



EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SCIENCE  
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

January - April 2016

Volume 6, Nr.1

ISSN 2411-9563 (Print)

ISSN 2312-8429 (Online)

EUSER  
EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
First Published 2016

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

September - December 2015  
Volume 6, Nr. 1

ISSN 2411-9563 (Print)  
ISSN 2312-8429 (Online)

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Typeset by EUSER  
Printed by EUSER  
EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
January - April 2016

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## Generation Y in Poland – Expectations and Attitudes of Young People

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### Abstract

*The article presents an assessment of students studying economics who belong to the Generation Y. Generation Y is a group of people born in the 80s and 90s of the twentieth century. The aim of this study was to verify the correctness of judgments about Generation Y. The article presents results concerning the behaviour of students in 2001 and 2015 years. Subjective evaluation of opinion of Generation Y was examined in the areas of faculty chosen, work, internet, mobility. Data analysis was performed using positional statistics, bar diagrams and parallel set. It was confirmed almost all opinions about Generation Y, indicating only a small difference in the perception of mobility by young students of economics.*

**Keywords:** Generation Y, expectations, behaviour of young people, statistical analysis, parallel sets

### 1. Introduction

The aim of the study was to examine whether the Generation Y in Poland corresponds to the reported in the literature characteristics of this age cohort. To achieve this goal were used data collected during questionnaire survey, which was conducted in 2001 and 2015 years.

Generation Y is the youngest group of workforce. Their behaviour patterns are significantly different from the elderly. Understanding their expectations in both the private and professional life is very important, for example in the process of human resource management. Managers must often solve the task of "how to turn this (Generation Y) high maintenance workforce into a high productivity workforce" (Martin, 2005). Characteristics of Generation Y has been repeatedly presented at various scientific articles, for example Barwińska-Malajowicz A. (2011), Bąkowska J. (2013), Hammill G. (2005), Gentry, et al. (2011), Martini, C. (2005), Parment A. (2013), Stanimir (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). For this reason, only short characteristics of this age cohort is presented below.

Generation Y are people who were born between 1980 and 1999. But those years are conventionally determined. Affiliation to the Generation Y depends on the culture, lifestyle, family and friends patterns, social surrounding [Stanimir 2015c, p. 22]. Deal (2007, p. 14) writes that all generations have similar values and "they just express them differently". Gentry et al. (2011, p. 41) define Generation Y as: "grew up in the digital age", and Generation Y use technology and digital media in every area of life. Social networks and other kinds of virtual communication are integral characteristics of the Generation Y, so this is the first generation naturally without territorial limitations in communications. "Communicators and social networks replace and simplify verbal communication. Decline verbal communication causes problems in the process of applying for work and its implementation." [Stanimir 2015b, p. 173]. Quality of life is very important for them. They believe in education as a key to success. People from Generation Y highly appreciate their abilities and they belief in their own uniqueness. In every area of life they have high expectations and a strong aversion to criticism. They pay high attention to private life, simultaneously with expectation of more freedom and flexibility of working time. Like Martini (2005, p. 40) writes this is first non-nuclear family generation. Their opinion about work is: we must work, but not a lifelong, so they are looking for life-work balance. This is a different attitude toward Generation X, which works to live [Gursoy et al. 2008, p. 451]. Stanimir (2014) shows the differences in perception of life-work balance not only between generations but also differences between men and women of Generation Y. The perception of work is quite different as for Generation X or Baby Boomers. "They know their worth on the labour market" (Barwińska-Malajowicz A. 2011 p. 304). For Generation Y work is a way for



self-realisation. They are looking for job which gives them more opportunities to realize private interests. Generation Y appreciate the authorities, but their loyalty ends very quickly. It is multitasking Generation, but in work they need constant feedback, only than they can function correctly. Stanimir (2015c, p. 27) writes that "Generation Y declare their willingness to learn new things but it must be associated with the possibility of achieving additional benefits and not only the execution of work".

In this article are presented results of the analysis of data from questionnaire surveys, which were conducted among students of economic studies in 2001 and 2015 in Wroclaw. The respondents in both periods were 20-25 years old. In 2001 they were the first people from generation Y, which began its career and studies. They were born between 1976 and 1981. The respondents in 2015 were born between 1990 and 1995. In 2001 students were asked for opinion about:

I. Chosen faculty

II. Work.

In 2015 the survey was conducted to identify the diversity of the behaviour of young people in three areas related to private and professional life:

I. Internet

II. Work

III. Mobility.

Questionnaire in 2001 didn't contain questions related to the importance and use of the Internet, because, at that time, it was not seen as one of the most important sources of information, entertainment, communication or work.

## 2. Data Characteristics

Below are presented questions which were contained in surveys in 2001 and 2015.

In questionnaire in 2001 in area of chosen faculty, were asked literal questions:

- *Why did you choose University of Economics (X1)?* (possible answers: I am interested in economics, management, computer science and financial (a); prestige of the university (b); easy entrance examinations (c); no entrance examinations (d); easy studies (e); my friends have chosen this school (f); other (g));

- *Do you think that studying will help you to find preferred job/occupation (X2)?* (possible answers: yes (a); no (b), don't know (c)).

In area of work, were asked literal questions:

- *Do you have a job (X3)?* (yes (a), casual work (b), no (c));

- *Where wish you to work after graduation (X4)?* (own company (a); employee in a large company (b); employee of a small business (c); managerial position (d); other (e)).

In 2015 the profile of students, their skills and expectations are different than 14 years ago. For this reason, the range of questions has changed. In the area of Internet use the following questions were asked:

- *How important part of life is the Internet for you?* ([very important] 5 4 3 2 1 [completely unimportant]);

- *For what purpose do you most often use the Internet?* Rank 7 means the most important, 1 – the least important (Communication; Official matters; Learning and working; Finance and banking; Entertainment; Shopping; Others).

In area of work, were asked literal questions:

- *Do you have a job or have you ever worked since the age of 18 years?* (yes, no);

- *Are you ready to work abroad* (yes, no, don't know);

- *If you don't want work abroad give three main reasons why?* Rank 3 means main, 2 – very important, 1 – important (lack of knowledge of language; current job in Poland; don't like to go abroad for a long time; safety concerns; family; other);

- *What factors are important to you during your job search and choose the right company?* Select answer: very important, important, I do not know, unimportant, totally unimportant (precisely defined responsibilities; the diversity of the social package; information about bonuses; information about flexible work hours; earnings amount; stability of employment; company location, company image, friends in the company, other).

In area of mobility, were asked literal questions:

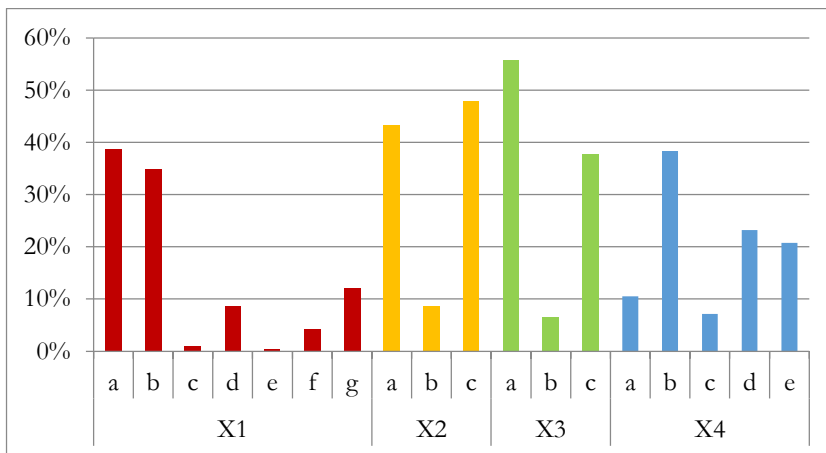
- *Have you participated in student exchange programs between universities?* (yes and I never go again; yes and I want go again; no and I do not want to go; no but I'm going to go; don't know).

- *Please do subjective evaluation of your language skills.* English and other languages. Mark 5 means very good skills, 2 – insufficient language skills (in everyday communication; reading, writing, professional communication – at work).

### 3. Main conclusions of the analysis

Figure 1 shows the frequencies of choices of response variants in the four variables (X1-X4). Based on the answers given by students in 2001, should be noted that most people chose business schools because of the interest in subjects and because of the prestige of the university. 43% of respondents thought that their chosen studies will help them to find preferred job or occupation. 48% of respondents didn't know whether the studies will be helpful in achieving this goal (association of categories of variables X1 and X2 are presented in the next paragraph below). 56% of respondents worked during the study, 38% - didn't. After graduation, most people wanted to work in a large company (38%), and 23% of respondents wanted to occupy managerial positions. Only 11% of respondents planned to work in their own company.

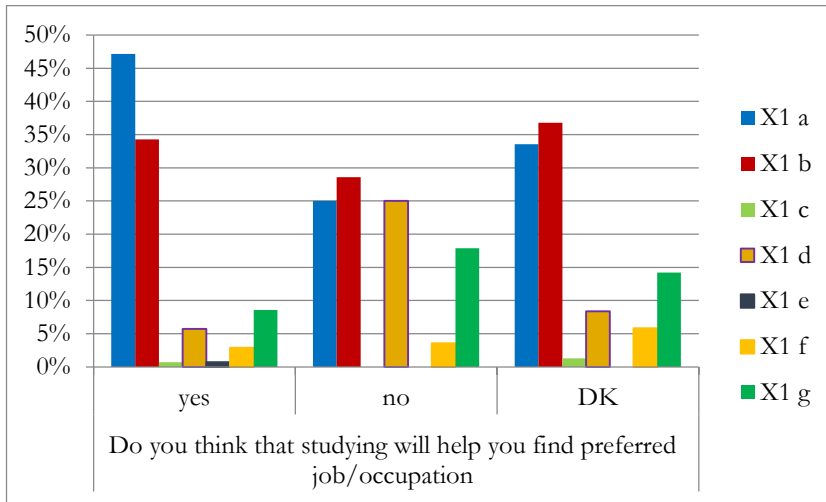
Fig. 1. Frequencies of answers given for questions X1-X4



Source: own elaborations.

Figure 2 presents the reasons for the choice of economic study described by those who believed (or not), that the study will help them to find preferred work. Regardless of whether the respondents believed that the study will help them to find a preferred job or not (or don't have an opinion), one of the main reasons for the choice made was the prestige of the university. Those who were convinced that find employment in an ideal job, most often made choices of school according to their scientific interests.

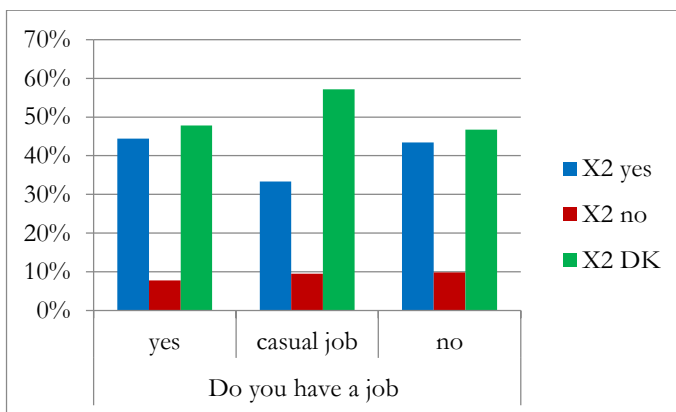
Fig. 2. Frequencies of answers given for questions X2 taking into account the variants of X1 (*Why did you choose University of Economics*)



Source: own elaborations.

Figure 3 shows a breakdown of people who worked or not during their studies, due to the expectations for employment after graduation. Among those who worked dominated those who didn't know whether studies will help them to find ideal job. The share of people who positively assessed the chances of finding preferred employment is a little lower. The smallest group of people who believe that studies will help them in finding the perfect job or occupation, are those who have worked casual.

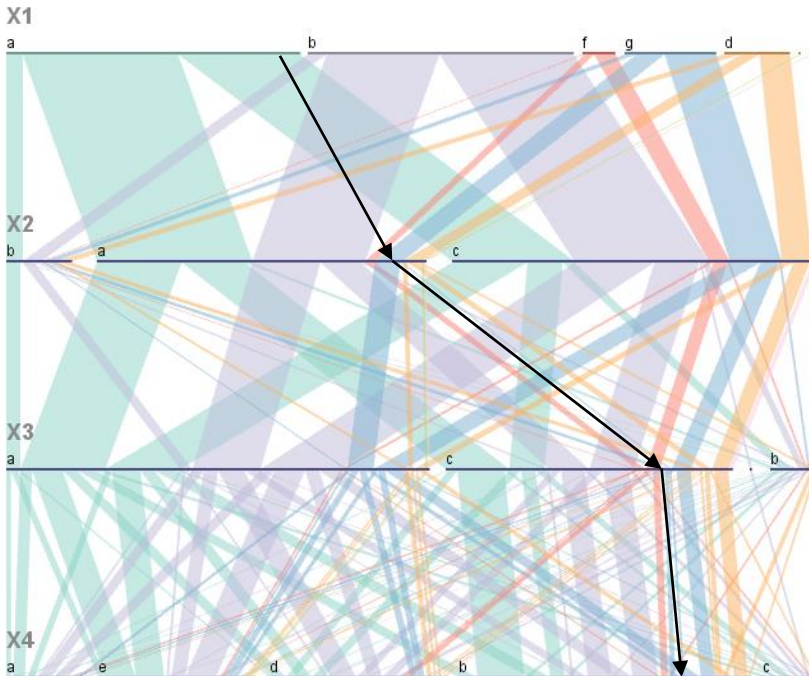
Fig. 3. Frequencies of answers given for questions X3 taking into account the variants of X2 (*Do you think that studying will help you find preferred job/occupation*)



Source: own elaborations.

Figure 4 shows the graph constructed using the Parallel Sets V2.1<sup>1</sup> program. Method of Parallel Sets is a technique for visualization categorical data, which are cross-tabulated. The horizontal lines shows the frequencies of each category for chosen variable. From each category in upper line goes ribbons which connect all categories from bottom line, corresponding to frequencies of how often each category occurred. The lowest division indicates the size of this part of the population that chooses indicated pattern (track) of categories of the variables.

Fig. 4. Parallel sets of Variables X1, X2, X3, X4



Source: own elaborations using Parallel Sets V2.1.

The most numerous group (pattern dividing the population is indicated in Figure 4 by arrows), covering 6% of the study population, are people who chose the university because of the compatibility of their interests (X1a), thought that the studies will be helpful in finding preferred job or occupation (X2a), they didn't have work (X3c), and after graduation they wanted to work in a large company (X4b). It was interesting what path chose people for whom very important was the prestige of the university (the purple colour of ribbons). In the first step are constructed two main groups: those who believed that the studies will help to find a dream job and those who didn't know whether the studies provide such an opportunity. After taking another variable into account, population becomes increasingly diverse – it can be identify four main paths. After taking the last variable into account, the largest group (4% of the population) are people who chose the university because of its prestige (X1b), but they didn't know if studies are helpful in finding preferred job (X2c), they were working during studies (X3a) and didn't have defined plans for jobs after graduation.

<sup>1</sup> Szczegółowy opis programu znajduje się na <https://eagereyes.org/parallel-sets>.

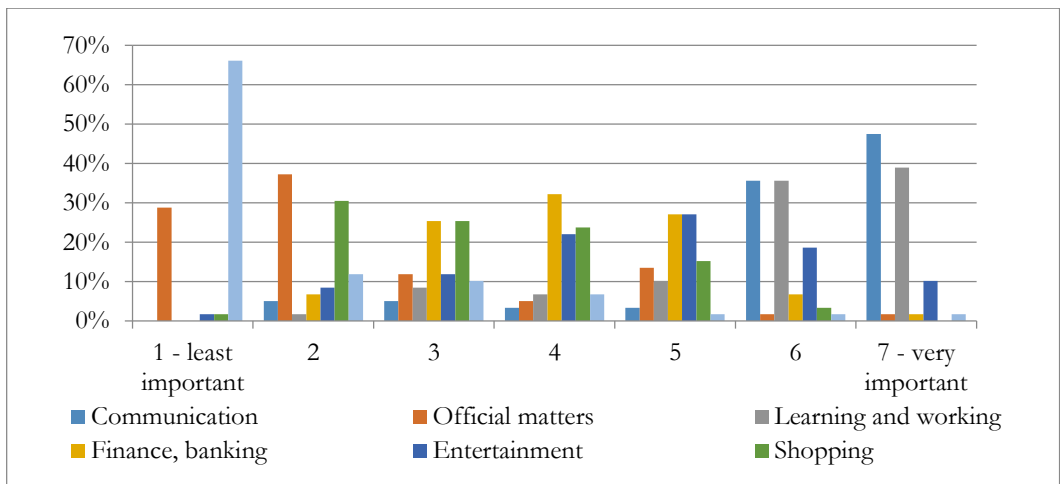
First area analysed in 2015 was Internet use. In 2015, the Y Generation, evaluated Internet as very important and as essential part of life.

Very important	Important
70%	28%

The result confirms that Generation Y is a generation of ICT with natural use of the modern technologies, specially the Internet. If for 98% of young people the Internet was important in their daily lives, so it was examined for what purpose were they used it.

Figure 5 shows the frequency of Internet use by students corresponding to different purposes.

Fig. 5. Frequencies of Internet use divided into purposes

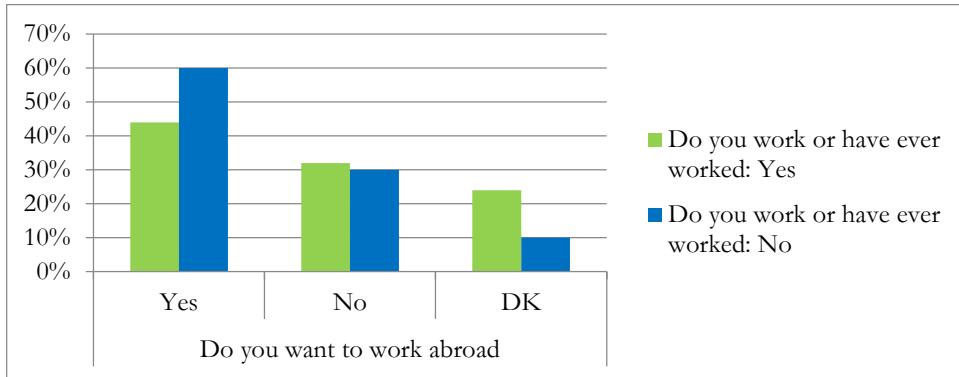


Source: own elaborations.

Use of the Internet by different generations of Poles, was discussed in the article Stanimir (2015a). There were used data from panel survey: Soical Polish Diagnozis [Rada Monitoringu Społecznego 2013]. There were obtained results similar to those presented in Figure 1. The most important for Generation Y were the possibilities of using the Internet to communicate, work and study. Finance and banking were often indicated as carried out via the Internet, as well as entertainment. Young people least likely used the Internet to deal with official matters. As indicated in the article Stanimir (2015 a, p. 51) in 2013, young people also used the Internet to communicate, entertainment and study or work, but also to deal with banking matters. On the other hand they didn't use the Internet to do shopping or own creativity. Also, online shopping was rarely indicated by the Generation Y in 2015.

Figure 6 shows opinions about working abroad but taking into account respondents who have ever worked or not.

Fig. 6. Frequencies of respondents who wanted to work abroad divided into groups of people ever worked or not.

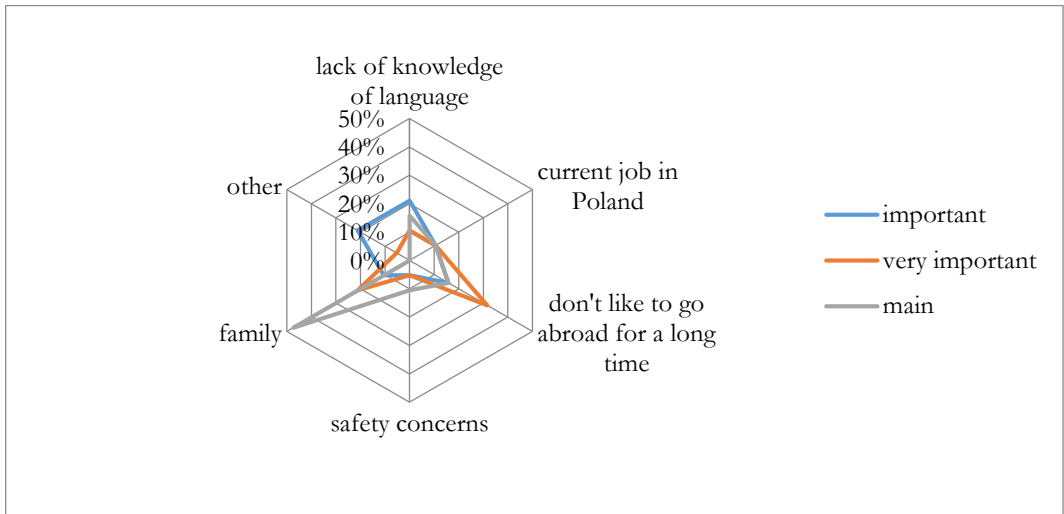


Source: own elaborations.

Figure 6 presents the attitudes of Generation Y to work abroad in association with situation, whether they ever worked, or still never were worked. Chi-square statistic for this association is equal 1,22 and p-value: 0,54. It follows that the analyzed variables are independent. From Figure 6 shows that more people who have already worked didn't know whether they want to work abroad. Thus, their tendency to mobility were not specified. A greater percentage of people who have never worked wanted to leave to work abroad than from people who have already taken a job.

Both among people who worked or didn't have gainful employment, about 30% did not want to work abroad. The question is what is the main reason of this situation. The respondents could identify three reasons (main, very important and important) for not want to work abroad. Figure 7 shows the obtained results. Main reason why they didn't want go abroad to work was a family, very important reason was that they don't like go abroad for a long time, and important reasons were lack of language knowledge and other.

Fig. 7. Main reasons for not going to work abroad



Source: own elaborations.

Another question asked to respondents was related to expectations of future jobs. Table 1 shows the median for each variant.

Table 1. Median value for all factors defining ideal company or work place.

Median	Very important	Important	DK	Unimportant	Totally unimportant
Precisely defined responsibilities					
The diversity of the social package					
Information about bonuses					
Information about flexible work hours					
Earnings amount					
Stability of employment					
Company location					
Company image					
Friends in the company					

Source: own elaborations.

Very important factor in the process of choosing right company was salary. Important were: precisely defined responsibilities, diversity of the social package, information about bonuses and flexible work hours, stability of employment and finally company location. Unimportant was company image.

In the next step, was examined the current students tendency to mobility. Mobility is understood as a willingness to participate in the exchange of students between universities. This variable is analysed in correspondence to language knowledge and skills. Only 6% of all population took part in such a kind of studies, and half of them didn't want to participate again. 45% of respondents didn't take part in students exchange and didn't want to, despite the fact that 59% of them well-evaluate their own language skills in everyday communication, 70% in reading, 41% in writing and 19% in professional conversations – at work.

## 5. Conclusions

When analysis subjective evaluation of opinion of Generation Y was examined in the areas of faculty chosen, work, internet, mobility. It was confirmed almost all opinions about Generation Y, indicating only a small difference in the perception of mobility by young students of economics. It was pointed out that for students in 2001, it was important to pursue their own interests. They chose the university, which gave them a very good education. Many of them believed that the selected studies are the way to their ideal career path. In 2015, students were asked about the importance of the Internet in their daily lives. Their opinion was consistent with the characteristics of Generation Y. The Internet was for them ways to communicate, learn, work and entertainment. These choices are also consistent with the general characteristics of Generation Y. Aspect of the employment, which does not correspond to common views and opinions on Generation Y is mobility. Students showed average interest in working abroad and lack of willingness to travel abroad to study.

## 6. Acknowledgements

This study was done as a part of the project "Non-metric multivariate data analysis as a tool for study of adults situation in the context of demographic changes" financed by Narodowe Centrum Nauki (National Science Centre) in Poland. Project number: 2012/05/B/HS4/02499.

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## Assessment of Participation in Cultural Activities in Poland by Selected Multivariate Methods

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### Abstract

*This paper presents analyses of participation in cultural activities by Poles. The analyses are carried out on the base of metric and non-metric data retrieved from the Eurobarometer survey. The study includes two main aspects: the comparison of the involvement in Poland with the situation in other European Union countries and the detection of similarities among various forms of the engagement. The socio-economic background of the respondents is also taken into account, namely age, gender, place of residence and level in the society. Chosen multivariate methods are applied to identify regularities in the participation. The results of the analyses are presented graphically to facilitate the interpretation. A two-step procedure is used for a better understanding of the participation schemes. The first step includes the partition of qualitative variables into relatively homogenous groups leading to the reduction of the multidimensionality. The second step is focused on evaluating the participation with respect to the variables forming the identified clusters.*

**Keywords:** participation in cultural activities, clustering methods, categorical data.

### 1. Introduction

The access to culture plays an important role across Europe but still an essential part of the population is not widely involved in cultural activities despite many Council conclusions on its importance, namely in terms of combating poverty and social exclusion or developing creative and intercultural competences (European Union 2012, p. 5). A general conclusion of a rather low level of the participation in Poland can be drawn from the Eurobarometer Reports (European Commission 2007, 2013). A vast national survey concerning this area was carried out in 2009 (GUS 2012). Other comprehensive national studies under a common name *Social Diagnosis* deal with this issue mostly in terms of the cultural needs and financial obstacles to the involvement (Czapiński & Panek 2015).

The main objective of this study is to identify and analyze patterns of the participation in cultural activities by Poles according to the Eurobarometer most recent data (2013). Some specific objectives are also formulated:

- to compare the engagement in Poland with the situation in other UE countries,
- to detect the similarities in the participation in various forms and to compare them with chosen socio-economic characteristics,
- to apply multivariate methods adequate for the variables of various type (metric, non-metric) in order to group either units or variables,
- to support the interpretation of the results of the analyses by visualization techniques.

Selected clustering methods are applied to identify regularities in the participation in cultural activities. The results of the analysis are presented graphically by dendrograms, barcharts and heatmap plots. The analyses are carried out on the base of *Eurobarometer* survey outcomes allowing for making international comparisons due to the unified process of data collection.

## 2. Data description

This study is based on data from Special Eurobarometer survey<sup>1</sup> devoted to cultural participation of European Union citizens. The survey was requested by the European Commission and carried out in April and May 2013. The questionnaire included a question concerning the frequency of the participation in various cultural activities in the last year. The literal question was as follows: "How many times in the last twelve months have you...?" (TNS Opinion 2013). Nine options were given for the evaluation, i.e. "seen a ballet, a dance performance or an opera; been to the cinema; been to the theatre; been to a concert; visited a public library, visited a historical monument or site (palaces, castles, churches, gardens, etc.); visited a museum or gallery, watched or listened to a cultural programme on TV or on the radio, read a book" (TNS Opinion 2013). As the original descriptions of the activities are rather long, shorter versions of them are used in further considerations in order to make the visualizations and tables more clear: Opera, Cinema, Theatre, Concert, Library, Monument, Museum, RTV, Book, respectively. The respondents of the survey were asked to choose one from possible answers: "not in the last 12 months; 1-2 times; 3-5 times; more than 5 times". The analyses of the participation are based both on aggregated and individual data. The international comparison was carried out with respect to the percentages of respondents who declared that they had took part in a particular activity at least once in the last twelve months. The analysis of the behaviour of the Polish respondents was performed on individual, categorical data. The answers to the question about the involvement in various activities were binarized (0 - no participation at all, 1 - participation at least once in the last year). A set of socio-economic non-metric variables was also taken into consideration:

- gender: male, female;
- place of residence: rural area or village, small/medium-sized town, large town/city;
- age (categorized): 15-24, 25-39, 40-54, 55+;
- level in the society (self placement on ten-degree scale, categorized): low (1-4), middle (5-6), high (7-10).

As some missing values were detected, some observations had to be omitted and the final dataset comprised N = 960 cases.

## 3. Analytical methods

According to the objectives of this research, some selected multivariate techniques are applied to disclose relationships and patterns in datasets. Various clustering procedures as well as certain visualization methods supporting the interpretation of the results are used. The clustering algorithms were chosen as they constitute crucial methods of the scientific inquiry, especially in social sciences when no particular underlying theory of the phenomenon is available and the goal is to search for and to reveal the existing patterns (Bartholomew et al. 2008, p.18). The principal objective of cluster analysis is to assign individuals (observations, units) to clusters when the group membership is not known *a priori* (Afifi, May & Clark 2003). There are two main types of clustering algorithms: partitioning and hierarchical (Rencher 2003, p.452). Only the latter approach is used in the analyses, so its general idea is briefly presented. Hierarchical clustering is done in a few predefined steps, namely: (1) collecting a data matrix representing the objects and the attributes describing them, (2) standardizing the data matrix if necessary, (3) measuring the similarities among all pairs of objects, (4) applying a specific method to find the hierarchy of the similarities among objects and to present it in form of dendrogram (Romesburg 2004, p.3). Detailed descriptions of numerous clustering algorithms can be found in many publications, e.g. Anderberg (1973), Aggarwal & Reddy (2013), Everitt et al. (2011). Although the most common purpose of the cluster analysis is to group the units, the same procedures may be applied to group the variables according to their mutual behaviour and to reveal structures and "natural associations" among variables within complex datasets (Anderberg 1973). Moreover, some specific methods are proposed for variables clustering only. As indicated by Chavent et al. (2013) the most important methods for metric data are VARCLUS procedure implemented in SAS software, CLV method (Vigneau & Qannari 2003) and diametrical clustering (Dhillon, Marcotte & Roshan 2003). As survey data are often non-metric in nature, these techniques cannot be used in many social science studies based on such data. Another solution dealing with both quantitative and qualitative data is proposed by Chavent et al. (2013) and implemented in ClustOfVar R package. The clustering procedures are based on a principal components method appropriate for a mixture of qualitative and quantitative

<sup>1</sup> European Commission, Brussels (2014): Eurobarometer 79.2 (2013). TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5688 Data file Version 4.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.11873

variables and maximize a homogeneity criterion - the degree of the association with the central quantitative synthetic variable measured either by correlation coefficient or correlation ratio (Chavent et al. 2013). The stability of the partitions may be assessed by Rand (Rand 1971) or adjusted Rand (Hubert & Arabie 1985) criteria.

The results of the hierarchical clustering are usually presented graphically by dendrograms but another extended approach is possible. A visualization technique called *cluster heatmap* is used to show or identify the relationships between the units and the variables with respect to the clustering outcomes. This visualization method is widely used in biological research, mostly to data collected from microarrays but there are not any obstacles to apply this technique to other data (Pryke, Mostaghim & Nazemi 2007). The cluster heatmap consists of a rectangle representing the data matrix with dendrograms attached to its margins and it facilitates the examination of row, column, and joint cluster configuration (Wilkinson & Friendly 2009). The rectangle is divided into cells whose colours reflect the values of the original dataset; the columns and the rows are permuted in order to properly show the clustering of the variables and the units, respectively (Chen, Härdle & Unwin 2007, p. 567). An interesting heatmap presentation with a variety of options is implemented in pheatmap R package (Kolde, 2015).

#### 4. Participation in cultural activities in Poland on the European background

The comparison of Poles' participation in cultural activities with the patterns observed in all European Union member states (at the moment when the survey took place) was performed on the base of the variables representing the percentages of respondents who declared that they had taken part in a particular activity at least once in the last twelve months. Hence, the data matrix comprised 27 objects described by 9 variables (attributes). The input data in this case were metric so an agglomerative clustering algorithm was applied. The data were standardized. The Euclidean distance was chosen as the measure of dissimilarities among the pairs of objects and Ward's method was selected as the criterion for merging clusters in the hierarchical procedure. Finally, a heatmap presentation was used to visualize the outcomes of the analysis and to facilitate the interpretation of the patterns. The heatmap reflecting the standardized values of the analyzed data and the clustering results is given in Figure 1. The position of Poland is marked by an arrow.

The heatmap in Figure 1 shows the partition of the countries into four clusters. The first cluster (as seen from the top of the figure) consists of the worst performers in terms of the participation in cultural activities: Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Cyprus, Portugal and Romania. All participation indicators in these countries are below the average. A completely different pattern can be noticed in the countries who constitute the second cluster: Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands where the engagement in cultural activities is the highest across the European Union. The third cluster comprising Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, Spain and Malta is characterized by the values lower than or close to the average. The fourth and the biggest cluster contains the other member states (not listed above) and can be described as moderate as the values are higher or close to the average.

Some similarities among the variables can be also indicated, particularly among visiting museums, galleries and monuments, reading books and going to the cinema. Other regularities may be noticed between being to a concert or being to a theatre as well as between seeing a ballet, a dance performance or an opera and watching or listening to cultural programme on TV or on the radio.

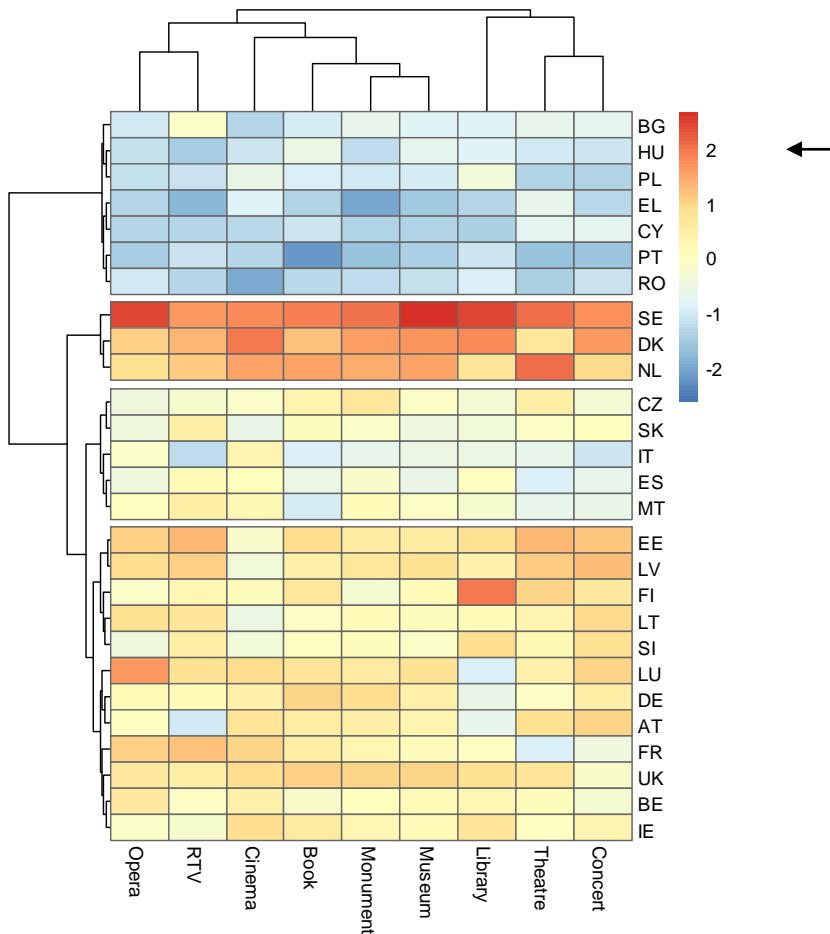


Figure 1. Results of the agglomerative hierarchical clustering (Ward's method) of the EU countries and the variables describing the participation in the cultural activities.

Note: The position of Poland is highlighted by the arrow. Abbreviations: AT- Austria, BE - Belgium, BG - Bulgaria, CY - Cyprus, CZ - Czech Republic, DE - Germany, DK - Denmark, FR - France, HU - Hungary, EE - Estonia, EL - Greece, ES - Spain, FI - Finland, IE - Ireland, IT - Italy, LT - Lithuania, LU - Luxembourg, LV - Latvia, , MT - Malta, NL - Netherlands, PL - Poland, PT - Portugal, RO - Romania, SE - Sweden, SI - Slovenia, SK - Slovakia, UK - United Kingdom.

Source: own elaboration in pheatmap R package on the base of Special Eurobarometer 79.2 (399) data.

As it can be seen from the recognized clusters and patterns, the participation in cultural activities in Poland is among the lowest in the European Union. This unfavorable situation induces the need for a more detailed analysis based on individual data and with respect to the socio-economic background.

### 5. Participation in cultural activities in Poland - analysis of non-metric data

The involvement in cultural activities in Poland was evaluated on the base of nine categorical variables describing various aspects of the phenomenon. In the first step of the analysis it was verified whether there are patterns due to the type of the

participation. For this purpose, a method available in the ClustOfVar R package (Chavent et al. 2013) was used that allows detecting clusters among qualitative variables. The agglomeration process is illustrated by the means of a dendrogram in Figure 2. Figure 3 shows the evaluation of the stability of the dendrogram partitioning on the base of the mean adjusted Rand criterion calculated from 100 bootstrap samples. The highest index corresponds to the division into eight clusters of variables but this solution is unfortunately not informative. Therefore, the split into three clusters was taken into consideration, for which the Rand criterion was the second largest.

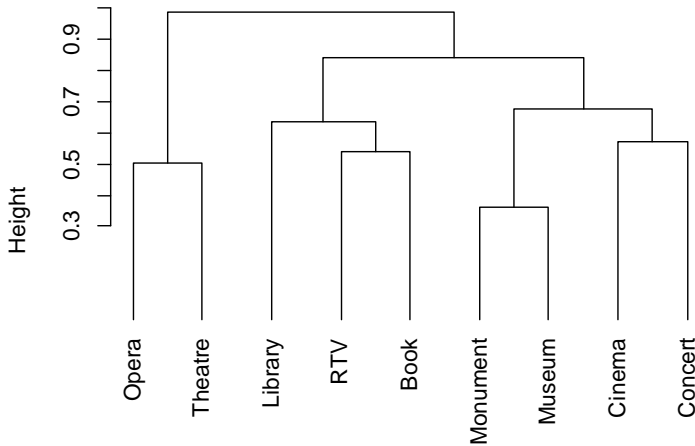


Figure 2. Dendrogram representing the clustering of the variables describing the participation in the cultural activities by Poles

Source: own elaboration in ClustOfVar R package on the base of Special Eurobarometer 79.2 (399) data.

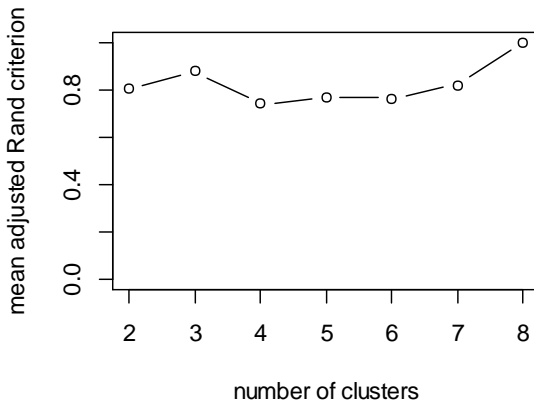


Figure 3. The evaluation of the stability of the dendrogram partitions according to the adjusted Rand criterion (calculated from 100 bootstrap samples).

Source: own elaboration in ClustOfVar R package on the base of Special Eurobarometer 79.2 (399) data.

Three identified clusters are as follows: (1) seeing a ballet, a dance performance or an opera and being to the theatre, (2) being to a concert, being to the cinema, visiting a historical monument or site, visiting a museum or gallery, (3) visiting a public library, watching or listened to a cultural programme on TV or on the radio, reading a book. It is worth underlying that the clusters are different in nature. The first one seems to be the most sophisticated and comprises some events available only in large towns or cities. The third one consists of easily accessible and low-cost activities as reading books, listening

to the radio, watching TV, visiting a public library. The second cluster includes the activities carried out outside home and probably requiring more time and financial expenditures. The homogeneity of the clusters can be evaluated by the degree of association between the variables constituting the cluster and the central synthetic variable; in the case of qualitative variables correlation ratio is applied for this purpose (Chavent et al. 2013). The results in Table 1 show that the partition into three clusters is reasonable as the correlation ratios are relatively high.

Table 1. Associations between the input variables and the clusters' synthetic variables

Cluster	Variable	Loading (cr)
1	Opera	0,75
	Theatre	0,75
2	Cinema	0,53
	Concert	0,52
	Monument	0,68
	Museum	0,66
3	Library	0,56
	RTV	0,57
	Book	0,69

Source: own elaboration in ClustOfVar R package on the base of Special Eurobarometer 79.2 (399) data.

The identification of three different clusters gives reason to perform the analyzes separately for each of them. It is an alternative, more detailed approach than the *Index of cultural practice* proposed in (European Commission 2013, p. 9), which has many advantages such as the simplicity of construction and interpretation, but treats all cultural activities equally. In the case of Poland the approach based on pre-clustering appears to be justified because of large differences in participation rates calculated separately for the three recognized groups. The particular terms are defined as follows: full participation (F) - participation in all activities within the cluster, partial participation (P) - participation in at least one activity within the cluster but not in all of them, no participation (N) - no participation in activities within the cluster. Some indicators calculated as F, P and N ratios are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of the participation with respect to the identified clusters

Cluster	Participation indicators		
	F/N	P/N	Total: F/N+P/N
1	0,08	0,14	0,22
2	0,19	0,84	1,03
3	0,77	1,85	2,62

Source: own elaboration on the base of Special Eurobarometer 79.2 (399) data.

Essential differences in the indicators calculated for the clusters should be emphasized. In the first cluster for one person who saw a ballet, a dance performance, opera or a play in a theatre there are about five persons who did not participate in such events at all. It is the only cluster, in which the partial participation is only a bit higher than the full involvement. In the others the partial engagement is much higher than the full one. There are more people using than not using the cultural offers included in the clusters 2 and 3. Moreover, the ratio is much more favorable in the third group (2,62 as compared to 1,03). The ratio of the partial participation and no participation is higher than one only in the case of the cluster 3 which

includes easily accessible and low-cost activities. The calculated indicators show a very large diversity of Poles' participation in cultural activities depending on their type.

The next step of the analysis is the assessment of the full, partial and no participation indicators within the identified clusters with respect to a set of socio-economic variables (Figure 4).

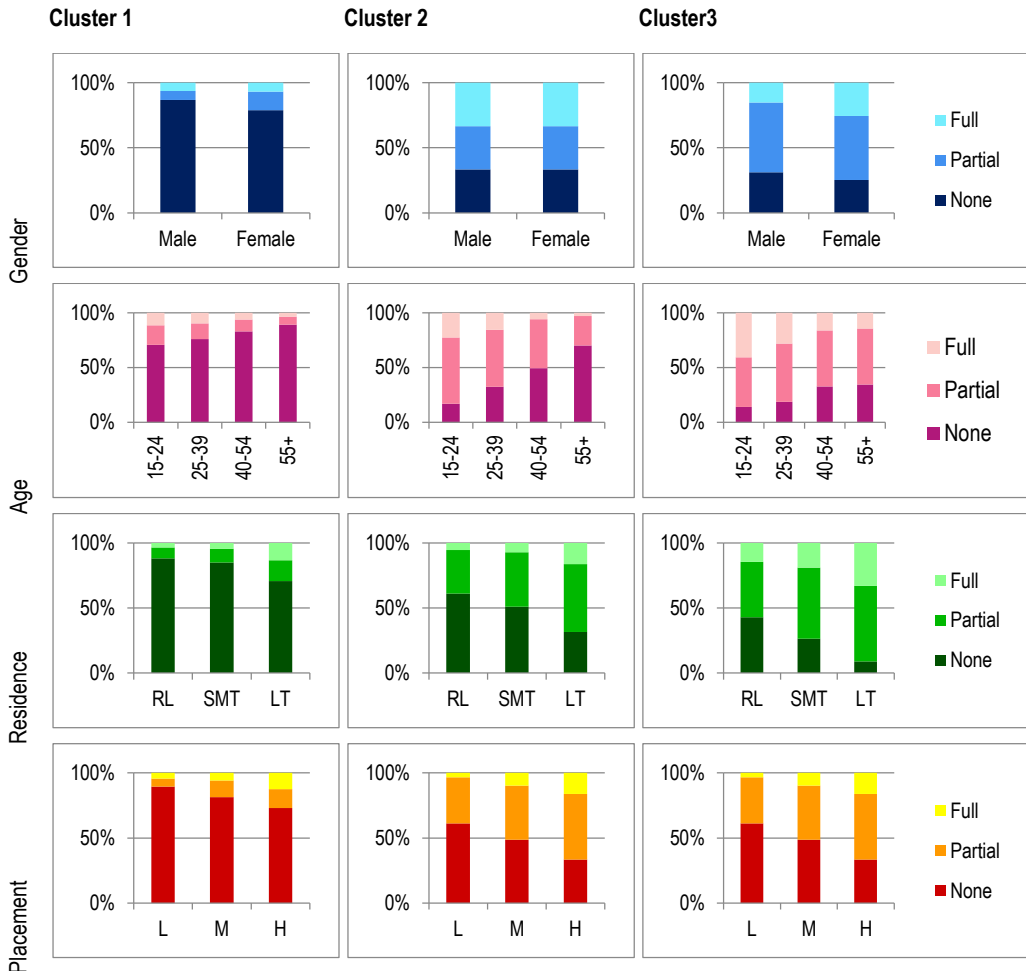


Figure 4. Participation in cultural activities with respect to the identified clusters and socio-economic characteristics.

Note: Residence: RL - Rural area or village, SMT - Small/Middle town, LT - Large town/city; Placement in the society: L - low, M - Middle, H - High.

Source: own elaboration on the base of Special Eurobarometer 79.2 (399) data.

A higher percentage of women than men declares participation in cultural activities included in the clusters 1 and 3. A vital difference can be found in the cluster 3 in the case of the full participation, which is declared by 25,6% of females and only by 15,2% of males. In contrast, the differences due to the gender are not found in the cluster 2. The age is also an important differentiating factor. Generally, the engagement in cultural activities decreases with the age of the respondents. Particularly worrying is the fact of no participation by people from the oldest age group (55+). A clear division occurs between 40+ and



younger Poles when the activities included in the cluster 3 are considered. The younger generation tends to read more books and use more the cultural offers given on the radio and TV or in the library. The place of residence also plays an important role. In the case of cluster 1 and 2, the reason may seem to be evident as the access to certain cultural events in rural areas, villages and smaller towns is limited. However, the same patterns occur in the case of the cluster 3 comprising easily accessible activities. Moreover, the gap between rural areas/villages and large towns/cities is the highest in this cluster: no participation is declared by 42,8% and 8,9% of respondents, respectively. It suggests the existence of not only objective obstacles arising from the external circumstances, but also intrinsic barriers, perhaps resulting from the lack of such needs or the lack of awareness. Some regularities combined with the perceived level in the society are also noticeable, but one must bear in mind that this assessment is a self-placement type, so it does not give objective criteria. Nevertheless, the lower placement in the society, the lower participation in cultural activities is observed. More than a half of those who place themselves at the lowest level of the society resigns from the engagement in cultural offers, irrespective of the cluster.

## Conclusions

The analysis of the Eurobarometer data reveals that the participation in cultural activities in Poland is among the lowest in the European Union and varies across socio-economic factors. In particular, there are clear differences between people living in the countryside and in town/cities as well as between persons from different age groups. Very alarming, especially in the context of the aging population is no or a low involvement in cultural activities by persons 55+. It is necessary to take appropriate steps to attract older people to these forms of spending time contributing to the realization of the idea of the active aging.

The partition of variables into relatively homogenous groups in the first stage of the analysis reduces the multidimensionality of data while retaining the possibility of recognizing underlying patterns. This kind of approach is particularly helpful if groups of variables characterized by considerable similarities exist, which allows the researcher to extract meaningful clusters. Taking into account a set of the identified clusters of variables in further analysis is probably more informative than the interpretation of one composite indicator based on all variables altogether. On the other hand, the synthetic indicator has also a number of advantages - it has a simple construction, requires less complex calculations and is understood more easily by stakeholders without background in statistics. It can thus serve as an overall index for the general description of the situation, while the two-step approach giving a more detailed and more precise insight into the phenomenon can be applied in the in-depth analysis of the problem. The approach including the preliminary clustering of variables may be treated as a kind of balance between handling each factor separately, and construction of one global indicator.

## Acknowledgements

This research was financed by Narodowe Centrum Nauki (National Science Centre) in Poland under the project entitled "Non-metric multivariate data analysis as a tool for study of adults situation in the context of demographic changes". Project number: 2012/05/B/HS4/02499.

This research uses Special Eurobarometer data: European Commission, Brussels (2014): Eurobarometer 79.2 (2013). TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5688 Data file Version 4.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.11873.

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## Communication about Sex-Reproductive Health Issues with Adolescents: A Taboo among Malaysian Parents?

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### Abstract

*Young people need to establish their identity and develop the ability to make their own decisions and plan for their future life. This establishment is an important process which is facilitated by good communication with parents and family, especially regarding problem-solving skills. Through open communication they can express their ideas freely, which then leads to family satisfaction and lessen conflict. Parent-child communication would heighten family cohesion, contentment, psychological well-being and at the same time thwart detrimental life consequences for adolescents. Research has also revealed that family environment and communication is in fact a predictive factor for risky behaviour in young people around the world. Thus, effective communication is imperative in promoting good family functioning. Many parents are still reluctant to discuss sex-related issues with their children openly. Parents found that such talks are hard to initiate. This study has two-pronged objectives, first, to examine sexuality and reproductive health that adolescents communicate to their parents and second, is to explore adolescents' views on communication with parents on matters related to the topics. The population of this study was lower secondary school students who came from four different zones in Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. Quantitative data was collected from 504 respondents from urban, semi urban and rural geographical school locations for study via multistage stratified sampling procedure. This survey employed two sets of constructs from the Highly At-Risk Behaviours Questionnaire (a questionnaire to gauge adolescents highly at-risk behaviours) - HARBQ. Descriptive (means, standard deviation and percentages) and inferential statistical analyses in this study revealed several interesting findings. Interestingly Malaysian teens were found rarely discussed issue related to sex and reproductive health with their parents. Ironically, they were open for discussion about these matters with their parents as long as would not turn them down. The respondents were also found positive in that they could communicate with their parents on matters related sexual and reproductive health issues. Findings from this study provide crucial information which may help improvise existing interventions and communication of knowledge and skills on reproductive health to adolescents especially by parents. Counsellors could use the information to provide effective treatment; intervention and preventive plan for teenagers to enable them to cope with the issues and in reducing unwanted consequences that may arise in the future.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, reproductive health, sexuality, psychological well-being, intervention, at-risk behaviours*

### 1 Introduction

The present generation of young people is approaching half of the world population. Statistically, about 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 19, or 18% of the world population are alive across the world today and majority of them are adolescents. In Malaysia, this age group make up 19.2% of the total population (WHO, Western Pacific Region, 2009). Thus, the population of adolescents that we have today could be the largest cohort ever and they "represent a tremendous asset for our future, and we must not miss the opportunity to empower them and help them flourish (Nasser, 2011, pg. 58). They are Generation Y (15 to 32 years old) and Generation Z (0 to 14 years old) who grew up with technology,

so being connected and tech savvy; crave for attention, feedback and guidance; open-minded and want to be included and involved in many life activities.

Neither young children nor adults, adolescents need help and support for services that respond to their distinctive needs, challenges and aspirations for the future because, developmentally, as they go through the transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents will go through the “storm and stress” period i.e. experiencing intense physical, psychological, emotional and economic changes. Most importantly they also experience remarkable changes and challenges in sexuality development. At the same time, these young people are at risk of adverse reproductive health outcomes. Changes in social culture resulting from globalization, and the breaking down of traditions are likely to cause the adolescents to be sexually active before marriage compared to their parents’ generation (Kamrani, Syed Yahya, Hamzah & Ahmad, 2011). Sexually active adolescents of both sexes are increasingly at high risk of unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortions, maternal health complications as well as contracting and transmitting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. Many adolescents and their peers are typically poorly informed on how to protect themselves and the inadequate information makes them more vulnerable. Their vulnerability to this phenomenon is also due to the lack of skills in negotiating sexual relationship (Low, 2009). Although reports have shown that adolescents’ fertility rates have fallen, still, 20,000 girls under age 18 give birth in developing countries every day. Every year, there are 70,000 adolescent deaths from complications of pregnancy and childbirth (UNFPA, 2014).

So, will adolescents seek advice or opinion from their parents if they have questions regarding sex and reproductive health matters? In Malaysia, like many Asian societies where traditional and conservative minds prevail, issues relating to sexual and reproductive health are often highly sensitive or taboo and considered impolite to discuss openly (Okwun, Siraj & Okwun, 2012). Within family, many parents are reluctant to discuss anything about sex-related issues with their children and they found such talks as inappropriate and hard to initiate. Many adults feel hesitant to communicate openly in the presence of children. Malaysian adolescents also do not talk about subjects related to reproductive health and sexuality with their parents except probably after puberty whereby they experience menarche. Due to the sensitivities of the issues and limitations of the communication, adolescents have inadequate information, guidance and support in managing their sexual and reproductive health issues.

Much has been reiterated about the restriction of parent-adolescent communication about sexuality issues but the situation could be different with the parents of the present teenage generation. Although school-based programs appear to be practical choices for sexual and reproductive health education, there is a profound need to explore on the extent of the openness of the adolescents in Malaysian secondary. Another crucial issue is to understand the views of these adolescents about their parents’ openness to talk or discuss sexuality and reproductive health matters. More importantly, in the perspective of the present study, the alarming rate of underage pregnancies revealed by National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB, Malaysia), involving 1,048 teen cases between January and March 2013 (the Malay Mail, January 14, 2014) served as a “wake-up call” on the importance of parents role in educating their children at home.

In line with the awareness and concerns, the purpose of this research was to seek the view of the adolescents about topics that they talk to their parents and their thoughts about parents’ reaction if they discuss issues related to sexuality and reproductive health. Their openness in terms of communicating sexuality and reproductive health issues with their parents was also examined. The findings would highlight if the topic under study is still a barrier between adolescents and parents. The statistical data would be used to determine if communication on the topics related to the issues is still considered a taboo. Stratified clustered sampling procedure was applied in five zones throughout Malaysia. Data were examined via descriptive and inferential statistics. The outcomes are relevant to relevant parties for further interventions.

## **2. Problem Statement and Justifications**

In Malaysia, the phenomenon of premarital sexual activity has been increasing over the years (IPH, 2008). Unwed pregnancy and baby dumping are also on the rise in Malaysia. Although researchers might claim that Malaysian statistics are not reliable due to under reporting of the pregnancy and the outcomes, a study conducted on 14 tertiary hospitals in Malaysia, Clinical Research Center (CRC), Ministry of Health, Malaysia reported that there are increasing incidences of unwed pregnancies throughout Malaysia especially in the younger age group between 10-20 years old (Ruhazain, Ravichandran, Rozima, Karalasingam, Soelar, Sa’at, Baharum, 2013). They are in the age range of adolescence and

engaging in early sexual activity places them at risk. Although the statistics are worrisome, prevention and protection against at-risk behavior especially involving unhealthy sexual behavior can still be done for the young people. They must be given adequate sexual and reproductive health knowledge.

Studies show that most of the sexual and reproductive health knowledge acquired by Malaysian students was from teachers, friends, parents and media. For instance, in Kelantan, Malaysia it was found that the main source (64%) of sexual information was friends (Ab. Rahman, Ab. Rahman, Ibrahim, Salleh, Ismail, Ali, Wan Muda, Ishak & Ahmad, 2011). Nevertheless, adolescents who are curious on sexual topic may adopt the value and trust the sources from mass media especially internet to avoid the embarrassment of discussing the topic with adult (Yaacob, Wong, Baharuddin, Mansor, Juhari, & Abu Talib, 2010).). A study in Kelantan revealed that the main source (64%) of sexual information was friends (Ab. Rahman, Ab. Rahman, Ibrahim, Salleh, Ismail, Ali, Wan Muda, Ishak & Ahmad, 2011). Malaysian adolescent boys (n = 31) aged between 13 and 17 years involved in a qualitative study reported that their sources of sexual information were mainly from male friends or through the mass media (Low, Ng, Fadzil, & Ang (2007). Nonetheless, information from these sources might not be correct and may deceive adolescents' understanding about an appropriate sexuality and reproduction health. As the role of school and teachers in delivering related information, in Malaysia, sexuality education is embedded across other subjects like Science, Additional Science, Biology, Islamic Education, Moral Education (Chan & Jaafar, 2009) and not taught as an independent subject in school. Majority of parents (73%) of rural elementary school children supported the inclusion of various sexual health topics in school curriculum provided the contents were in line with religious teachings (Makol-Abdul, Nurullah, Imam & A. Rahman, 2010). Scholars viewed that since education begins from home, parents can play a vital role to reduce adolescent risk behaviours while encouraging healthy sexual development (Martino, Elliott, Corona, Kanouse, & Schuster, 2008). It is obvious that the level of awareness and knowledge on sexual issues is still lacking but adolescent boys claimed that their parents did not talk to them about sexual matters (Low, Ng, Fadzil, & Ang (2007).

Thus, one of the ways in which this outcome can be achieved is through parent-adolescent communication. Researchers have revealed that adolescents, who communicated regularly with their parents about sex, sexuality, and development issues, are more likely to have open and closer relationships with them. The young people are also more likely to talk with their parents in the future about sex-related issues than adolescents who rarely had such communication with their parents (Martino et. al, 2008). Studies in developed countries have revealed that adolescents who talk with their parents about sexuality are less likely compared to their peers to get involved in sexual risk behaviours, and more likely to delay first intercourse (Kaljee, Green, Lerdboon, Riel, Van Pam, Tho, Ha, Minh, Li, Chen, & Stanton, 2011). Nonetheless, few studies in developing countries have examined parent-child communication about sex. A study in India reported that only one third of the girls were told about menstruation by their mothers but only one fourth were explained the reason (Kotecha, Patel, Baxi, Mazumdar, Misra, Modi, & Diwanji, 2009). Talking about sexuality can be a tremendous challenge for many parents and adolescents and if it happens at all, usually consists of parents advising their unmarried children not to have sex (Trinh, 2004). However in his study, he found that parents in Vietnam openly discussed sexual issues with their adolescent children. "Most parents directly communicated (i.e., providing explanations, asking questions, sharing their own stories, warning of risks, and advising on safe sex behaviours) with their adolescent children on topics such as male-female sexual relationships, virginity, pregnancy, abortion, condom use, and HIV/AIDS" (Trinh, 2004, pg. 11). In Eastern Eutophia, nonetheless, parents believed that informing adolescents about sex and teaching them how to protect themselves would make them sexually active (Ayalew, Mengisite & Semahegn, 2014)

It is evident that in Malaysia, sex is still considered a sensitive topic. Due to the sensitivity of this issue as well as the cultural and religious realities of the country, adolescents receive inadequate education, guidance and services on reproductive health. Malaysian adolescents often do not discuss subjects relating to reproductive health and sexuality with anyone except about puberty changes. In other words, topics related to sex and reproductive health is still forbidden or rather a taboo in family. Therefore, there is a deep and unmet need for a reliable and open source of information amongst adolescents.

Despite the sensitivity of such discussion in family, would there be a probability of certain sex and reproductive health-related matters or concerns that Malaysian adolescents discussed with their parents? What were the opinions of these young peoples' about their parents, if ever they communicate with them on issues and concern about sexual and reproductive health talk about issues of their concerns. The findings could also provide crucial information if the intervention strategies should be focused on the adolescents or on educating the parents on better approach to deliver of knowledge and skills on reproductive health matters to adolescents. Counselors and individuals or organizations working with

adolescents could use the information to provide effective treatments, crisis interventions and preventive plans for adolescents so they can cope with the issues and in reducing unwanted consequences that may arise in the future such as teens unwed pregnancy, abortion, contracting and transmitting STDs and HIV/AIDS and other unhealthy habits related to sexual and reproductive health issues.

#### **Objectives:**

- a. To examine the scopes of sex and reproductive health issues that adolescents discuss with their parents.
- b. To explore adolescents' views on communication with parents about sex and reproductive health issues.

#### **Research Questions:**

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the scopes of sex and reproductive health issues that adolescents discuss with their parents?
- What are the adolescents' views on communication with parents about sex and reproductive health issues?

#### **Research Methodology**

##### **Population**

The targeted population the study intends to generalize its findings are Lower Secondary School students in Malaysia. This population included all Form Two students in Lower Secondary Schools in the northern, central, southern, and eastern zones of Peninsular Malaysia and also the Sabah and Sarawak zones. The total enrolment of secondary school students from West and East Malaysia was about 2.3 million and approximately 1.4 million of them were in lower secondary levels (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013).

Multistage sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the participants for this study. The sample was representative in terms of school location (both rural and urban schools), minority and at risk students (remote area, *orang asli*/aborigines and students with special needs).

##### **Determining Adequate Sample Size**

Representative sampling enables the researcher to generalize and make claims of knowledge about the population (Gay & Airasian, 2006). Based on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) if the total population is 1,000,000, hence the sample size recommended is 384 respondents. However due to students' diversity in this country, problem related to form's completion and the return rate, this study has identified randomly 60 schools throughout Malaysia, and has selected 1,500 lower secondary school students who were in Form students One, Two and Three respectively, to participate in this study.

##### **Sampling Procedures and Data Collection**

Quantitative data was collected based on the stratified multistage sampling procedure. This procedure is based on grouping units into subpopulations called strata and using hierarchical structure of units within each stratum (Jain & Hausman, 2006). In stratified sampling, a random sample is drawn from all the strata and the primary goal of stratification is homogeneity. Based on the multistage sampling method, the cluster sampling was done in stages, which involved selection of clusters within clusters (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Neuman, 1997). This sampling procedure in essence is a way to reduce the population by reducing it up to smaller groups, which then can be the subject of random sampling.

In the first stage, the states in Malaysia was classified randomly as the following: Northern states (Perlis, Kedah and Pulau Pinang); Central states (Perak, Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur); Southern states (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor); Eastern states (Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang) and East Malaysian states (Sabah and Sarawak). Data was collected from several zones. In the second stage, the lower secondary schools was assigned according to zones.

In the third stage, 60 schools were randomly drawn from these zones and 2,500 students were identified. Finally 25 boys and 25 girls were selected from each school to participate in this study.

From 1,500 questionnaires posted to respective school through 'snail mail', 1,120 were returned. However, 504 data were analysed for this research purposes due to some inevitable problems like some schools also involved the upper forms student as respondents. The remaining data was utilized for other purposes. The number of schools met the targeted 95% of the confidence interval. Several respondent's demographic variables were identified namely; age, gender, mother tongue, religions, home address, type of home, parents' marital statuses, siblings, stay with siblings, stay with grandparents, marital status, frequency of communicating with mom, frequency of communicating with dad, raised by both parents, closer to either parent.

The response rate is equivalent to 74.7%. According to Diem (2003) 50-60% of response rate is often considered an acceptable return rate for survey research. Babbie (1989) proposed that at least 50% of response rate is adequate, 60% of response rate is considered good and response rate of 70% is considered as very good. This allows the researchers to proceed with the data analysis.

## Methodology

### Instrumentation:

Two instruments have been developed and they are: Highly At-Risk Behaviors Questionnaire (a questionnaire to gauge adolescents highly at-risk behaviors)- HARBQ. For the purpose of this study, only data from two constructs of Parent-Adolescent Communication Patterns were analysed, which were (i) Parent-adolescent discussion on puberty, reproductive, and sexuality issues; and (ii) Adolescents' opinion about Parent-adolescent reproductive health, and sexuality issues communication pattern

### Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted on 81 Form Two respondents from a secondary school in the Klang Valley in November 2012. Eleven items (16 through 26) in Section B (patterns of adolescents-parents communication on puberty, reproductive, and sexuality issues) used a Likert scale 0 (never), 1 (rarely), 2 (occasionally), 3 (quite frequent) and 4 (very frequent); while 16 items (45 through 60) which asked about parent-child reproductive health, and sexuality issues communication pattern used different Likert scales Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) through 5 (strongly agree). The two constructs yielded astounding reliability estimates. Table 1 tabulates the individual reliability estimates of each construct measured with rather high alpha values of 0.955 and 0.919 respectively.

**Table 1: Pilot study (Internal Reliability Estimates of Constructs)**

	Parent-Adolescent Communication Patterns	Items	Reliability Estimates ( $\alpha$ )
1.	Scopes of parent-adolescent discussion on puberty, reproductive, and sexuality issues	16 through 24 (9 items)	.967
2.	Adolescents' views on parent-adolescent reproductive health, and sexuality issues communication pattern	45 through 60 (16 items)	.898

## Data Analysis and Results

Analyses of data for this study are summarized in the table below.

### Table 2: Data Analysis

No.	Research Question	Statistical Analysis
1.	What are the scopes of sex and reproductive health issues that adolescents discuss with their parents?	Descriptive (Means, Standard Deviations), Percentages.
2.	What are adolescents' views on communication with parents about sex and reproductive health issues?	Descriptive (Means, Standard Deviations), Percentages.

### Demographic characteristics of respondents

Forty six percents (n = 232) were males while the rest (n = 272) were females. On the background, majority of the respondents were from urban schools (75.6%) while the remaining were from rural schools (24.4%). As of age, of 504 respondents, eighty one (16.1%) were 13, 193 (38.3%) were 14 and 230 (45.6%) were 15 years old respectively. Table 3 tabulates the age range, gender and school locations of the respondents who completed the entire questionnaire from the two constructs. These breakdowns were basically based on the number of completed items found in the questionnaires.

**Table 3: Respondents Demographic Background**

Age	Location	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
13	Urban	15	19	34
	Rural	15	32	47
	Total	30	51	81
14	Urban	79	57	136
	Rural	15	42	57
	Total	94	99	193
15	Urban	97	114	211
	Rural	11	8	19
	Total	108	122	230

### Findings

Findings of this study are presented according to the research questions as follows:

#### ***RQ1: What are the scopes of reproductive health issues that adolescents discuss with their parents?***

Descriptive statistics namely frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations were employed in making sense of the data analysed. Table 4 tabulates the findings related to parent-child communication on reproductive health.

Nine items on communication issues related to reproductive health were asked in the survey. All issues were hardly discussed by the respondents with their parents. Approximately 76% to 90% of the respondents claimed that they had never and rarely discussed the issue related to (in descending order) pregnancy abstinence (89.9%), abortion (89.4%),



sexual transmitted diseases (88.9%), fertilization (88.8%), prostitution (88.4%), pregnancy (86.7%), followed by discussions on menstruation (78.7%) and sexual relationship (76.0%).

Although more than half of the respondents (43.6%) claimed that they had either never or rarely discussed homosexuality-related issue, 33% reported that they had discussed (quite, and very frequent) with their parents about it. As compared to eight other scopes, for an unclear reason, as shown in the table, less than 80% adolescents responded to item "discussion about homosexuality" These findings showed that of the nine issues adolescents and parents actually had a rather open discussion on topic related to homosexuality.

**Table 4: Scopes of Reproductive Health Issues Adolescents Discussed with Their Parents**

Item	Issues	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Occasionally (%)	Quite frequent	Very frequent	Mean	SD
16	Discussion on pregnancy	384 (76.2)	53 (10.5)	25 (5.0)	9 (1.8)	9 (1.0)	.31	.746
17	Discussion on fertilization	411 (81.5)	37 (7.3)	13 (2.6)	6 (1.2)	4 (0.8)	.20	.630
18	Discussion on sex relationship	334 (66.3)	49 (9.7)	35 (6.9)	18 (3.6)	37 (7.3)	.68	1.165
19	Discussion on menses	347 (68.8)	50 (9.9)	23 (4.6)	19 (3.8)	30 (6.0)	.58	1.569
20	Discussion on sexual transferred diseases	406 (80.6)	42 (8.3)	17 (3.4)	3 (0.6)	5 (1.0)	.22	.641
21	Discussion on pregnancy abstinence	412 (81.7)	41 (8.1)	10 (2.0)	8 (1.6)	2 (0.4)	.20	.594
22	Discussion on abortion	416 (82.5)	35 (6.9)	16 (3.2)	4 (0.8)	3 (0.6)	.19	.592
23	Discussion on prostitution	411 (81.5)	35 (6.9)	11 (2.2)	6 (1.2)	5 (1.0)	.23	.747

24	Discussion on homosexuality	183 (36.3)	37 (7.3)	11 (2.2)	72 (14.3)	94 (18.7)	2.24	2.202
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**RQ2. What are the Adolescents' Views on Communication about Sex and Reproductive Health Issues with Their Parents?**

There were mixed findings with regards to adolescents' views on communication about sex and reproductive health issues with their parents. As demonstrated in the table above, majority of the respondents were in disagreement (strongly disagreed and agree) with six statements. In descending orders: "I will only arouse suspicions on my parents' part if I ask sexual matters to them" (97.4%); "I am too ashamed to discuss sexual matters with my parents" (95.2%); "It is too difficult to find the right time and place to discuss sexual matters with my parents" (88.4%); "My parents are just too busy to discuss sexual matters with me" (87.1%); "My parents would be angry if I try to discuss sexual matters with them" (85.9%); and "My parents would be asking too many personal questions if I try to discuss sexual matters with them" (84.1%). Nonetheless the percentage of respondents that were uncertain of their opinions related to the subject matter range from moderate to moderately high. For example, they were uncertain if their parents would nag in case they try and ask questions related to sex (60.3%) and if their parents were dishonest when discussing about sexual matters with them (49.7%).

Although 49.6% of the respondents were uncertain if there was a need for them to ask any sexual-related questions to their parents as they had knowledge about the issues, about 30% disagree on the statement. On a positive note, some seemed to agree that to certain extent, they need to communicate about this issue with their parents. Despite nearing half of the respondents (45.2%) were uncertain if their parents were not too old to discuss sexual matters with them, 37% reported that they disagreed with the statement. About 44% of the respondents also disagree that their parents have little knowledge about sexual matters and slightly less than that (40.2%) were uncertain about the matter. Like almost equally distributed, 34.3% of the respondents had the opinion that their parents would not turn them down if they asked about the sex-related matters; 34.6% were uncertain and 30.4% agree (strongly agree and agree) their parents would refuse to answer such questions.

The following Table 5 tabulates the findings on adolescents' views on communication about sex and reproductive health issues with parents

**Table 5: Adolescents' Views on Communication about Sex & Reproductive Health Issues with Parents**

Items	Issues	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
45	I am too ashamed to discuss sexual matters with my parents	464 (92.0)	16 (3.2)	7 (1.4)	6 (1.2)	4 (0.8)	1.10	.447
46	My parents refused to answer any sexual related questions	76 (12.9)	126 (21.4)	204 (34.6)	96 (16.3)	83 (14.1)	1.13	.568
47	My parents would nag if I try and ask questions related to sex	61 (10.4)	86 (14.6)	355 (60.3)	51 (8.7)	28 (4.8)	1.47	1.037

48	There is no need for me to ask any sexual related questions to my parents as I already knew about them	91 (15.4)	98 (16.6)	292 (49.6)	63 (10.7)	39 (6.6)	1.14	.550
49	My parents have little knowledge about sexual matters	123 (20.9)	137 (23.3)	237 (40.2)	59 (10)	27 (4.6)	1.25	.539
50	My parents were dishonest when discussing about sexual matters with me	98 (16.6)	78 (13.2)	293 (49.7)	67 (11.4)	43 (7.3)	1.11	.363
51	My parents were too old to discuss sexual matters with me	118 (20)	100 (17)	266 (45.2)	57 (9.7)	36 (6.1)	1.09	.351
52	I will only arouse suspicions on my parents' part if I ask sexual matters to them	482 (95.6)	9 (1.8)	4 (0.8)	0 (0)	2 (0.4)	1.05	.283
53	It is too difficult to find the right time and place to discuss sexual matters with my parents	413 (81.9)	33 (6.5)	30 (6.0)	13 (2.6)	4 (0.8)	1.01	.147

**Table 5 (cont.): Adolescents' Views on Communication about Sex & Reproductive Health Issues with Parents**

Items	Issues	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
54	My parents are just too busy to discuss sexual matters with me	399 (79.2)	45 (8.9)	37 (7.3)	8 (1.9)	2 (0.4)	1.00	.066
55	My parents would be asking too many personal questions if I try to discuss sexual matters with them	392 (77.8)	32 (6.3)	52 (19.3)	15 (3.0)	2 (0.4)	1.00	0.66
56	My parents refused to listen to what I have to say about sex	313 (62.1)	54 (10.7)	81 (16.1)	44 (8.7)	2 (0.4)	1.74	1.059
59	I would be arguing with my parents if we were to discuss about sexual matters	296 (58.1)	74 (14.7)	91 (18.1)	27 (5.4)	2 (0.4)	1.69	.986

60	My parents are too shy to discuss sexual matters with me	298 (59.1)	54 (10.7)	90 (17.9)	47 (9.3)	4 (0.8)	1.79	1.059
61	I find it difficult to be honest with my parents about my behaviour regarding sexual matters	143 (28.4)	26 (5.2)	41 (8.1)	22 (4.4)	1 (0.2)	1.75	1.069
62	My parents would be angry if I try to discuss sexual matters with them	386 (76.6)	47 (9.3)	37 (7.3)	18 (3.6)	1 (0.2)	1.57	0.925

In sum, in many instances, there was a possibility that the respondents were quite positive they could communicate with their parents on matters related to sexual and reproductive health issues.

## Discussion

Two research questions were addressed to accomplish the respective aims of the research. With respect to sex and reproductive health scopes, descriptive analyses of the data in this study consistently revealed that Malaysian adolescents were reserved and hardly discussed culturally forbidden issues such as sex related matters and reproductive issues with their parents. Majority of the respondents in this study did not communicate issues related to fertilization, pregnancy and pregnancy abstinence, sexual relationship, abortion, STD and prostitution with their parents.

Menstruation matters which were supposed to be experienced by all female adolescents when they reach puberty were also not communicated to their parents. These encounters are in agreement with Okwun, Siraj and Okwun (2013) that Malaysian, a rather traditional and conservative nation it is considered impolite to discuss openly topics concerning sexual and reproductive health as they are normally highly sensitive or taboo. In support, literature review and research findings on sexual and reproductive health of Malaysian adolescents agreed that cultural and religious sensitivities impede collection of data on issues as premarital sex, abortion and homosexuality (WHO, 2005 in Temple-Smith, Moore & Josenthal, 2015). Research findings from India (Kotecha, Patel, Baxi, Mazumdar, Misra, Modi & Diwanji, 2009), Vietnam (Trinh, 2004) and Africa (Ayalew, Mengisite & Semahegn, 2014) were in line with the results of the topic under study.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to mention that as compared to other scope of discussion, more than 30% of the adolescents involved in this study reported that they had conversed about homosexuality (quite, and very frequent, respectively) to their parents. Another thought-provoking issue that need to be addressed is “what are the reasons for the little openness of some adolescents to talk about it with their parents?”

“Homosexuality involves not just sexual contact with persons of the same sex but also a romantic feeling, emotional attraction, fantasies, and a sense of identity” (Temple-Smith, Moore & Rosenthal, 2015, pg. 165). Typically, the words “gay” and “lesbian” are used to refer to homosexual men and women (FamilyDoctor.org, 2010).” Unlike other scope of discussion related to adolescents biological development (e.g. mensuration, fertilization), social psychosocial issues involving both genders (e.g. sex relationship, pregnancy abstinence, STD, abortion and prostitution), homosexuality is rather a unusual issue as it involved intimate relationship among the same gender. Several significant news were highlighted by and debated on mass media between 2011 to 2013 about same-sex civil unions or marriages involving international celebrities and Malaysian living abroad in 2011 to 2013 which majority of the people in this country especially among the Muslims observed as a “deviant culture.” One main reason that could probably explain the findings was a contemporary issue that received a wide media coverage at a time when this data was collected in 2013. Regular references related to the matter in the mass media appeared to have left an impression on the public. Thus, the awareness on the subject ran high and could probably have been mentioned in family communication, in direct or indirect manner due to phenomenological factor. Section 69 (d) of the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 states that in Malaysia, “A marriage which takes place after the

appointment date (March 1, 1982) shall be void if the parties are not respectively male and female” (Government of Malaysia, 2006). Since majority of the respondents in this study were Muslim (69.4%), the deterrence of homosexual behaviour is strongly emphasized in the Islamic teachings by Muslim scholars, religious teachers and parents as a strong reminder to the adolescents. It is mentioned repeatedly across the Holy Qur’an for example:

*“And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, “Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people” (Al-Araf, 80-81); and*

*“Do you approach males among the worlds (165). And leave what your Lord has created for you as mates? But you are a people transgressing” (Ash-Shura, 65-166)”.*

In support of the religious belief and culture especially among Muslims, parents have always considered homosexuality to be wrong and alien. In many instances, when a parent hears for the first time that someone that their children is in love with is a gay or lesbian, the feelings can range from bewilderment and confusion to fear and anger.

In addressing the second aim of this study, that is exploring the adolescents’ views on communication about sex and reproductive health issues with parents, findings of this study revealed several exciting discoveries. Majority of the adolescents examined in this study indicated that they are not too ashamed to talk about sexual matters with their parents as they believed that they would not arouse suspicion and made their parents angry. They also purported that it was not too difficult to find the right time and place to talk about it with parents and refuted that their parents were too busy to address their concern about sex and reproductive health –related issues. Apart from that the adolescents also trusted that their parents would not provoke them with personal questions if they tried to ask them about the issues. They were quite positive that parents would not nag or even dishonest in the discussion or too old and have little knowledge about sexual matters.

Hence, is it really a big deal to talk to parents about sex and reproductive health issue? The answer could probably be “no” on the adolescents’ part. These findings perhaps were contributed by the younger generation that got involved in this study. As the age range of the adolescents in this study was between 13 to 15 years old, they fell in the category of Generation Z (Gen-Z also known as iGen or Post-Millennials). Experts differ on when the earliest members of Gen-Z were born. Some claimed that were 1990 to 2001 babies but some researchers start this generation at the mid-1990s or from the mid-2000s to the present day (Horovitz, 2012). On the other hand some researchers addressed those who were born from the early 1980s to the early 2000s as millennial (also known as Millennial Generation).

Whether they are in the demographic cohort of Gen-Z or towards the end of Gen-Y, the more important fact is they were part of a generation that is global, social, visual and technological. As of the present time, they are the most connected, sophisticated and educated ever. Almost all information is accessible to them via one touch of the keypad buttons. They are “digital natives.” Social media platform is one of the ways to communicate with the outside world. This generation is not bothered about privacy and are willing to share intimate details about themselves. This could be a logical explanation that they do not have problems or boundaries to discuss a lot of things concerning their life including sex and reproductive health issues. Firstly, information can easily be obtained on line secondly, physical and virtual peers and friends are always out there to justify their curiosity. Based on this openness, probably they have the willingness to share their private matter even with their parents.

Are parents ready enough to talk about the matters openly? Generation gap and culture could possibly be the limitations of such private communication. Most of the parents of the respondents were of Generation X or baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) who probably delayed parenthood. Researchers and scholars mentioned that from the Baby Boomers to Generation X, each generation has distinctive parenting styles. Baby Boomers engaged in more discussions with their children, and tried to be more nurturing than critical and they exercised parenting like everything else they did, with idealism and righteousness while Generation X exercise protective and hands-on child-raising style and they are highly involved in their children’s lives (Howe, 2014).

Hence, how best can we communicate personal and private issues other than academic achievement, aspirations and educational as well as career pathways? We also put a lot of focus on adolescents’ physical health, emotional well-being and mental health, but unfortunately we ignore sexual health. Despite all the education and knowledge that the parents might have personally acquired and have imparted to their children, the problem of ‘teenagers and sex’ continues to be a

matter of concern for everyone despite the notion that ideal parenting requires that the child be guided and prepared for a mature marital relationship. Regardless of the generation which they belonged to, parents can actually benefit from the multigenerational family teams through open positive communication.

Many factors probably impede parents from discussing sexual matters with their children. Among the factors was lack of sexuality information (Lefkowitz & Stoppa, 2006; German & Constantine, 2010). A review by Ayalew, Mengisite and Semahegn (2014) on studies conducted in developing countries like South America and Africa, gender of parents hinder discussions about sexuality with adolescents where boys might receive little or no information from their parents. Fathers communicate rarely over sexual matters with their children. In Ghana on the other hand, German and Constantine (2010) found that some parents viewed discussions on sexual matters with adolescents as a means that could tempt them to indulge in sexual intercourse. Other parents also viewed adolescents as too young to discuss sexual matters while others view adolescents as knowledgeable since they learn from the peers and media (Lefkowitz, Stoppa, 2006).

Like other developing countries, it is important to suggest that in Malaysia, cultural factors might also repressed parents from discussing sexual matters with teenagers since the sexual topics were considered culturally sensitive. Ayalew, Mengisite and Semahegn (2014) affirmed that parents may also restrained themselves from discussing sexual matters with their children due to cultural taboos and beliefs is in line with the findings of Okwun, Siraj and Okwun (2013). This substantiates several studies where cultural taboos have persisted and inhibit parents from discussing sexual matters with their children and the finding of present study can safely be implicated that communication on sex and reproductive issues between parents and their teenagers is still a taboo.

### **Implications of the study**

This study implicates several important sectors of the Malaysian society; namely parents-teachers' association (PTA / PIBG), NGOs working closely with adolescents, curriculum designers, counsellors and finally policy makers in Malaysia per se. The parents-teachers association is capable of organizing parenting program which focus much on how to communicate with adolescents of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There shouldn't be any generation gap between parents and their children. Issues on pubescence, sexuality matters and reproductive health are important matters that should be handled subtly both by teachers and parents. It should no longer be perceived as a taboo by parents and teachers alike. Curriculum designers on the other hand, must consider real current issues related to adolescents' development and growth when reviewing and restructuring the existing curriculum. Thus, such curriculum may be compatible for the younger generation. Similarly, counsellors need current information from studies and identify and devise suitable interventions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century adolescents. To the current adolescents, actions are faster than words, thus, their extra energy needs to be channelled accordingly. In this context counsellors might select suitable activities which motivate adrenalin rush and are challenging for the younger generation and help them develop the right self-efficacy, self esteem, and self confidence effectively. Perhaps these attributes may prevent them from deviating. Eventually policy makers will make a huge impact on the lives of adolescents by suggesting policies that will ensure the rights of adolescents to education and by funding appropriate programmes for youth sustainability and survivability. In sum, findings from this study may help every section of the society to play their positive roles in ensuring that Malaysian adolescents are progressing positively and not digressing in any manner.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future studies may focus on other issues related to adolescents. Fewer studies in Malaysia have focus on adolescents' career paths and impact of substance abuse on future lives of adolescents, and the impact of "feminine curriculum" on boys or the impact of "masculine curriculum" for girls. Perhaps these areas of studies may be ventured in the future by other researchers.

### **Limitations**

While this study has brought highlighted that the teenagers opted not to discuss sex and reproductive health issues despite promoting positive opinions that it did not really a problem to discuss the issues with their parents, there are limitations. First, as this study utilized cross-sectional design, inferences about causality cannot be explained. Secondly, this study examined the views of the teenagers only and thus, parents' opinion about the issues might be disregarded. Finally, this quantitative study provides a general view and did not look into the length and depth of discussions on difficulty in the means to deliver sexuality messages to adolescents. Furthermore, other factors like parenting and family communication style were not considered as factors that impact sexuality communication. However, the topic under study has shed light on the views of the teenagers as well as constrictions to parent-teenagers communication about sexual and reproductive health matters.

## Conclusions

Majority of the adolescents, i.e. approximately 76% to 90% the respondents in this study claimed that they did not discuss sexual matters with their parents; hence they continue to lack information from parents which otherwise could have endowed them to discuss openly about their sexual and reproductive health needs. The adolescents' viewed that there was no problem to discuss about the sexual and reproductive health issues with their parents but still they were reluctant or did not discuss about it openly with them. The young people participated in this study were born in visual and technological era and most connected to social media. Hence, whether or not they communicate the issues with their parents probably is not that important to them as they can read them online from various websites. On parents' part, their limited access to sexuality information which could perpetuate beliefs, taboos and negative attitudes among themselves could hinder them from discussing sexual matters with adolescents. Parents might think that searching for relevant information related to sexual and reproductive health is not the main priority as they probably perceive that "the right time will come" as their children would be taught at school by science and religious education teachers. Given guidance on sex education principles, parents/caretakers could initiate or improve discussions about sexual matters with adolescents.

In sum, there is an immense need that modular-based programs are initiated by government particularly the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Malaysia in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations (NGO) to provide trainings to increase knowledge and skills of the parents and care providers with the 'challenging' tasks of providing adolescents sexual and reproductive health information with an open, friendly and non-threatening approaches to promote healthy sexual and reproductive lives.

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The Malay Mail Tuesday January 14, 2014: Schools to teach teen pregnancy

## Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes Towards Studying Chemistry

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### Abstract

*This research aims at investigating the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards chemistry. A researcher used "Chemistry Attitudes and Experiences Questionnaire" (CAEQ) to measure students' experiences and attitude towards chemistry, it has good indices for validity and reliability. This questionnaire has three subcategories, (1) attitudes towards lecturer classes in chemistry, (2) attitudes towards tutorial classes in chemistry and (3) attitudes towards laboratory classes in chemistry. The participants are 70 students (85.7% female and 14.3% male) from the first year students in faculty of science and mathematics (FSM) - UPSI. The findings showed that, the students have moderate attitudes towards lecture class in chemistry, tutorials classes in chemistry and laboratory classes in chemistry. Although there is no significant differences found related to the students' gender or race (except for attitudes and tutoring) but there is an interaction between gender and race concerning the pre-service teachers' attitude toward chemistry.*

**Keywords:** Pre-service teachers, science education, Chemistry, university, attitudes, laboratory, tutorial.

### Introduction

Students' attitudes is an important factor that affect their performance in school. Students' attitudes may, for examine, influence their motivation to pursue study in a specific subject or persist in their effects to attain subject matter mastery (Soediono, 1989). Investigating students' attitudes towards studying science has been a substantive feature of the science education research in last four decades (Osborne, Simon, & Collins, 2003; Can & BOZ, 2012). Promoting of students attitudes is vital in education and promoting positive attitudes has been an important goal for educators (Sundre, Barry, Gynnild, & Ostgard, 2012). Therefore, science education should pay a lot of attention for improving students' interest in and attitudes toward science (van Aalderen-Smeets, Walma van der Molen Juliette, & Asma Lieke, 2012).

Attitudes, one of the constructs of the affective domain. The term "attitude" is sometimes mentioned in course design descriptions along with learning objectives associated with "knowledge" and "skills." (Sundre et al., 2012). Although, many studies provide uncertain definitions of attitude because attitude is a multi-faceted construct, or do not distinguish between attitudes toward science and other related concepts (e.g., opinions or motivation) (van Aalderen-Smeets et al., 2012). In other words, the term "attitude" is often confused with other terms such as value, belief, interest and opinion (Sundre et al., 2012). Different researchers define attitude differently (Anwer, Iqbal, & Harrison, 2012). Attitude could be a way of looking at things (Khan & Ali, 2012; Mokoro, Wambiya, & Aloka, 2014), it is also an individual mental processes which determine both the actual and potential responses of each person in the social world (Akbulut & Karakus, 2011). Attitude characterized by: (Cheung, 2011) (van Aalderen-Smeets et al., 2012)

- It is a hypothetical construct used by social psychologists to understand and predict the behaviors of humans,
- It indicates an individual like and dislike towards an item.
- It may positive, negative or neutral.
- Attitudes are quite stable (once formed they are hard to change).
- They are highly dependent upon context.
- It is a construct consisting of multiple dimensions and subcomponents.

As Pajares (1992) describes, "When clusters of beliefs are organized around an object or situation and predisposed to action, this holistic organization becomes an attitude". Like attitude, the definition of attitude towards science has also been an issue among the researchers. According to some of them, attitude consists of different sub-constructs that ultimately give rise to a person's attitude towards science. Researchers made a distinction between attitude towards science and

scientific attitude. According to them, attitude towards science is linked with the views and images that the individual develops about science as a result of interaction with different situations, while the term scientific attitude is linked to the ways of thinking or scientific method, which covers the skills and is related to the undertaking of practical work (Anwer et al., 2012).

Research clearly shows that feelings of enjoyment and interest in science combined with success in junior science courses are likely to lead to a positive commitment toward science that is enduring (Osborne et al., 2003). Many studies pointed out the importance of attitudes towards performance. Some of them found that students attitude towards chemistry have significant direct effect on students' achievement in the subject (Adesoji, 2008); others mentioned that attitude is one of the factors that determines achievement and enrolment of students in science subjects (Afolabi, 2009). Adesoji (2008) indicated that:

- Students' attitude and interests could play substantial role among pupils studying science.
- Students' positive attitudes to science correlate highly with their science achievement.
- Using integrated science environmental activities improved high school students' attitudes towards and awareness about the environment.

However, students' affect toward science becomes increasingly less positive, as science attitudes scores have been observed to decline as students advance through the grade levels (Soediono, 1989). The reviewed studies showed the absence of consensus between the psychologists about the casual relationship between achievement and attitude. Some of them clarify that there is a strong relationship between attitude and achievement; and that it is possible to predict achievement from attitude scores (Adesoji, 2008).

Walma, Molen, & Aalderen-smeets (2013) mentioned that (pre-service) primary teachers' attitudes towards science are mostly negative, and that "primary teachers share a number of characteristics that impede the stimulation of science learning and of positive attitudes towards science among their pupils". For example, a meta-analysis of research concluded that the correlation between attitude toward science and achievement is 0.50 for boys and 0.55 for girls, indicating that attitude can account for 25–30% of the variance in achievement. However, not all previous studies documented that girls had a more positive attitude toward the study of chemistry than boys (Cheung, 2009). Others mentioned that there is some disagreement about the nature of the causal link and whether it is attitude or achievement that is the dependent variable. The essential premise permeating much of the research is that attitude precedes behaviour (Osborne et al., 2003).

Many factors could contribute to student's attitude towards studying science, such factors include teaching methods, teacher attitude, influence of parents, gender, age, cognitive style of pupils, career interest, and social implication of chemistry and achievement (Adesoji, 2008). The attitude literature includes various studies that investigated gender differences in students' attitudes toward chemistry courses. Some of the studies reported that female students' attitudes toward chemistry lessons are higher than male students. Some of the studies, on the other hand, found the opposite situation in their cases; that is, boys have more positive attitudes to chemistry lessons than girls (Ilgaz & Aricak, 2008). In her study, (Cheung, 2009) found that male students in secondary 4 and 5 liked chemistry theory lessons more than their female counterparts. However, male students' liking for chemistry laboratory work declined when they progressed from Secondary 4 to Secondary 7; no such a significant decline in attitude toward chemistry laboratory work was found in females. Overall, both males and females were just marginally positive about chemistry lessons during the years of secondary schooling.

Research suggests that the main factor determining attitudes towards school science is the quality of the educational experience provided by the teacher. Part of the explanation for student attitudes toward school science may be a shortage of well-qualified science teachers capable of providing a positive experience (Osborne et al., 2003). Teachers as basic tool in curriculum implementation remain a very crucial factor that influence students' experience and achievement, and continuing educational development. On the other hand, teachers' personality and attitude towards their teaching subjects as factors contributing to poor performance in science subjects Afolabi (2009).

According to van Aalderen-Smeets et al. (2012) many studies have shown generally negative attitudes toward science among preservice and in-service primary school teachers. The negative attitudes come from the teachers' negative experiences that they had during their own primary and secondary education, and these attitudes persist during their training. Primary schools teachers play a crucial role in enhancing the positive attitudes of students towards science (Walma

et al., 2013). Moreover, there is a clear evidence from the previous studies that the primary science teachers with less positive attitudes share a number of characteristics, such that: (van Aalderen-Smeets et al., 2012)

- They have lower confidence and self-efficacy beliefs about teaching science.
- They spend less time discussing and teaching these topics in their classrooms.
- They rely more on standardized methods and top-down instruction.
- They are less able to stimulate the attitudes of their students.

Obviously, the development of students' positive attitudes regarding chemistry as a school subject is one of the major responsibilities of every chemistry teacher (Cheung, 2011), however a major problem remains that school teachers are not adequately trained to teach science (van Aalderen-Smeets et al., 2012). Professional development should therefore pay explicit attention for improving the attitude of pre-service science teachers towards science (Walma et al., 2013). The content courses and pedagogical content courses have a significant role to develop positive attitudes towards teaching profession. If pre-service teachers develop a positive attitude towards their profession, they will develop creative thinking, motivate their students more easily, and adapt their verbal and non-verbal messages to their students (Akbulut & Karakus, 2011).

Therefore, improving science teachers' attitudes towards science is one of the major challenges in today's science education (Walma et al., 2013) and teacher education have a major role to form the pre-service teachers' thinking towards teaching profession. This research investigates the attitudes of pre-services teachers towards chemistry that are; pre-services teachers' attitudes towards lecturer class in chemistry, pre-services teachers' attitudes towards tutorial classes in chemistry and pre-services teachers' attitudes towards laboratory classes in chemistry. These findings to evaluate learning experiences of chemistry, along with their attitude-towards-chemistry in first year in lecturer classes, tutorial classes and laboratory classes.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards studying Chemistry?
  - What are the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards lecturer classes in Chemistry?
  - What are the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards tutorial classes in Chemistry?
  - What are the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards laboratory classes in Chemistry?
2. Are there any differences in pre-services teachers' attitudes in Chemistry according to their gender and race?

## AIMS

This study aims to study the (1) pre-services teachers' attitudes towards lecturer classes in chemistry, (2) pre-services teachers' attitudes towards tutorial classes in chemistry (3) pre-services teacher teachers' towards laboratory classes in chemistry and (4) to test the differences in pre-services teachers' attitudes in Chemistry according to their gender and race.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Sample

The sample in this study was randomly selected from first year chemistry students in FSM-UPSI, those students studying to be science teachers in the future. Table 1 below shows the sample for this research. The participants' sample consisted of 70 pre-service teachers. There are 10 male and 60 females. On the other hand, there are 34 Malay, 23 Chinese and 13 Indian. In other words, the majority of the sample are female 85.7% (51.7% of them are Malay, 33% Chinese and 15% are Indian) while Male students formed 14.3% with equal percent within race variable.

### **The Instrument**

The survey is aimed to collect data about: (1) pre-services teacher attitudes towards lectures classes in chemistry, (2) pre-services teacher attitudes towards tutorial classes in chemistry and (3) pre-services teacher attitudes towards laboratory classes in chemistry. The survey instrument used in this study was developed based on literature review. It is not a test instrument but it is a descriptive one.

To measure what influence students learning experiences might have upon their attitude towards chemistry, Dalgety, Coll, & Jones (2003) developed the Chemistry Attitudes and Experiences Questionnaire (CAEQ). The final version of the CAEQ consists of three categories scales; experiences during first year chemistry class about class lecture, class tutorial and class laboratory. The attitude-toward-chemistry scale contains a total of 35 questions, across three subscales: 10 questions of experiences in lecturer classes, 10 questions in tutorial classes and 15 questions about experiences in laboratory classes. This scale have 5 point Likert with response options: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree.

### **The Validity**

One concept of validity is how faithfully the set of items in an instrument correspond to that attribute in which the researchers are interested. To enhance clarity and conciseness, the English teachers made suggestions about the terminologies of some items and modified them into Malay language according to the sample characteristics. Then, a Malay Language teacher from each school retranslates the statements into English. Both the translated and original piece is examined. Both the translated and original instrument are the same.

### **The Reliability**

The Cronbach's alpha, and split –half procedures were used to obtain the reliability estimate of the instrument, the results were summarized in Table 2. George and Mallery (2003) proposed that Cronbach's alpha of 0.7–0.8 is acceptable; 0.8–0.9 is good; and  $\geq 0.9$  is excellent. . The results in Table 4 indicate that an alpha coefficient and split–half reliability test values are more than 0.8 for all the instrument's subcategories, they are higher than the values suggested by George and Mallery (2003). Therefore, the reliability of the instrument were considered to be acceptable. It was clear that the instrument is reliable and could be used to measure the pre-services teachers attitudes in chemistry about the teachers' experiences in first year in chemistry.

## **RESULTS**

### **What is the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards studying Chemistry?**

Basic descriptive statistics about the data collected for this research are summarized in Table 3. From the descriptive data in the Table 3, the pre service teachers have positive attitudes toward chemistry ( $M=153.9$ ,  $SD=13.07$ ). The other results showed that the student teachers' have a positive attitudes of learning experience in lecture class in chemistry ( $M=37.829$ ,  $SD=4.745$ ), a positive attitudes of learning experience in tutorials classes in chemistry ( $M=38.014$ ,  $SD=4.67$ ) and of learning experience in laboratory classes in chemistry ( $M=57.129$ ,  $SD=5.71$ ). The percent of the means range from 73 to 76%.

### **What is the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards lecturer classes in Chemistry?**

Results in table 4 showed that the first two items are respectively (The lecture material is relevant to the course objectives, and Lecturer explain the problem clearly to me), all of those get a percent of mean more than 80%. On the other hand the last three items are respectively (Notes is interesting lecture, Chemistry lecturer has made me feel that I have the ability to continue learning in science, and It is easy to find lecturers to discuss issues).

### **What is the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards tutorial classes in Chemistry?**

Results in table 5 showed that the first three items are respectively (The material presented in the tutorial is useful, Problem tutorial covers all parts of the course, and the material in this tutorial was presented in an interesting way), all of those get a percent of mean more than 85%. On the other hand the last three items are respectively (My tutor interested to know in my progress, my tutor encouraged me to take up chemistry papers, and it is easy to find a tutor to discuss issues) that gain a percent around 70%.

### **What is the pre-services teachers' attitudes towards laboratory classes in Chemistry?**

Results in table 6 showed that the best item is (the experiment is interesting) with 83.4%, and the last item is (When writing in a book of practical experiments) that gain a percent around 67%. The other items are between 83-67%.

### **Are there any differences in pre-services teachers' attitudes in Chemistry according to their gender and race?**

Students' attitudes towards chemistry were subjected to a two-way analysis of variance having two levels of gender (male/female) and three levels of race (Malay/Chinese/Indian). Table 7 shows the main ANOVA summary results. The main effect of gender was not significant,  $F(1, 64) = 0.514$ ,  $p = .476$ . While, the main effect of race was significant,  $F(2, 64) = 4.204$ ,  $p = .019$ . However, the interaction effect was significant,  $F(2, 64) = 14.111$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . The plot of the mean "attitudes towards chemistry" score for each combination of groups of "Gender" and "Race" is plotted in a line graph, as shown in figure 1, and the results of the Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test) for Race presented in table 8.

Figure 1 shows that gender type effects the Chinese and Indian students' attitudes towards chemistry. The Chinese males have more positive attitudes than the females Chinese students. On the opposite, the Indian female students have more positive attitudes than the Indian male students have. The results of the Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test) presented in table 8 showed that there is a significant differences between the Malay and Chinese students, the Malay students have more positive attitudes towards studying chemistry than the Chinese students have.

## **1. LECTURES CLASS IN CHEMISTRY**

Table 9 shows the main ANOVA summary results. The main effect of gender was not significant,  $F(1, 64) = 0.651$ ,  $p = .423$  and the main effect of race was not significant also,  $F(2, 64) = 2.078$ ,  $p = .133$ . However, the interaction effect was significant,  $F(2, 64) = 9.734$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . The plot of the mean "attitudes towards lectures class in chemistry" score for each combination of groups of "Gender" and "Race" is plotted in a line graph, as shown in figure 2. From figure 2 it is clear that gender type effects Malay, Chinese and Indian students' attitudes towards lectures class in chemistry. The Malay and Indian females have more positive attitudes than the males. On the opposite, the Chinese male students have more positive attitudes than the Chinese female have.

## 2. TUTORIAL CLASS IN CHEMISTRY

Table 10 shows the main ANOVA summary results. The main effect of gender was not significant,  $F(1, 64) = 1.337, p = .252$ . While, the main effect of race was significant,  $F(2, 64) = 4.304, p = .018$ . However, the interaction effect was significant,  $F(2, 64) = 8.603, p = 0.001$ . The plot of the mean "attitudes towards tutorial class in chemistry" score for each combination of groups of "Gender" and "Race" is plotted in a line graph, as shown in figure 3, and the results of the Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test) for Race presented in table 11. Figure 3 shows that gender type effects the Chinese and Indian students' attitudes towards tutorial class in chemistry. The Chinese males have more positive attitudes than the females have. On the opposite, the Indian female students have more positive attitudes than the Indian male students have.

The results of the Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test) presented in table 11 showed that there is a significant differences between Malay students on one hand and students on the other hand, Malay have more positive attitudes towards tutorial class in chemistry than the Chinese and Indian students have.

## 3. LABORATORY CLASS IN CHEMISTRY

Table 12 shows the main ANOVA summary results of students' attitudes towards laboratory class in chemistry. The main effect of gender was not significant,  $F(1, 64) = 1.584, p = .213$  and the main effect of race was not significant also,  $F(2, 64) = 2.523, p = .088$ . However, the interaction effect was significant,  $F(2, 64) = 10.437, p = 0.001$ . The plot of the mean "attitudes towards laboratory class in chemistry" score for each combination of groups of "Gender" and "Race" is plotted in a line graph, as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4 shows that gender type effects the Chinese and Indian students' attitudes towards laboratory class in chemistry. The Chinese males have more positive attitudes than the females Chinese students. On the opposite, the Indian female students have more positive attitudes than the Indian male students do have.

## Summary

This research aims at investigating the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards chemistry. The results reveal that pre service teachers have positive attitudes toward chemistry in general. Results showed that the most important items are (The lecture material is relevant to the course objectives, Lecturer explain the problem clearly to me, The material presented in the tutorial is useful, Problem tutorial covers all parts of the course, the material in this tutorial was presented in an interesting way, and the experiment is interesting).

Considering the different in pre-services teachers' attitudes in Chemistry according to their gender and race, the researcher used 2-way analysis of variance to compare the attitude toward chemistry according to the students' race (Malay, Chinese, and Indian). The main effect of gender was not significant, this showed that there are no any differences in pre-service teachers' attitude toward chemistry according to gender, while, the main effect of race was significant in "attitude towards chemistry in general" and mean "attitudes towards lectures class in chemistry". The results of the Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test) showed that the Malay students have more positive attitudes towards studying chemistry than the Chinese students do, and Malay have more positive attitudes towards tutorial class in chemistry than the Chinese and Indian students have.

On the other hand, the interaction effect was significant in all the comparisons, the results showed that gender and race type effects the Chinese and Indian students' attitudes towards chemistry. The Chinese males have more positive attitudes than the females Chinese students. On the opposite, the Indian female students have more positive attitudes than the Indian male students have. Similarly, attitudes towards lectures class in chemistry. The Malay and Indian females have more positive attitudes than the males. On the opposite, the Chinese male students have more positive attitudes than the Chinese female have. Regarding the attitudes towards tutorial class in chemistry, the Malay and Indian females have more positive attitudes than the males. On the opposite, the Chinese male students have more positive attitudes than the Chinese

female have. Results also shows that the Chinese males have more positive attitudes than the females Chinese students. On the opposite, the Indian female students have more positive attitudes towards laboratory class in chemistry than the Indian male students do.

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**Table 1: The sample**

	Female		Male		Total	
	Count	% within	Count	% within	Count	% within
Malay	31	51.7%	3	30.0%	34	48.6%
Chinese	20	33.3%	3	30.0%	23	32.9%
Indian	9	15.0%	4	40.0%	13	18.6%
Total	60	85.7%	10	14.3%	70	100.0%

**Table 2: Results of Reliability Tests**

The coefficient	Cronbach's alpha	split –half
<i>Total Lectures Class</i>	.841	.835
<i>Total Tutorial Class</i>	.823	.821
<i>Total Laboratory Class</i>	.867	.866

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistic for Pre-Services Teachers Attitudes towards Chemistry**

	Mean	%	Std. Deviation
LECTURES	37.829	75.7%	4.74562
TUTORIAL	38.014	76.0%	4.67337
LABORATORY	57.129	76.2%	5.71020
CLASS IN CHEMISTRY	132.971	76.0%	13.07722

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistic for Pre-Services Teacher Attitudes towards lecturer**

	Mean		Std. Deviation
1. The lecture material is relevant to the course objectives	4.157	83.1%	.500
2. Lecturer I took out about my progress in chemistry	3.929	78.6%	.598
3. The concepts introduced in the lecture materials which have been explained clearly	3.629	72.6%	.641
4. Lecturer me encouraged me to take up chemistry courses	3.729	74.6%	.962
5. Notes is interesting lecture	3.443	68.9%	1.002

6.	Chemistry lecturer has made me feel that I have the ability to continue learning in science	3.543	70.9%	.716
7.	Notes lecture presented clearly	3.757	75.1%	.806
8.	It is easy to find lecturers to discuss issues	3.643	72.9%	.799
9.	Teaching was presented in an interesting way	3.814	76.3%	.597
10.	Lecturer explain the problem clearly to me	4.186	83.7%	.952

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistic for Pre-Services Teacher Attitudes towards tutorial**

	Mean		Std. Deviation	
11.	Problem tutorial covers all parts of the course	4.000	80.0%	.511
12.	My tutor interested to know in my progress in chemistry	3.529	70.6%	.737
13.	Problems in the tutorial sheet relevant to the course	3.686	73.7%	.894
14.	My Tutor encouraged me to take up chemistry papers	3.486	69.7%	.864
15.	Materials tutorial helped me understand college courses	3.986	79.7%	.732
16.	Tutor chemistry has made me think has the ability to continue learning in science	3.857	77.1%	.856
17.	The material presented in the tutorial is useful	4.100	82.0%	.617
18.	The material in this tutorial was presented in an interesting way	4.000	80.0%	.417
19.	It is easy to find a tutor to discuss issues	3.471	69.4%	.696
20.	Tutor explain the problem clearly to me	3.900	78.0%	.640

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistic for Pre-Services Teacher Attitudes towards laboratory**

	Mean		Std. Deviation	
21.	Manual instructions contained in the laboratory is easy to follow	3.914	78.3%	.608
22.	When writing in a book of practical experiments, relationship between the data and the results are clear	3.371	67.4%	.663
23.	Demonstrator interested in my progress in chemistry	3.686	73.7%	.956

24.	Practical experiments related to college	3.971	79.4%	.481
25.	What is required in practical writing is clear	3.514	70.3%	.989
26.	Laboratory assistant encouraged me to take up chemistry papers	3.929	78.6%	.573
27.	The theory behind the experiment clearly presented	3.657	73.1%	.883
28.	The purpose of the calculations required to write a practical book is clear	3.771	75.4%	.745
29.	Chemical Laboratory Assistant has made me feel that I have the ability to continue learning in science	3.886	77.7%	.498
30.	Laboratory manual, experimental techniques and practical writing are interrelated	3.886	77.7%	.526
31.	What is required in practical questions while writing the book is clear	3.971	79.4%	.416
32.	It is easy to find a lab assistant to discuss the issue with me	3.743	74.9%	.716
33.	The experiment is interesting	4.171	83.4%	.701
34.	The amount of work required when writing a practical book is appropriate for the number of votes	3.986	79.7%	.551
35.	Laboratory assistant explained the problem clearly to me	3.671	73.4%	.557

**Table 7: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4455.896 <sup>a</sup>	5	891.179	7.766	.000
Intercept	582200.110	1	582200.110	5073.607	.000
GENDER	59.036	1	59.036	.514	.476
RACE	964.759	2	482.379	4.204	.019
GENDER * RACE	3238.470	2	1619.235	14.111	.000
Error	7344.047	64	114.751		
Total	1249498.000	70			
Corrected Total	11799.943	69			

a. R Squared = .378 (Adjusted R Squared = .329)

**Table 8: Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test)**

(I) ethnic	(J) ethnic	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Malay	Chinese	8.7558*	2.89209	.014	1.5077	16.0038
	INDIAN	6.9932	3.49314	.143	-1.7612	15.7476
Chinese	Malay	-8.7558*	2.89209	.014	-16.0038	-1.5077
	INDIAN	-1.7625	3.71701	.894	-11.0780	7.5529
Indian	Malay	-6.9932	3.49314	.143	-15.7476	1.7612
	CHINESE	1.7625	3.71701	.894	-7.5529	11.0780

**Table 9: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	488.502 <sup>a</sup>	5	97.700	5.869	.000
Intercept	45189.921	1	45189.921	2714.514	.000
GENDER	10.846	1	10.846	.651	.423
RACE	69.200	2	34.600	2.078	.133
GENDER * RACE	324.110	2	162.055	9.734	.000
Error	1065.441	64	16.648		
Total	101724.000	70			
Corrected Total	1553.943	69			

a. R Squared = .314 (Adjusted R Squared = .261)

**Table 10: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	436.050 <sup>a</sup>	5	87.210	5.212	.000
Intercept	48078.059	1	48078.059	2873.185	.000
GENDER	22.378	1	22.378	1.337	.252

RACE	144.033	2	72.016	4.304	.018
GENDER * RACE	287.908	2	143.954	8.603	.000
Error	1070.936	64	16.733		
Total	102663.000	70			
Corrected Total	1506.986	69			

a. R Squared = .289 (Adjusted R Squared = .234)

**Table 11: Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe test)**

(I) ethnic	(J) ethnic	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Malay	Chinese	2.6292*	1.10440	.020	4.229	4.8354
	INDIAN	2.8733*	1.33392	.035	.2085	5.5381
Chinese	Malay	-2.6292*	1.10440	.020	-4.8354	-.4229
	INDIAN	.2441	1.41941	.864	-2.5914	3.0797
Indian	Malay	-2.8733*	1.33392	.035	-5.5381	-.2085
	CHINESE	-.2441	1.41941	.864	-3.0797	2.5914

**Table 12: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	673.068 <sup>a</sup>	5	134.614	5.464	.000
Intercept	109676.270	1	109676.270	4451.671	.000
GENDER	39.014	1	39.014	1.584	.213
RACE	124.321	2	62.160	2.523	.088
GENDER * RACE	514.260	2	257.130	10.437	.000
Error	1576.774	64	24.637		
Total	230707.000	70			
Corrected Total	2249.843	69			

a. R Squared = .299 (Adjusted R Squared = .244)

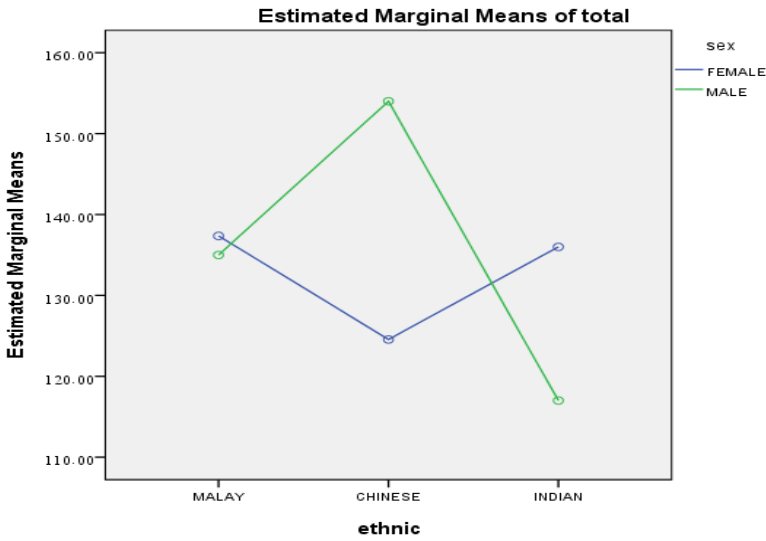


Figure 1. Effects of gender and race on attitudes towards chemistry

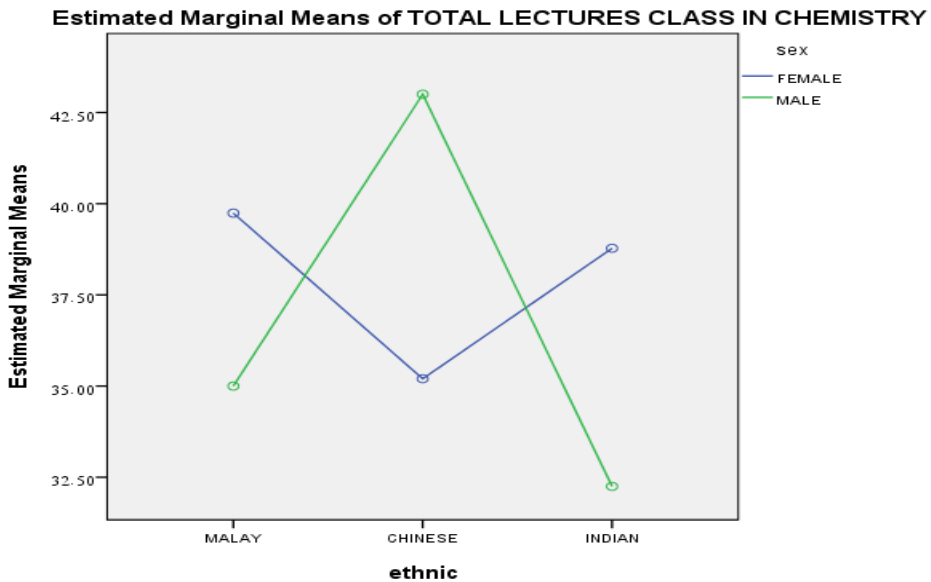


Figure 2. Effects of gender and race on attitudes towards

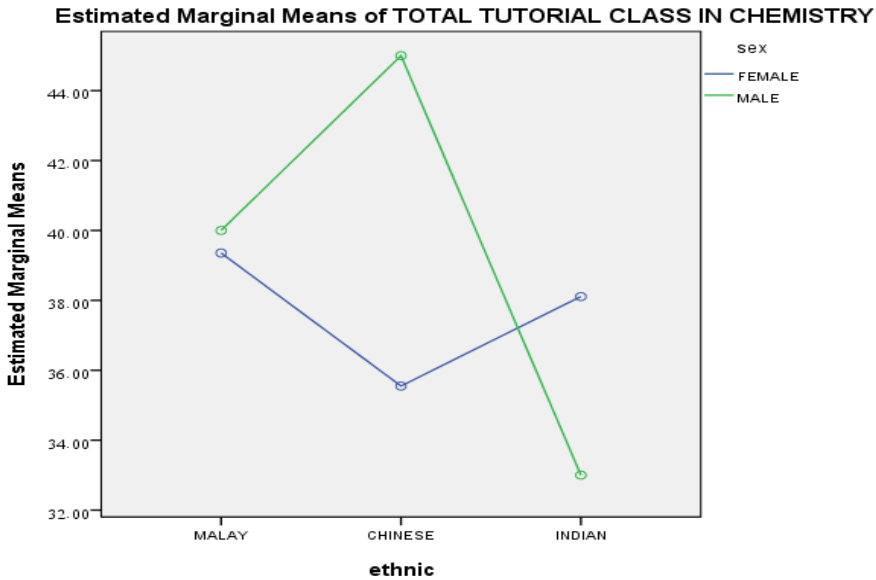


Figure3. Effects of gender and race on attitudes towards chemistry



Figure 4. Effects of gender and race on attitudes towards chemistry

## Arabic Language Influence on the Iraqi EFL Tertiary Learners' Use of Grammatical Cohesive Devices in their Argumentative Essays

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### Abstract

This study intends to shed light on the significant role that language rhetoric and cultural differences play in affecting the EFL learners' written discourse. Thus, it investigates the effects of Arabic language as a mother tongue (L1) on the use of English grammatical cohesive devices in the argumentative essays of 20 Iraqi EFL tertiary students in their third year study in English Department, College of Arts, Al Iraqiya University. By identifying Arabic rhetoric and the cultural differences that are involved in the students' use of grammatical cohesion, it will be able to determine which types of grammatical cohesion are actually influenced and which are more affected. In addition, it intends to identify the effects of Arabic as L1 through exploring the Iraqi students' appropriate and inappropriate uses of English grammatical cohesive devices in their argumentative essays. To achieve this, it employed two writing tests: pre and post as well as a background educational questionnaire. First, a background educational questionnaire was administered on 90 students. It included some questions which asked the participants about the usefulness and role of Arabic writing in general and grammatical cohesion in specific in their English essays. Next, a diagnostic test, including two topics, was given to the participants and they were asked to choose one of them in order to write an argumentative essay. The purpose of this test was to elicit information about the students' ability to use appropriately the different types of grammatical cohesion in their argumentative essays. For post- pre-test, the participants received a training in cohesion and coherence similar to CATW approach in which they were trained, in a whole semester, on way to read a passage critically and make a paraphrase and then write an argumentative essay based on this paraphrasing. At the end of the semester, they sat for a final test in which two reading passages were given to the students and they were asked to write an argumentative based on them. The findings of the two writing tests, based on a qualitative content analysis, indicated that the participants, in the final test, used more appropriate uses of the four types of grammatical devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunctions). Based on a contrastive analysis, the results also revealed that the influence of Arabic in the pre test was very clear. In contrast, the influence of L1 in the final test was considerably less than that in the pre-test. Additionally, the results of the questionnaire showed that Arabic writing and its grammatical cohesive devices have a big influence on the use of English grammatical devices in the students' argumentative essays.

**Keywords:** grammatical cohesion, reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, Arabic rhetoric

### 1. Introduction

Good writing is usually characterized by the use of certain grammatical and lexical features including the use of syntactic structure, various cohesive devices; grammatical and lexical, coherence, synonymy, etc., all of which could exhibit a great influence on the reader's understanding of a text. All these implements are significant for students to have a strong command of language and an understanding of text dynamics if they plan to become good and strong writers. In this respect, it could be argued that these can be challenging aims for any writer and accordingly, they cause serious problems for EFL/ESL writers. In particular, Iraqi EFL students have difficulty precisely judging their writing mistakes and resolving fuzzy writing problems. When they produce their essays, grammatical, lexical and organizational aspects are noticed by their instructors. These aspects are only addressed in general terms without identifying the real reasons the cause them.

It is argued that a readable text needs strong organization, the use of different cohesive devices for the purpose of relating the ideas of text together in a cohesive way. If sentences are not woven together, and if sentences are not well-controlled with effective variety of structure (CUNY Assessment Test in Writing [CATW], 2010), within an obvious organized text, the writer will not express his/her ideas clearly.



This paper concentrates on the influence of Arabic language rhetoric on the use of grammatical cohesive devices in Iraqi EFL tertiary students' argumentative writings. Thus, much will be paid about the effects of cultural differences as well as the Arabic grammatical cohesive devices used in Arabic on the students' use of English devices in their writings. Using Hyland's (2000) model of contrastive rhetoric, the study intends to shed light on how grammatical cohesion used in Arabic language could interfere with the use of their English equivalents.

A number of researchers and scholars investigated the use of cohesive devices in EFL context and in Arab speaking students' writings and found out that interlingual differences between Arabic and English caused big problems for the students in their use of cohesion and coherence. According to Hinkel (2004), writing in a foreign language can cause a number of difficulties for EFL students to be aware and able to use the conventions and features of academic writing. In connection with Arabic EFL context Khalil's (1989) study was one of the important researches which clarified the overuse certain types of lexical cohesive devices that Arab learners use in their compositions. In contrast, they underuse the other types of lexical and grammatical links because of the influence of interlingual interference. Rabab'ah (2003) and Al-Khnesheh (2010) argue that essay writing is considered a difficult task for non-native students, especially for Arab learners because of interlingual differences between Arabic and English in addition to the effects of using translation in difficult words rather than teaching vocabulary in context.

What makes the present study differs from other studies is that its main concern is directed to explore how L1 rhetoric could affect the appropriate use of grammatical cohesive devices in the Iraqi students' argumentative writings.

#### **a. Arabic Language Rhetoric**

The study of language rhetoric is dated back to the late 1960s where Kaplan (1966) 600 expository texts written by different language groups. This work is generally considered as the beginning at a new stage of ESL writing research since it was the first major attempt to study different rhetorical patterns in the writing of L2 students from different L1 groups (Connor 1996). This type of research has become to be known as contrastive rhetoric. Contrastive rhetoric studies have investigated L1-L2 transfer by examining EFL/ESL essays only which are based on cultural rhetoric conventions. According to Kaplan and Grabe (1996), contrastive rhetoric later draw on discourse analysis and text linguistic research to find out how students' writing could be analyzed at the discourse level as a means of understanding the different patterns of organizational preferences in students' writing.

The present study, following Hyland's (2005) model of contrastive rhetoric and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive devices, tries to identify the influence of Arabic rhetoric on the appropriate use of grammatical cohesive devices in the Iraqi students' argumentative essays. Specifically, it makes a contrastive analysis of the similarities and differences between Arabic and English in the use of grammatical cohesion in writing.

More specifically, Iraqi Arabic written discourse is influenced by the Arabic culture where the Arabic language and Islam is the essence of Iraqi culture. Arabic language is the medium of instruction at all levels. What distinguishes Arabic from English is that, as Connor and Kaplan (1987) argues, Arabic is very close to highly poetic language. This is significant in Iraqi and Arab culture because the written language and written rhetorical strategies used are looked at as means for retaining the audience attention as well making the message agreeable to the audience (Zaharna 1995: 244). Therefore, the role of the listener in Arabic language is heightened. Besides, as Zaharna (1995) points out, the burden of meaning, in western rhetoric, falls on the person delivering the message. On the other hand, Arabic prefers to put more emphasis on the context of the message than the message itself.

Accordingly, it is important stating that, though the features used in an Arabic text are almost the same as those used in English, the way of using them is obviously different. For instance, the conjunction "and" "wa" in Arabic is used in written discourse to stand for more than one relation. It is normally used as an additive conjunction to connect two similar sentences or phrases. It is also used as a temporary conjunction to mean "then", and sometimes used a contrastive conjunction meaning "but" or "however" and so on. An explanation of the Arabic grammatical cohesive devices will be offered in the section of data analysis.

## 1.2 Purpose of the present Study

Because of the great influence that L1 rhetoric and cultural differences can cause in shaping the EFL learners' written discourse, particularly in the respect of using grammatical cohesive devices in argumentative essays, this study intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the influence of Arabic language rhetoric and cultural background on the use of grammatical cohesive devices in the Iraqi EFL tertiary students' argumentative essays.
2. To examine how the students' L1 differences could affect their appropriate use of grammatical cohesive devices in their argumentative essays.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Participants

The participants of the study were Iraqi native speakers of Arabic language studying English language in their third year in the Department of English, College of Arts, Al-Iraqiya University. The number of the sample was 110 male and female students: 20 subjects for the qualitative method and 90 for the quantitative since according to (Creswell 2005), the number of the subject in a qualitative study is between 1, 2 until 30 or 40. The subjects were selected through purposive sampling. According to Maxwell, purposive sampling is a type of sampling in which, "particular setting, persons, or events are deliberately selected for important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices" (87). The justification behind selecting third year students is that they are taking essay course in this year. Above, at this level it is expected that the subjects have been exposed more extensively to English language writing through the first two study years and hence, their use of cohesion could be examined easier.

### 2.2 Instruments

The instruments used for this study were: (a) writing task consisting of (1) diagnostic (pre-test) which consisted of two topic they were asked to choose one of these topics and write an argumentative essay, (2) regular assignments included four passages given to the participants and they had to read them critically, make a summary of the whole passage with writing notes of the most important ideas it contains, and then write an argumentative essay based on the summarized passage, (3) final (post-test) was given to the students at the end of the semester and immediately after the training had completed. In that test, two passages were given to the participants and they had to choose one to make summary and write an argumentative essay as was done in the training. In addition, the study used (b) a background educational questionnaire.

### 2.3 Procedure

First, the students were informed of the nature of the present study which includes a pre-test, training course and a post-test. They were given enough explanation about the nature of the training they will receive. In fact, they were told that this training is of great benefit for the students since it helps them improve their writing skill and give them the opportunity to analyze, judge and summarize reading passages in a critical thinking which is not so familiar to them. As a result, more than 30 thirty students were willing to participate in the semester training. In this respect, the instructor of the writing course, helped too much in explaining the nature of the training course in which they will be enrolled. After that, the researcher and the instructor decided to choose 20 students as participants from their two classes and then gathered in one class to receive the training.

Before conducting the main study, a pilot test was carried out on five students from the third stage of the English Department in the College of Arts, Al-Iraqiya University. First, it was made for the background educational questionnaire in which the students were given a survey of 18 questions, some of them focus on the way the students see the influence of their Arabic writing on English writing and their use of English grammatical cohesive devices in their argumentative essays. Later, in

the following day the pre-test was piloted in which the subjects assured that the two subjects given to them were familiar because they were taken from their textbook. In a similar way, before administrating the final test, a pilot test was also done. By doing the pilot test, the researcher had a good insight of the time assigned for each instrument and how each one is practically administered.

After each participant had been further contacted and agreed to participate, the questionnaire questions were given to 90 students and they were told to answer in their class by ticking and in some items by giving very short answers on the paper of questions itself. Before they started to answer the questions, an extensive explanation was supplied to them in order they can respond easily. Further, they were informed that these questions should be answered accurately by them since this questionnaire is very important in providing the research with valuable information about their status in the area of the present study.

Concerning the writing task, in order to make it easier for students to complete, certain issues were taken into consideration in choosing the topics of the pre and post writing. The researcher aimed at selecting those topics which could be available in their textbook that may be familiar to them. In addition, one of the important considerations in the process of selecting the topics was the extent to which the topic induces the participants to use the different type of grammatical cohesive devices in their essays.

On the first administration, a diagnostic test as a pre-test was given at the beginning of the semester. This test consisted of two topics in which the participants were asked to write an argumentative essay within 90 minutes. After having collected the diagnostic essays, an analysis of the written work was performed by two professional raters and me with the purpose of having a rating of the participants' writing, which provided the researcher with some information of the level of grammatical cohesion they had achieved in their argumentative essays.

The following week, a training in cohesion and coherence adapted from CATW training started in which the researcher with the help of the instructor explained the aim of this training to the participants. Since this training is not followed in the teaching of essay writing in Iraq, the researcher himself, instead of the instructor, gave it to the selected 20 participants with some help of the instructor. Those 20 subjects had been gathered in a separated class and given the training two hours a week. The task of the researcher was to give a reading passage to the participants and asked them to read critically and then write an essay after summarizing the passage. Before giving them the assignments, the researcher provided the subjects with samples of CATW essays and explained extensively the steps in which the passage could be read and summarized and then how to write an argumentative essay based on the critical reading of the passage. In this training, the participants were given four passages and wrote four argumentative essays. After collecting the essays from the subjects, the researcher takes the papers with him to write his comments on the paper and the next day he brings them to the class. Inside the class he gives every participant his paper and starts to explain orally the comment more clearly so that the participant could understand his/her mistakes clearly. After he finishes his comments, he gives every participant a copy of his/her essay and keeps the original paper (essay).

At the end of the semester and before the mid of May, 2015, the participants took the final test essay as a post-test. The same procedures followed in the diagnostic test were repeated. The participants were also given two passages and were asked to choose one of them to summarize and write an argumentative essay depending on CATW training. The post-test helped in showing the differences in the use of grammatical cohesive devices and how certain elements contributing to cohesion had developed over the semester training.

## **2.4 Data Analysis**

### **3.4.1 Qualitative Coding**

As the present study is a case one of a mixed mode methods, qualitative and quantitative, the analysis of its data has been done both qualitatively and quantitatively. For the purpose of analyzing the participants' written pieces, a qualitative descriptive analysis based on Halliday and Hasan's model was employed to count the actual numbers of the four types of grammatical cohesive devices used in the students' pre and post- tests. A qualitative content analysis was also used to analyze the devices appropriate and inappropriate uses. On the other hand, a quantitative analysis based on SPSS descriptive statistics was used for the purpose of analyzing the questionnaire data.

In the analysis of students' written pieces, the researcher accomplished it according to the following steps: (1) collected 40 pieces, 20 for diagnostic test and the other 20 for the final test; (2) counting the use of grammatical devices according to its classification in each table of grammatical cohesive devices; (3) categorizing the grammatical cohesive devices.

According to (Kohlbacher 2006: as cited in Hasanah 2013), 520, qualitative content analysis has two basic procedures: (1) summary, and (2) structuring. For the first procedure, he recommended to sum up the data in order to reduce number of information and highlight only its important parts. In a similar way, the study reduces the number of data by distinguishing important point from each student's writing. For the structuring step, the researcher made a division of the unit of analysis according to the grammatical cohesion theory. In doing so, the researcher structured the discussion to display the texture of the writings of the students to find out whether grammatical cohesive devices are appropriate or not. Therefore, the discussion about reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction is shaped according to the grammatical cohesion theory.

## 2.5 Findings and Discussion

This section is used to answer the objectives of the study which are 1) the effects of Arabic language rhetoric and cultural background on the use of grammatical cohesive devices by Iraqi EFL learners in their argumentative essays and 2) the influence of L1 differences on the students' appropriate use of grammatical devices. In order to answer the study's problem, the section is divided into two sub-divisions. The first section aims at showing the difference in the grammatical cohesive devices use by Iraqi students in their diagnostic test and final test. The second displays a comparison between the percentages the appropriate and inappropriate uses of each type of the grammatical devices in the diagnostic test and final test. Table 1 and table 2 show the difference in the use of grammatical cohesive devices between the participants' diagnostic and final essays.

Table 1 *Participants' Use of Grammatical Cohesive Devices in Diagnostic Essays*

Types of Grammatical Cohesive Devices	Students' Grammatical Cohesive Devices Use	
	N	%
Reference	400	63.90 %
Substitution	1	0.16 %
Ellipsis	1	0.16 %
Conjunction	224	35.78 %
Total	626	

Table 2 *Participants' Use of Grammatical Cohesive Devices in Final Essays*

Types of Grammatical Cohesive Devices	Students' Grammatical Cohesive Devices Use	
	N	%

Reference	501	61.93 %
Substitution	2	0.25 %
Ellipsis	5	0.62 %
Conjunction	301	37.21 %
Total	809	

The findings in table 1 and table 2 revealed that the participants of this study employed more reference and conjunction in both diagnostic and final essays. Their use of the four types of grammatical cohesive devices was better in the final test. Anyhow, their use of substitution and ellipsis are insufficient in the two tests.

According to Hyland’s (2005) contrastive rhetoric, the participants employed more two categories of interactive markers: transitions such as, (and, also, but and therefore) and frame markers such as, (finally, to conclude and in conclusion). On the other hand, they also overused self-mentions as interactional markers. They used more personal pronouns like (I, we, my, our).

### 2.5.1 Arabic language Influence on the Participants’ use of Grammatical Cohesion

From the results of pre and post tests, it was found that the participants overused personal pronouns, demonstratives, additive conjunctions and some adversative and causal conjunctions. Though, their use of grammatical devices improved both in number and in appropriateness in the final test, they, in both essays, focused on the use of personal pronouns: subject, object and possessive as well as the demonstrative references such as, “the”, “this” and “these”. In addition, they used more the additive conjunctions, “and”, “and then” and “also”. They also overused the adversative conjunction “but” and the causal conjunctions “because” and “so”.

The participants’ overuse of these grammatical cohesive devices could be due to the clear influence of their mother tongue (L1). In Arabic language, EFL learners and writers as well concentrate on the use of such personals like (hadha) “this” and (hadhihi) “these” even there is no noun being referred to. Arabic language also uses the definite article “the” almost before every noun, singular or plural. That’s why, Iraqi students employed more these references in their diagnostic and final essays. In the respect of using conjunction, it could be argued that Arabic language prefers to use the additive conjunction (wa) “and” and (fa) “and then” and almost in every sentence (Al-Shurafa 1994). These conjunctions are used in the middle as well as at the beginning of the sentence. Another additive conjunction which is extensively used in Arabic is (kadhalik) “also”. For this reason, most of the participants’ uses of additive conjunctions were the use of “and” and “also”. The participants employed a high number of the causal conjunctions “because” and “so” since their Arabic language overuses these conjunctions (wathalika lianahu) “because” and (lithalika) “so”.

Table 3 *Grammatical Cohesive Devices Appropriate and Inappropriate Use in Diagnostic*

Essay	Appropriate Use		Inappropriate Use	
	N	%	N	%
Type of Grammatical Cohesive Devices				

Reference	298	74.5 %	102	25.5 %
Substitution	1	100 %		
Ellipsis	1	100 %		
Conjunction	131	58.49 %	93	41.51 %
Total	431	68.85 %	195	31.15 %

Table 4 *Grammatical Cohesive Devices Appropriate and Inappropriate Use in Final Essay*

Type of Grammatical Cohesive Devices	Appropriate Use		Inappropriate Use	
	N	%	N	%
Reference	454	90.62 %	47	9.38 %
Substitution	2	100 %		
Ellipsis	4	80 %	1	20 %
Conjunction	268	89.04 %	33	10.97 %
Total	728	89.99 %	81	10.01 %

#### 2.5.2 The Influence of Arabic Language on the Participants' Appropriate Use of Grammatical Cohesion

Table 3 and table 4 indicate that the participants' appropriate use of grammatical cohesive devices was better in their final essay. This improvement in the appropriate uses is justified by the effect of the training in cohesion and coherence which enabled the students to receive the writing training in an English environment that could reduced the effects of Arabic environment effects.

Accordingly, most of the inappropriate uses that the students committed in their use of grammatical cohesion are due to the influence of Arabic and its cultural differences. Thus, it could be explained that their use of some personal pronouns is a reflection of Arabic use. For example, they used subject or object pronouns together with its noun in the same sentence

as in, *The woman she took care of her children in a respected way.* In a similar way, they employed the demonstrative “the” almost before every noun, in that they looked at it as a grammatical article with the effects of their Arabic use. For instance, a sentence like the following was most used, *The education is considered very important for ever persons in the life.* They used the definite article in such a way because they are unaware of the way these devices are used as cohesive devices and it is also due to the influence of their L1. In Arabic, these words are normally preceded by the definite article in exception of being common nouns or not.

Moreover, most the participants' diagnostic essays uses of the additive conjunctions “and”, “also”, the adversative “but”, the causal conjunction “so” and a number of the uses of “because were committed under the influence of their Arabic use of these devices. They used these additive conjunctions in different places in sentence. A high number of “and” was used inappropriately at the beginning of the sentence and some of these uses were repeated in the same clauses or sentences without using a comma since comma is not used as a conjunction in Arabic. The same explanation is said for other causal conjunctions.

What has been illustrated in the participants' written pieces in the respect of the influence of Arabic rhetoric on their appropriate uses of grammatical cohesive devices in their argumentative essays is confirmed by their responses in the questionnaire. Most of them reported that Arabic writing helps them in English grammar building, vocabulary meaning and translation. Some see that it is helpful in the aspect of essay writing. This means that they depend on Arabic vocabulary and translation when they write their English essays.

Similarly, the majority of the participants found that grammatical cohesive devices used in Arabic writing affect the use of these devices in English writing. The majority of the participants (60 participants) asserted that the grammatical cohesive devices they use in their first language could be used in their English writing.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

From the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that the participants' use of grammatical cohesive devices as well as their appropriate use of these devices are considerably affected by their L1 (Arabic language) and the cultural differences which are involved in the students' use of grammatical cohesion in their argumentative essays. However, the influence of Arabic rhetoric was reduced in their final essays due to the effects of the training in cohesion and coherence they received over a semester.

### Suggestion

As the data of this study have been collected and the results have been analyzed, the researcher proposes suggestions regarding the findings as follows: 1) to conduct the influence of Arabic rhetoric on the use of grammatical cohesion in Arab spoken discourse and 2) to conduct the use of grammatical cohesive devices in the writings of Arab EFL learners and in those of English speaking learners.

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## Conflict – A Necessary Evil

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### Abstract

*Conflict in organizations represents an important topic for managers. People often assume that all conflict is necessary bad and should be eliminated. On the contrary, there are some circumstances in which a moderate amount of conflict can be helpful. Where conflict already exists, something must be done. The techniques should be viewed as continuum, ranging from strategies that focus on changing behaviors near the top of the scale to strategies that focus on changing attitudes near the bottom of the scale.*

**Keywords:** conflict, strategies, management styles, public health, changing behaviors

### PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT

In the specialized literature conflict is seen from many perspectives. These can be grouped into four major categories (traditional perspective, pluralist perspective, radical or Marxist perspective).

The way in which conflict is seen determines the way the involved parties react.

#### 1. Traditional (unitary) perspective on conflict

Conflicts are a “malformation” that appears in a group, department or organization. Instability that leads to conflict is the result of a lack of confidence, opening and proper communication. Managers are considered responsible of unsatisfaction

of the employees' needs and expectations. From this perspective, the manager's task is to identify the causes of the conflict, to eliminate them and to restore order. Organizations have been present from this unitary perspective as cooperative, harmonious structures, where there is no conflict of interests. Conflicts are exceptional situations. They appear due to misunderstandings and confusion, personality factors, extra-organizational factors (where the organization has no control), and because of the employees expectations, which seem sometimes inflexible.

Organizations are seen as teams built in order to meet common objectives. <In any business there must be a real team that shall join efforts into a common effort. Each member shall bring their different part but all for the same common purpose. Their efforts must be directed in the same direction without frictions, without doubling the effort. > (Drucker, 1968).

## **2. The pluralist (behavior) perspective on conflict**

Conflict is a natural phenomenon that can be found in each organization or group. Since it is inevitable and cannot be eliminated, it must be accepted. In some circumstances, it can increase the personal or the group's performance and acts as an agent of change.

Conflict is not necessarily good or bad, but it must be evaluated according to the personal and organizational functions and dysfunctions. Generally, conflict generates pressure within the group for its decrease, but <chronic> conflicts persist and are managed in certain circumstances, being created consciously and preserved by the political – administrative structures. Conflict (in certain limits) assists the development change rather than the revolutionary change.

Conflict is like a safety valve that makes the organization responsible of the internal and external changes, meanwhile the essential elements, such as hierarchy within the organization and the distribution power remain intact.

A flexible society benefits from the conflict, because this behavior generates and changes standards, assists development in the circumstances of change.

## **3. The interactionist perspective**

This perspective promotes both the conflict and its solution. From this perspective, a group or a department which is peaceful, balanced and cooperative can become apathetic, and non-cooperative in circumstances of change.

This perspective encourages leaders to maintain a minimum level of conflict which is enough for the group to be viable, self-critical and creative. Managers should not eliminate conflict but to maintain an optimum level of it to obtain a maximum efficiency. The circumstances when managers have to enhance the conflict situation are the following:

- Changes within the organization: conflict is the tool that the organization uses to radically change; the power of structures, attitudes, they all can be changed through conflict;
- When it is necessary to increase the cohesion of the group;
- In order to increase the groups and organization's performance.

## **4. The radical (Marxist) perspective**

This considers stability and lack of conflict as an issue. Conflict is seen as a way to initiate a revolutionary change. The Marxist perspective sees the organization as one of the "war theaters" where classes are fighting and the organizational conflict, as part of the inevitable fight between the ones that possess control and the ones that don't (working classes, parties, etc.).

The organizations are arenas for personal and group conflicts. The combatants fight for professional values, restricted resources, and development in career, privileges, and other rewards. The goals of the organization are sometimes ambiguous. They do not determine behaviors but are used rather to justify certain actions. The individual and organizational interests rarely are in unison.

The conflict can improve taking organizational decisions rather than prevent them. When the ones with opposite ideas try to find a common way, they develop a better understanding of the positions of each one of them; they confront the differences and reach a satisfactory decision for both parties.

Groups and persons have different perspectives on the organization and their place within. People have different points of view on conflict. Understanding the conflict is the first step to resolve it.

### **The Positive and Negative Face of the Conflict**

People consider that conflict is a negative thing that has to be eliminated. Nevertheless, there are some circumstances when a certain level of conflict can be good. For example, conflict can lead to finding new ideas and new mechanisms, as solutions to organizational issues. Conflict can stimulate innovation and change. Also, it can facilitate the employees' motivation when employees feel the need to excel and to reach the desired performances.

Conflict can help the group members to develop as identities. Conflict appears as the result of some antagonistic tensions, having at the same time a balancer and integrative function for relationships. By allowing the revendications, the dissatisfaction sources are eliminated. Multiple conflicts serve to eliminate the causes of dissociations and to reestablish unity.

But there are some negative consequences of the conflict both for individuals and for the organization; when people use their energy to solve conflicts and not to obtain performance. The constant conflict affects the psychological health; it has a major purpose in generating stress and psycho-physical consequences of the stress. It can also affect the social climate of the group and inhibit the group's cohesion.

According to the nature, intensity or its duration, the conflict can be both functional and dysfunctional. Indeed, too much conflict or too little can lead to a multitude of negative consequences. In such circumstances, a moderate quantity of conflict can be the best way of action.

The management must take into account not eliminating the conflict but finding ways to solve it and to manage it.

### **Factors That Generate Conflict**

Conflicts do not appear by themselves, they are generated by certain factors that we shall mention here:

- Tasks' interdependence
- Not knowing the status
- Jurisdictional ambiguities
- Communication issues
- Dependence on common resources
- Lack of a common performance standard
- Individual differences

### **WAYS TO SOLVE CONFLICT**

There are five ways of solving conflict: competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance, accommodation.

**Competition.** Possible situations.

- Emergencies. When is necessary to take quick decisions.
- In important issues. When unpopular measures are implemented, for example: cutting funds, new rules.
- In vital issues for the company's prosperity. When you know you are right.
- Against those who take advantage of the noncompetitive behavior.

### **Collaboration**

1. When a compromising solution must be found because both parties have arguments that are too important to reach a compromise.
2. When the objective is to learn.
3. To have different perspectives on the issue.
4. To obtain the commitment by reaching a consensus.
5. To work beyond the feelings that interfered with a relationship.

### **Compromise**

3When goals are important but does not worth the effort of some assertive methods.

4When the opponents have equal powers, being dedicated to some exclusive purposes.

5To temporary balance conflict.

6When time requires us to find expedite solutions.

7As a backup for the time when collaboration or competition are not productive.

### **Avoidance**

- When an issue is minor and other issues are more urgent.
- When there is no possibility of satisfying the requests.
- When a possible impairment is more relevant than the advantages of a decision.
- To allow people to calm down and reassess the perspectives
- When the collection of information eliminate the immediate decisions.
- When others can resolve conflict more efficiently.
- When the aspects of an issue are tangential with others.

### **Accommodation**

1. When you discover that you are wrong – in order to allow another solution, to learn and show that you are reasonable.
2. When the issue is more important to others than to you – to satisfy others and maintain cooperation.
3. To obtain social credit for later on.
4. To reduce losses when you find yourself in this situation.
5. When harmony and balance are important
6. To allow subordinates to learn from mistakes.

## **STRATEGIES OF PREVENTING CONFLICT**

There are two categories of actions that managers can use: actions of prevention and actions of solving conflicts.

### **Methods of prevention**

- Focus on the organization's goals and efficiency. Focusing on the organization's goals and objectives prevents conflict. Employees see the general picture and work together to reach the desired performance.
- Ensuring some well structured, stable tasks. When activities are well defined, understood and accepted by the employees, conflicts should appear more rarely. Conflicts appear when the uncertainty on tasks is greater. Specifications and structured jobs reduce ambiguity.
- Facilitating communication in groups. The wrong perception on abilities, goals and motivations of others often leads to conflict, therefore, the efforts to facilitate dialogue between groups and distribution of information helps the elimination of conflicts. When people know more about each other, suspicions disappear and collaboration becomes possible between the groups.
- Avoiding the situations of <winner - loser>. When resources are a few, management should find solutions to distribute them in such a way to obtain maximum efficiency. Rewards must be offered for the contribution to the

achievement of the general objectives of the organization; in this way, there shall be created a climate for finding solutions accepted by everyone.

## **STRATEGIES OF REDUCING CONFLICT**

When conflict already exists, managers have at least two approaches: they can try to change the attitude or behavior of the employees. If the behavior is changed, open conflicts are often reduced, but groups still do not get along well; conflict becomes less visible if groups are separated. Changing the attitude leads to fundamental changes in the way groups get along.

- Physical separation

The easiest and quicker solution of conflict is the physical separation. Separation is useful when conflict groups do not work on a common task or they do not need a high level of interaction. Although this approach does not encourage the group's members to change the attitude, it provides them time for a better accommodation.

- Using rules and procedures

Conflict can be reduced by clearly stating the rules and procedures. This approach, known as bureaucratic method, imposes solutions but does not change the basic attitudes.

- Restriction of the intergroup interaction

When a group's members agree upon a goal cooperation becomes easier and the need of interaction with other groups is no longer felt necessary.

- Using <connection people>

These maintain a good communication between groups or departments. They must be recognized by both parties. They must have a diplomatic approach, identify the common points and find new methods for a future cooperation.

- Confrontation and negotiation

This method places face to face the conflict parties to debate their misunderstandings. It is hoped that by open debates and negotiation they should reach an agreement. Negotiations between unions and organization are an example. If by negotiation, a solution can be found of <win - win> situation, then the chances for the solution to be accepted are increased.

- Advice from a third party (arbitration)

In some cases it is useful to search for advice from a third party which can understand the human behavior and can facilitate finding a solution. The adviser can talk even more directly, not being member of any group.

- Rotation of members

By rotation of members from one group to another, individuals understand the values and attitudes of the other members and communication increases. When they are accepted by the new group, the change in behavior and attitude becomes possible. This is a technique on long term since establishing interpersonal relationships requires time.

- Identifying some interdependence tasks and common goals

A managerial strategy is that of establishing goals that require groups' interaction; to work together to obtain the desired performance (for example, when it is threatened the organization's future). Bankruptcy threat makes the opponents to work together so that they maintain the company in action.

- Training

Experts outside the organization help the members to develop constant mechanisms for team work. Workshops are well structured and training programmes help to improve intergroup attitudes, reaching a constructive intergroup behavior.

Conflict has an important role in the organization. Nevertheless, there are possible conflict situations which managers want to resolve before they become a serious conflict. This is managed by negotiation. We shall approach this subject in a future publication of this magazine.

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## Subjective Predictors of Safe and Risky Behaviours. Presentation of Selected Results of the Studies Among Workers in Non-Traditional Forms of Employment

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### Abstract

*The paper presents selected results of the studies carried out among Polish workers in non-traditional forms of employment, using the Occupational Safety Culture Scale (Milczarek, 2000) consisting of 6 sub-scales: management commitment and participation; OSH training and analysis of accidents; values; relations between employees and affiliation to the company; responsibility and awareness; safe behaviours. All groups of the nine examined forms of flexible employment have declared the evaluation of occupational safety culture at the average level of 5-6 Sten, which shapes its following features. The paper presents selected results of the Author's own broader research project on a sample of workers in non-traditional forms of employment.*

**Keywords:** atmosphere of occupational safety and health, flexible workers

### Introduction

It is a common knowledge that dangerous behaviour and errors at work affect the accident rate (McSween, 1995). Subjective conditions of safe behaviour, although essential for safety, are not as important measurements of working environment analyses – the organisational and physical working conditions which are the most common variables. Safe behaviours are considered an effect of good safety management, and not a matter of individual circumstances (Goszczyńska, 1997; Studenski, 1996; Tyszka, 1992). And it is this issue that causes a lot of controversy.

Safe behaviours are understood as a function of ability and motivation to perform one's tasks safely, as an opposite to risky behaviours, an attitude towards changes, a result of preventive actions and safety management policy within the organisation. On the other hand, the behaviour of people in situations of risk can be associated with an analysis of advantages and disadvantages, which is a conscious choice, it can be a habit or result from such a habit, from following others' behaviours, executing orders, complying with bans and standards based on formal and legal aspects (Goszczyńska, 1997, after: Najmiec, Milczarek, 2003, p. 5).

### Theoretical background and an overview of selected studies

In their study carried out on a group of drivers, Clark & Prolisko (1979) found that a positive attitude to the rules and respect for other drivers manifests itself among people causing fewer accidents, than those who treat the legal provisions as imposed and restrictive in terms of freedom. Different nations are diverse when it comes to perception and acceptance of risk (Cutter, 1993; Goszczyńska, 1997). In the US, Norway and Poland, modern technologies are seen as more risky, than in Russia or Hungary (Mechitow, Rebrik, 1990). In societies which lower the risk, accidents are caused much more often. They are a result of unsafe conditions and behaviours, and the acceptance, consent and tolerance among others is a symptom of poor and undesirable safety culture which results in such accidents. In comparison to the UK, there is also a five times lower rate of deadly accidents. It results from the different attitude to OSH regulations, confidence in the preventive role of OSH regulations, the attitude of superiors to their subordinates who take the risk, the attitude of employees to their co-workers who take the risk, the attitude of superiors to employees who need to comply with safety standards, the attitude towards OSH training, the prestige of services and rank of OSH position and the involvement of employers in the organisation of safe working conditions. It has been noted that the role of the safety creator is played by

the employer who creates the OSH policy, and, at the same time, defines threats, specifies standards, and promotes vigilance against threats (Pidgeon, 1994) (after: Studenski, 2000, p. 1-4).

Szczygielska (2011) discusses three approaches to changing the attitudes: cognitive approach that is based on changing the way people think; social approach, or imitating the behaviour of individuals considered to be role models; and behavioural approach understood as the effect of system of reinforcement and punishment, as an essential element for the safety-oriented behaviour in the workplace. Knowledge of the attitudes, or willingness to behave in a certain way in response to certain stimuli, allows to predict the human behaviour (Ajzen, 2001). There is a relationship between attitude and behaviour, due to the behavioural element, which is important for occupational safety and health (Harley, Bolman, Gregory, Eros, 2001; Szczygielska, Wszesieńska, 2009). There is a positive relationship between positive attitudes to OSH and the accident rate value in the organisation (Donald, Canter, 1994). This allows to avoid mistakes, like a waste of time, discouragement, accidents at work. In the cognitive approach, the Author suggests to change the way of thinking about OSH, using the information and a persuasive statement through training and direct talks with the staff. In the behavioural approach, behaviours, opinions and attitudes that are rewarded can be repeated and included in the routine behaviour. Such activities are used in order to strengthen the desired OSH attitudes. Diverse reinforcements and rewards clearly linked to the behaviour or attitude are a condition for the reward to be seen as desirable. Social approach to the changes of behaviour is based on the principles of learning by observing and memorising these behaviours. Gaining acceptance in the group requires the adoption of its standards and, therefore, the group moderates safety-oriented behaviours. As a result of modelling, it is possible to know the unknown pattern of behaviour, to refrain from negative behaviour, e.g., breaking OSH regulations, being easier to display certain behaviours, mimicking the behaviour of others (after: Szczygielska, 2011, p.19-21).

The model of determinants of safe behaviour suggested by Najmiec & Mielczarek (2003, p. 5) takes into account the individual and social variables. The former include emotions, like fear, anger, curiosity, and a sense of control, temperament traits (in particular, the need for stimulation, reactivity), seniority and level of professional experience, individual experience in emergency situations. Some of the selected social determinants have been singled out – the opinion of the management and co-workers in the field of compliance with the OSH regulation and an overall safety culture in the organisation (after: Najmiec, Milczarek, 2003, p. 5).

Szmajke (1992) has carried out a synthesis of personality determinants of resistance to difficult and threatening situations: self-esteem, guilt, neuroticism, sense of control over reinforcements and responsiveness, need for stimulation (Gal, Lazarus, 1975, Drwal, 1981, Modzelewska, 1983, after: Szmajke, 1992, p. 242). In the working conditions that are characterised by difficult situations, like overload, novelties, deprivation, people with low self-esteem, high level of neuroticism and sense of guilt, with an external sense of control and low level of reactivity function worse than people with opposite features. These individuals are also more prone to accidents at work (*ibid.*, p. 242). The dimensions which are important for the perceived and accepted risk are: the level of anxiety in the face of danger, how imaginable causes and results of events are, how catastrophic or chronic the consequences are, how voluntary the taken risk is, how controllable the consequences of risky events are, how often the accidents happen, how inevitable the consequences of the risks are, how big and important the infringed human needs and values are (Goszczyńska, Tyszka, 1986, after: Szmajke, 1992, p. 244).

Ratajczak (1992) emphasises that emotions which will be triggered, and their role, depend on the dangerous situation. She applies the principle of interventions made and describes three such situations which differentiate the behaviour: situation of dangers which can be prevented and predicted; situation of dangers which can be eliminated and controlled; situation of dangers from which one can be protected, and finally – situation of dangers from which one should escape and evacuate. Each of these situations causes various emotions, however, anxiety is the dominant one (*ibid.*, p. 197-198). Various emergency situations show different adequate behaviours, and fear can create favourable conditions for them or disorganise human behaviour, according to the principle that moderate anxiety favours right decisions, and excessive fear leads to inadequate behaviour. The Author systematises the effect of emotions (in the form of stress) on behaviour, while stressing that they may deform the perception of the situation by narrowing the area of awareness, distract, divert one's attention; they can demobilise employees to fight against the existing threats by the minimisation of meanings, due to stress as a dominant and competitive emotion; they can demobilise the standard workflow, thereby creating a greater risk; they may lead to exhaustion, excessive involvement of energy. Thus, stress can trigger involuntary dangerous behaviours (*ibid.*, p.202). As part of the preventive actions, the Author suggests: training on the development of skills to deal with difficult



situations, which allows temporary states of relaxation and self-control; creating models of efficient actions, hope and confidence in one's own strength; the formation of a positive self-image by suppressing pessimistic attitudes (*ibid.*, p. 204-205). The second group of methods proposed by the Author concerns the professional selection – diagnosis of resistance to stress, emotional weakness (*ibid.*, p. 206). The third group of conclusions relates to the optimisation of working conditions, adequately to human capabilities without causing frustration and tension in difficult situations, reducing environmental stressors (*ibid.*, p. 207). The last group concerns the design of adequate warning and alarm systems, adapted to the sensory organs, which guarantee the effectiveness of the collection of information about the risks (*ibid.*, p. 208).

Sztumski (2004) distinguishes three attitudes towards occupational safety: conformist attitude, hedonistic attitude and opportunistic attitude. Stasiła – Sieradzka (2012, p. 219-225, after: Sztumski, 2004, Horton and Lesile, 1970, Rybakowski, 2007, cf. 2013) lists twelve attitudes to safe behaviours. Indifferent attitude shows in people who do not care about any safety issues; while fatalistic attitude is characteristic of people with catastrophic visions who believe that accidents are inevitable; it is similar to cynical attitude when a person cares about their own safety but has no interest in general safety problems. Religious attitude is a belief in supernatural forces, in the power of faith. Sentimental attitude shows in people with the belief that all safety measures are utopian. On the other hand, scientific attitude is characteristic of people with an organised and rational approach to research, analyses and implementation of programs to improve safety. Conformist attitude expresses a passive approach to safety issues, the adoption of standards; opportunistic attitude, on the other hand, expresses a passive attitude to risks and aware exposure of life and health to risk in the name of one's own purposes. Enthusiastic attitude is typical for people interested in safety systems implementations; realistic attitude is characteristic of those who analyse the resources and costs involved in the organisational safety issues, without denying the very essence and seriousness of the problem. Pragmatist, on the other hand, is a person who analyses safety with a view to actual opportunities to reduce the risk and accident rate. Sceptical attitude is a belief that any improvement activity in the workplace does not affect the level of safety in the organisation. This quick overview of the above attitudes shows how different the motivations, beliefs, approaches and behaviours can be, in the face of danger and in relation to the issue of occupational safety. Even the same workplace, the same path of shaping safety-oriented behaviours, although it moderates and improves the attitude to safety, it still depends on the subjective factors of every single employee, regardless of the form of employment.

In his study of the efficiency of drivers, Najmiec (2008) proves that it is conditioned by the safety culture. The efficient behaviour of a driver itself depends on three conditions: accurate self-evaluation, assessment of one's own competence, and the right assessment of situation on the road, making the right decisions and executing efficient manoeuvres. The efficiency also depends on the age, personal and temperamental characteristics, experience, fatigue or monotony (after: Najmiec, 2003, p. 10). It can be argued that all jobs are similar, and the analogy is justified in terms of promoting safety culture, because the efficiency of actions is affected by momentary loss of attention, perception disorders associated with sleepiness and fatigue, personality traits, competencies and skills, nervousness and haste, as well as unawareness of the risks (cf.: Najmiec, 2008).

Szczygielska (2009) emphasises that greater professional experience, understood as longer service, causes greater resistance to the changes in the established patterns. Analyses of individual accidents in enterprises have confirmed that they are more common in the age group of long-serving workers. This almost automatically brings to mind the instructions for preventive measures, due to patterns handed down to the younger workers, and due to the fact that, particularly, groups of people with bigger experience have been affected in terms of creating OSH behaviours, regardless of the form of employment. The younger groups, up to 30 years old, are recommended to receive a message together with good practice possible to be used immediately, as younger workers find it easier to implement new behaviours in their work or adopt certain standards, than those with already formed abnormal behavioural styles (after: Szczygielska, 2009, p. 29).

Tyszka (1992) has presented a model employee behaviour in hazardous conditions. In most cases, every worker is affected by a diverse range of harmful or risky factors, which depend on the behaviour of the employee to varying degrees. Whether the employee is aware of the threatening factors depends on the information available to them. Sources of information affect the scope of the worker's knowledge about the risks. Perception of risk determines what is seen as dangerous or not, given the immediacy of the negative effects, catastrophic or chronic character of the risk, degree of familiarity with the threat, controllability of negative effects. After perception and evaluation of threats, it is time for behaviour determined by three elements: analyses of advantages and disadvantages associated with a particular behaviour, imitation or

subordination to the group standards, and a formed habit. When choosing between different safe and dangerous behaviours, the three mechanisms mentioned can be involved to a various degree. Therefore, the creation of safe behaviours of employees should be done by providing reliable information about risks present in the workplace, proper assessment of risk, creating working conditions which favour choosing safe behaviours, using behavioural techniques to develop habits of safe behaviour and, finally, promotion of safe behaviour standards (after: Tyszka, 1992, p. 28-33).

As it has already been mentioned, Goszczyńska (1997) says that the behaviour of a worker in an emergency situation can be induced and regulated by three mechanisms: a conscious choice preceded by an analysis of advantages and disadvantages; a habit; imitation of the other people's behaviour or submission to group norms. The last two mechanisms are more unconscious, thoughtless, automated way to respond (after: Goszczyńska, 1997, p. 181-182). It results in the fact that the prophylaxis and measurement of occupational safety and health in terms of subjective impact should include both the improvement in the area of OSH and creation of favourable conditions for automated, unconscious activities related to the performance of duties.

### Presentation of own research

The study has been carried out among workers in non-traditional forms of employment. It has been conducted among temporary workers employed by agencies, replacement workers, workers employed under civil law contracts, social economy employees, workers employed under fixed term contracts, part-time workers, teleworkers, seasonal workers and self-employed entrepreneurs or businesspeople.

Polish method developed in the Industrial and Organizational Psychology Lab at the Central Institute for Labour Protection (CIOP) covers similar elements of climate as the foreign methods, which include the involvement of management in OSH, employee participation, values shared in the field of OSH, OSH training, responsibility and awareness of the staff in the field of OSH, safe behaviours. This tool is used to study the self-assessment of safety climate. M. Milczarek (2000) has created her own tool on the basis of very similar measurements. The tool has been used to measure the organisational climate in organisations using flexible forms of employment. Due to multiple statistical analyses obtained, this paper will mention selected conclusions.

As for the results of the variable against the analysis of individual differences, relationship with socio-demographic factors, the following variables have been chosen: gender, age, education, occupation, position, sector, industry, seniority, the number of employers, duration of employment contract, place of residence, marital status and the number of children. It has been shown that the occupational safety variable is correlated with gender, age, education and occupation.

Analysis of the Mann–Whitney U test has showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and the result on the scale of occupational safety culture:  $U = 493371$ ;  $p < .001$ . The results obtained by women ( $M = 182$ ;  $SD = 29.063$ ) have been higher than among men ( $M = 177.46$ ;  $SD = 30.024$ ). The Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance has showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between age and the results obtained on the scale of occupational safety culture: Chi-square (df 2)= 13.327;  $p < 0.01$ . The highest results have been obtained by the oldest employees at the age of 41-65 (median = 183). Slightly lower results have been reported in the youngest group – 18-30 (median = 181), and the lowest ones – in the middle group (31-40 years old) (median = 176). The Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance has showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between education and the results obtained on the scale of occupational safety culture: Chi-square (df 2)= 28.671;  $p < 0.001$ . The highest results have been obtained by employees with higher education (median = 183). Slightly lower results have been reported in the group of employees with secondary education (median = 175), and the lowest ones – in the group of respondents with primary and lower education (median = 173). The Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance has showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between occupation and the results obtained on the scale of occupational safety culture: Chi-square (df 4)=46.835;  $p < 0.001$ . The highest results have been obtained by directors, CEOs and business owners (median = 193), then specialists and freelancers (median = 183) and technicians and officials (median = 182). Slightly lower results have been obtained by low-ranking employees – trade and services employees (median = 172) and workers (median = 172).

The lack of correlation of this variable has been obtained together with the other personal data: sector, industry, seniority, the number of employers, duration of employment contract, place of residence, marital status, the number of children.

This means that, in accordance with Health & Safety Executive, the assessment of high occupational safety culture, understood as *“the result of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competences and patterns of behaviour, as well as style and quality of safety management within the organisation”*, where an enterprise which has high safety culture is characterised by *“communication based on mutual trust, perception of safety validity, trust in the efficiency of preventive measures”* (Horbury, Bottomley, 1997, after: Milczarek, 2000, p. 17) will be affected by the group age of relatively mature and older employees with higher education, higher or middle-ranking – of specialised positions in the organisational structure, and the fact that the respondents are men. Younger employees, women and the less educated – with education lower than primary, as well as the lowest-ranking workers, tend to assess safety culture as low. Organisation as a system where the main role is played by the employees and adaptation to external conditions, will be assessed more pejoratively. Attitudes, behaviours, implemented values, or organisational culture traditions, defined as *“norms, values, attitudes and generally accepted patterns of behaviour and procedures in the organisation, shared by all its members”* (Milczarek, 2000, p. 18), are evaluated more critically, in accordance with the study results obtained.

The variable – *flexible worker's perception of occupational safety climate*, is among the environmental determinants of human behaviour at work. The mean score on the scale of occupational safety culture in the group of flexible workers was 179.33 with a range of the variable from 99 to 243. The median is 179, which means that half of the respondents has a score under 179 points. The negative value of skewness (slightly lower than zero) means that the distribution in relation to the vertical axis is symmetrical. The negative kurtosis informs that the distribution is slightly flattened. There are a little too many extreme values. The results obtained by flexible workers on the scale of occupational safety culture have been analysed with the regard to the form of their employment. The assumptions of analysis of variance have been met – normal distribution in sub-groups and homogeneity of variances. Analysis of variance has showed that the form of employment significantly differentiates the results of the respondents on the scale of occupational safety culture:  $F(8, 2107) = 8.31$ ;  $p < .001$ . The results of the study show that the highest scores on the scale of occupational safety culture are obtained by self-employed workers (mean 190.9), while the lowest scores – by seasonal workers (mean 171.7). The results obtained can be explained by the specificity of the conditions associated with self-employment as a self-employed person usually creates them on their own, while employers of seasonal workers pay the least attention to occupational safety and health conditions.

In their early Polish study on safety culture, K. Burché & A. Grzelak (1974) listed several factors that influenced safe or risky work undertaken by employees. Social pressure was one of the key ones – it was a group influence which affects the formation of behaviour, depending on the implemented environmental values. The second important finding was the fact that there was no clear procedures, systems and expectations of management or supervisors in the field of OSH, which does not favour the occupational safety. If OSH issues are of low importance in the system of values, no company's community groups pay attention to OSH, and thus we can speak of poor safety culture. Unfortunately, the study has showed that the concept of a good employee is associated with an efficient employee who works fast, regardless of the safety requirements and, what is even worse, risky work is identified with high competence, and OSH regulations are perceived as unnecessary, and personal protective equipment is considered inconvenient and useless. Non-compliance with the regulations, failure to use security and personal protective equipment have proved to be the norm for many employees with the approval of superiors and management (Milczarek, 2000, p. 18). The study by R. Studencki (1999) shows that safety culture in Polish workplaces is much lower than the culture of English plants, which results in a high number of accidents and a high percentage of employees' diseases, however, these analyses have shown mean, average assessments (not low in any event) of occupational safety culture.

When describing the safety climate, Zolar (1980) conducted a study related to safety by analysing various aspects: the importance of OSH training, management attitude towards safety, the level of risk in the workplace, the status of OSH workers. The accumulated result has been specified by a level of safety climate, or the atmosphere in the plant perceived by employees and connected with occupational safety and health. The safety climate is associated with the overall level of safety, it determines either safe or risky job. The better the safety climate, the lower the number of accidents. The safety climate is a manifestation of the safety culture, and its monitoring favours maintaining high safety culture (Mearns, Flin, Gordon, Fleming, 1998). This study has shown a combined result of the organisational climate as average, according to the literature cited above. The analyses of additional questions about the accident rate in the organisation have been confirmed as well.

## Conclusion

The studies of safety culture in the nineties were based on observational measurement methods during visits, interviews with the staff, analysed documents and questionnaires completed by employees. Their purpose was mainly to examine the management commitment to safety issues, clarity of objectives and OSH procedures, employee involvement in safety policy, communication process in the organisation and the overall relationships between the employees. The study results clearly showed that there is a relationship between the accident rate and safety culture. The enterprises with high safety culture have: greater individual safety awareness, higher morale of employees, greater mutual trust between the management and employees, efficient organisational learning, focusing on safety issues, acceptance of personal responsibility for safety (Mielczarek, 2000, p. 19). The studies also showed a correlation between safety culture and other derived variables, like safety management, or technological risk with the accident rate (Horbury and Bottomley, 1997). The above has been also confirmed in the analyses carried out in the context of these professional problems of workers in non-traditional forms of employment.

In addition, Heinrich (1996) proves that most accidents are more connected with dangerous behaviour within the enterprise (88%) than with the dangers resulting from working conditions, which due to the mean results obtained in this study is not without significance. The increase in safe behaviours is subject to the same conditions, than the ones described above – it prevents and reduces the number of injuries and accidents. Since behaviours are the result of attitudes and beliefs, prevention and prevention systems should be aimed at creating safety culture: strengthening the awareness and values of safety at work, particularly among women, people with lower education, lower-ranking workers, according to the obtained conclusions.

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## Barriers to Learning, Achievement, Institutional Identities and Professionalization

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### Abstract

*This study is part of the broader research program on University Quality Assessment. The aim was to go deep into the causes for delay in finishing studies in Argentina. This brings about a problem at the institutional and personal levels (disappointment, depression, frustration,...). In 1995 the Department of University Polices called for a contest to analyze the Causes for Dropout, and we won it. It had been preceded by another project (still in progress) dealing with graduates from different faculties. The combination of different factors (basic, personal, occupational, structural, institutional and psychosocial ones), concerning the 20 years of the UNCuyo and 6 Faculties/Study Courses (1987-2004; N 299 individuals) gradually showed which factors predicted different achievement levels, as well as the strongest underlying reasons of the individuals' courses of action. The quantitative-qualitative method was applied. In this paper, we focus on a motivational factor: Fear of Failure; one of the predictive ones for delay along with others, as it showed differentiated profiles according to Academic Units and Courses of Studies (Disciplinary and institutional identities). The results are very relevant within a context in which delay in studies is quite evident. The intervention and support systems and Professionalization to improve University Quality and the students' personal and professional achievement are necessary. Then, Performance, Identities and Professionalization comprise macroanalysis (national policies), mesoanalysis (questions differentiated as Academic Units), and microanalysis (individuals who are affected in their personal health and self-fulfillment due to the lack of non-disciplinary programs).*

**Keywords:** Psychology - Barriers to Learning - Researches on Psychology of Education, Social, Health, Organizational Studies, Quality, University, Delay, Identities, Professionalization

### I. Introduction

This work on university studies extension is not an isolated research. The issue of failure within an institution has always been the object of special concern, that is why, M. Aparicio has been working for over a decade along a continuous line which goes deeper into the subject of achievement from different theoretical and methodological angles (Aparicio, 2006 a and b, 2009 c, 2010, 2012 a, b and c, 2014 a and c, 2015 a, c and d).

More precisely, this study represents the extension of the Research Program on University<sup>1</sup> Quality Assessment started in 1994, which included three projects along these lines: Success (graduation) and Failure (dropout) at the academic and socio-professional levels. Its development involved work with three subsamples: graduates, delayed students in relation to the established length, and dropouts. This work was carried out within the UNCuyo (National University of Cuyo) (1980 – 1995), with a later extension until 2004.

Within the framework of the improvement process of University Quality, the UNCuyo authorities considered it was very important to analyze the problem related to the delayed students in that institution who first enrolled in 1985 and reenrolled later in 2004, with the intention of continuous improvement<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, they decided to carry out this research, which is,

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1 All the research has been carried out in the CONICET (National Council of Scientific Research) and the National University of Cuyo.

2 The system allows yearly re-enrollment, and there is no limit for student as for number of years they take to graduate at University.

Students could re-enroll every year until 2015, when the system changed: there are limits to continuing in each of the years and there is a pre-requisite subjects regime in some Faculties.

globally, of special interest since it goes through different socio-economic systems, curricula, admission and promotion systems, etc. Besides, it is, as far as we know, the first analysis with these characteristics at the national level in Argentina.

In this respect, at a more specific level, from a grass-root perspective anticipated by Aparicio along this line, the personal factors (objectives and subjectives) – as usual in the available literature – are recovered in the model, as well as the contextual factors, which helps elucidate their relevance in performance. This applies not only to the university but also to the labor and structural levels, regarded as conditioning factors of achievement; all this, plus an “undervalued” insertion of graduates into the labor market, under the present circumstances, could lead to an of the period of study. This – according to previous studies – weakens the expectations about obtaining a university degree<sup>1</sup>.

Regarding the literature referring to other authors, we will just mention for the sake of brevity some founding fathers

## 2. Background: The Problem of the Politico-educational Agenda

We will not deal with the theoretical-methodological approach used in the Academic Achievement issue and its influencing factors.

We will merely point out that this is a fundamental problem within the university policies agenda due to the figures that focus on failure. Over ten years ago, La Nación Newspaper, in its 01/19/01 issue, published an article entitled “Why so many people leave their studies. University students: only 19 graduates out of 100 enrolments.” This article states that vocational disorientation, the mistaken ideas on which students base their career choices, and their difficulties to adapt to an unknown and more demanding study environment contribute to increase the number of university dropouts. An unfavorable economic situation also helps: many must prioritize work over studies.

In Argentina, according to the official figures of the year 2000, only 19% of students at public universities graduate. Today, the figures of the UTN (National University of Technology), Mendoza District<sup>2</sup>, increase this figure to 33%; on the other hand the UNCuyo (National University of Cuyo) reports that 38% of students graduate, thus, surpassing the country average in certain courses of study<sup>3</sup>. For the Universities, the loss of students implies a waste of resources in a time of meager budgets. It should also be considered the duration of studies, for most students take half as much than the required time to complete their studies (Aparicio, 2005, 2007 a and b, 2008, 2009 a and b).

There exist plenty of figures and descriptive studies; however, research is inadequate in revealing the actual significance of some factors on which the educational system itself could work in order to reduce the figures of failure, which appear to lie not only in a change of curriculum, improvement of infrastructure or increase of hours, but on attitudes strengthening solidarity and values in order to cope with adversity. Among these factors, there are the motivational ones and those related to them. Other factors dealt with in core research by Aparicio and complementary ones can be seen at en Aparicio 1995-2015, ops cites.

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1 See Aparicio, 2005 a, 2007 a and b, 2009 (HDR, Francia Also Aparicio, 2014 a and c; Adelman, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2001, 2005).

2 <http://www.losandes.com.ar/notas/2013/6/10/indice-719650.asp>. Index UTN. Printed edition, June 10, 2013. It reads: “At the National University of Technology, Mendoza District, the graduation index is assessed using a different methodology, since they consider the relationship between the enrolments and graduations in the same year.

According to the data submitted by the Academic Secretary, Mr. Juan Carlos de la Iglesia, this index has improved since 2003, when the relationship was 15.43%, with 674 enrolments against 104 graduations, the figures in 2012 is 33.62%, with 455 enrolments and 138 graduations.

Although this is relative data, since those entering and those completing university are not the same students, there exists a significant evolution with a favorable figure, said Mr. de la Iglesia, as he sadded he was working to improve this index.”

3 <http://www.losandes.com.ar/notas/2013/6/10/recibe-chicos-ingresan-uncuyo-719648.asp>

The 38% of the students entering the UNCuyo graduates, as a report drawn by this university shows. This percentage surpasses the country average of 27%. Medicine, Engineering, and Odontology provided a better index. Los Andes Newspaper, printed edition, on Monday June 10, 2013.

### **3. Development Plan**

The research was carried out in two instances: quantitative and qualitative. This work followed the quantitative approach. We just deal with the relationship between the Academic Performance Factor at University (UP) and the Motivational Factor, especially in the Fear of Failure as associated to negative performance/relative performance.

### **4. Objectives**

#### **4.1. General Objectives:**

Analyzing the relationship between Academic Performance of students who take longer to complete their studies than the time determined by the curriculum in the system, and the core, sociocultural, psychosocial, pedagogical, institutional and structural variables of the causal model, with a view to detecting the causes and comprehension of this problem. Furthermore, it looks into the core sociocultural, psychosocial, pedagogical, institutional and structural variables of the causal model, with a view to detect the causes and comprehension of this problem.

Being aware of the sociocultural and psychosocial aspects often associated to delay in studies (descriptive and explanatory levels) in order to determine the high-risk population and prevent the situation.

#### **4.2. Specific Objective:**

Analyzing the relationship between the motivational factors and delay in studies.

### **5. Hypotheses**

The hypotheses concerning each of the factors included in the model are not considered. Reference will only be made to the general hypothesis and the relative hypothesis concerning the factor being studied: the motivational factor and associated sub-factors.

#### **5.1. General Hypothesis**

Pedagogical-institutional and structural factors (labor market) as well as psychosocial ones have an impact on the achievement processes associated to academic performance; their interaction could determine selection in higher education and later in the market.

#### **5.2. Specific Hypothesis**

H1/ More motivation and high expectations favor Academic Performance (UP), measured by the number of Years at university (2005-COHORT), pre-established Time for the completion of the course of study according to the corresponding curriculum (ANIPLAN), Not-Passed Subjects (MATPLAN-PASSED), number of Subjects in the corresponding curriculum (MATPLAN), Number of Below-Average (FAILURES), Passes Subjects (MATPLAN).

H1a/ Motivation for learning (MOTLE) has a positive impact on university performance.

H1b/ Motivation for reputation (MOTREP) has a positive impact on university performance.

H1c/ Fear of failure (FEOFA) paralyzes students and impairs university performance

### **6. Guiding Questions**

Theses questions guided our study although in this article we intend to show the influence of motivational factors and, specifically, the “fear to failure” factor in students’ performance; the last of the issues pointed out.

How significant are core and sociocultural variables for Academic Performance and extension in studies?



What psycho-pedagogical-cognitive characteristics have an effective impact on the students' performance?

How significant are job-related factors for the students who worked and/or still work, if we consider that these factors are among the ones ranking first regarding dropout or delay in studies at university?

Are the factors inherent in labor insertion (subjective, like satisfaction, and objective) associated to delay in studies?

How relevant are psychosocial factors in terms of facilitating or obstructing factors of performance?

## 7. Methodology

We used a quantitative (descriptive and predictive levels) and qualitative methodology. Triangulation was later applied. In this work, we only refer to one of the factors included in the model, and to the correlational and predictive analysis related to it.

### 7.1. Population

Individuals in delay according to institutional records = 1,880; simple to 5%= 304; respondents N = 229. They are individuals who have been entering the National University of Cuyo since 1985, have not graduated, are still inside the system, and reenrolled in 2004<sup>1</sup>. The effective sample consisted of all the students who could be located – central problem in monitoring studies – and with whom we could work individually in order to apply the techniques. It is a type of strategic population since – considering the changes made during the period covering studies at the educational, economic and political level – these individuals should meet the new demands of the productive system. The data gathering process was carried out in two stages (registers, data provided by the UNCuyo Statistics Department and an at-home survey / interview).

### 7.2. Techniques

We included a semi-structured survey with variables of different kinds, thus covering a wide pedagogical-institutional, structural, core and sociocultural range. We also included tests in order to measure Motivation/Expectation (Montero and Alonso Tapia), Attributional Style (Seligman, 1991), Coping (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1991) and Resilience (Hendersen & Milstein, 2003; Melillo & Suárez Ojeda, 2003). Finally, to measure Learning Styles (CHAEA), we used Montero and Alonso Tapia's Questionnaire (1992).

We also produced sociocultural factors (Cultural Origin or CULTORI, Social Origin or SOCORI); factors related to the labor world: Satisfaction in the labor world (RESU), Objective Labor Achievement (ROO) and Subjective Labor Achievement (RESU). A composite index is essential in this framework: University Performance (UP). Another core quantitative variable was the Academic Performance factor, based on the equation which includes several indicators.

Finally, among the quantitative techniques we used the interview and open phrases included within a Final Section of the survey, and a lexicometric analysis was later carried out.

Let us now consider just the motivational factor which was measured through the MAPE test (Montero and Alonso Tapia, 1992). Let us consider for a moment the theoretical bases, which will help us understand the reasons for including this factor within the theoretical model and the results. The individuals may feel inclined towards an *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* goal when faced to learning related tasks (Pintrich and Schrauben, 1992); i.e., first, they may focus on learning and development of their capacities, or on the other hand, focus on the execution and the image they show at performing such task.

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<sup>1</sup> According to official data provided by the UNCuyo itself, this population consists of 1,880 students. Considering this list, a sample for finite universes was taken, with a reliability of 95%, or two sigmas ( $p=50$  and  $q=50$ ), and an allowed margin of error of 5%, which implies a sample of 304 units. Then, the sample was set through a proportional system to each of the strata, i.e., according to the relative presence of each Faculty over the universe. The effective sample (individuals making substitution, even when they were not located), makes a total of 229 individuals who are distributed as follows: Philosophy and Literature (Educational Sciences) 15; Economic Sciences (Certified Accountant and Business Management) 69, Political Sciences (Social Communication) 20; Law 67; Medicine 21; and Engineering (Civil, Industrial and Oil Engineering) 37.

Dweck and Elliot (1983) go deeper into this and, based on these two angles, they provide three different possible motivational patterns: *Motivation for learning (MOTLE)*, *Motivation for reputation (MOTRE)*, and *fear of failure (FEOFA)*<sup>1</sup>. Orientation to a certain goal is quite determined by the idea the individual has about the concept of intelligence.

The individuals with learning-oriented goals, and with a motivational pattern based on a *high Motivation for learning*, perceive intelligence as catalog of skills which expands through effort. They think that a suitable reflection on their mistakes helps learning and improving, and they see uncertainty as a challenge to overcome. They are hardworking, show high performance and reject the lack of effort. They show a desire for learning and their expectations are based on the effort they are willing to make.

The *extrinsic* orientation, directed to execution, leads to two kinds of different motivational patterns: *Motivation for reputation* (competition, search for positive judgments) and *Motivation for fear of failure*. These two types of motivational patterns share some features; however, they differ in an *approximation* tendency, which is shown in the motivated individuals by excellence, and an avoiding tendency, present in the fear of failure of the motivated individuals.

The individual oriented to execution goals considers intelligence as something global and stable. They endeavor to project a positive image (Motivation for reputation) or avoid projecting a negative image of themselves (Motivation for fear of failure). They focus on the obtained *product or result*, on showing their *competences* to others. Mistakes are seen as failures or flaws; on the other hand, uncertainty is considered a threat for the assessment of competences they pursue. They look for flattering statements about their competences.

As regards the practice and evaluation procedures, the motivational patterns described have been studied by Montero and Alonso Tapia (1992), authors of the MAPE II Questionnaire. The score obtained by the individuals in each scale is assessed according to whether we talk about positive saturation (1 for affirmative answers and 0 negative ones), or negative saturation (1 for negative answers and 0 for affirmative ones).

On the basis of these criteria, a direct score of the individual is obtained in each of the 6 scales of the questionnaire. This score corresponds to 6 first-order factors; direct score that may be converted to percentile score, referring to the respective attached one. According to the direct score, a percentile score corresponds to each scale. Percentile score allows for a more accurate idea of the individuals' situation in each of the scales that reflect the 6 first-order factors.

Once the score of first-order factors are processed, the score of the second-order factors must be obtained. The three second-order factors are determined on the basis of the direct score obtained in the 6 first-order factors. The assessment is determined based on the following formulas (Roman numbers correspond to the second-order factors and the Arabic numbers correspond to the first-order factors):  $FI = F1 + F2 + (12 - F6)$ ;  $FII = F3 + F5$ ;  $FIII = F4$ .

The direct score of three second-order factors are thus obtained. This score may be converted to percentile score.

In order to interpret this, we need to make reference to Montero and Alonso Tapia (1992) for the first-order factors and to Dweck and Elliot (1983) for the motivational factors. We provide now a brief summary these factors.

### *First-Order Factors*

*Scale 1* makes reference to *high performance and hard-working capacity*, to individuals who consider they take up large amounts of work simultaneously and usually work more than their co-workers.

*Scale 2* shows *intrinsic motivation*, to individuals who think work causes self-satisfaction and it represents challenges. *Scale 3* refers to *ambition*, to individuals who wish to achieve prestige, to get higher ranks at work, and is in search of positive judgments regarding competences.

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<sup>1</sup> In Spanish MOTAPRE, MOTLUCI, MIEFRACA, respectively.

Scale 4 refers to *performance inhibiting anxiety*, to the lack of confidence in the capacity to achieve success, to individuals with a tendency to experience depression after failures. It also refers to the avoidance of difficult situations or to a feeling of anxiety and blockage in view of them.

Scale 5 refers to *performance facilitating anxiety*, to the pressure existing in every test which leads to an improvement in performance. Pressure here helps work and performance.

Scale 6 refers to the lack of effort, to individuals who make frequent breaks while performing their tasks, do not finish them and usually apply the principle of minimum effort.

### Second-Order Factors

According to Dweck and Elliot's contributions, it should be clear that *Factor I* represents Motivation for learning, *Factor II* represents Motivation for reputation or competence, and finally, *Factor III* represents Fear of failure (called here FEOFA).

As regards the latter, in terms of inhibiting anxiety for fear of failure, the author defines it as a lack of confidence in one's own capacity to achieve success, blockage in the face of obstacles, and avoidance of these obstacles. Our histogram, by means of Jarque-Bera test, shows the normality of the variable. The probability of the test accepts the HO of normality ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The high values (close to 12) represent individuals unable to deal with obstacles or problems, who are afraid to fail and this fact leaves them motionless. The low values (close to 0) show the opposite situation; individuals who can deal with difficulties and experience no inhibiting motivation of performance<sup>1</sup>.

Let us now analyze the results.

## 8. Results

### 8.1. Bivariate Analysis

It is not our purpose nor would it be possible to analyze the relationships between the multiple independent variables (model conditions) and the dependent variable (effect: Academic University Performance – UP<sup>2</sup>).

We should say that core, occupational, pedagogical, cognitive and psychosocial variables (Motivation, Attributional Style, Resilience, Coping Strategies) were included in this model. Among the latter, we briefly provide the results for Motivation: Motivation for Learning, for Competences and Reputation, and Fear of Failure (measured through MAPE) in relation with UP (University Performance).

**Summary Table 1: Motivation (MOTLE, MOTREP and FEOFA) vs. UP (Pearson's Correlation)**

<i>n-Ach</i>	<i>Regression Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
<i>MOTLE vs. UP</i>	0.000137	0.9076
<i>MOTREP vs. UP</i>	0.000201	0.8852
<i>FEOFA vs. UP</i>	-0.002507	0.2408

<sup>1</sup> Most of our students remain on the left side, that is, they are not afraid to fail. The results represent a certain consistency, considering that these individuals will not leave university due to fear of failure, despite the difficulties they go through. In other words, "relative" failure has not prevented them from keeping on studying.

<sup>2</sup> In Spanish RU.

This table summarized the findings. As regards Motivation for Learning (MOTLE) vs. University Performance (UP), our findings show that Motivation for Learning has not accounted for a dependent variable, University Performance (UP). Regression in a lineal model (close to 1) does not help verification.

As regards Motivation for Competence and Reputation (MOTREP) vs. UP, it can be seen that it does not account for UP. Regression in a lineal model (close to 1) does not help verification. As regards Inhibiting Motivation for Fear of Failure (FEOFA) vs. UP, regression in a lineal model shows that *Fear of Failure inhibits students*.

In other words, MOTREP and MOTLE show probabilities with quite high values and indicates a lack of lineal association with UP, whereas FEOFA indicates a certain association, although somewhat low.

As a summary, the following Table shows, now from the point of view of correlation, that neither Motivation for Learning nor Motivation for Reputation account for University Performance. This is because it refers to under motivated individuals in both aspects. On the contrary, Fear of Failure inhibits students and reduces their probabilities for success in studies.

**Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients**

	UP	LOG(UP)	MOTLE	MOTREP	FEOFA	RESIOPP
UP	1.000000	0.986687	0.007732	0.009618	-0.077994	0.170907
LOG(RU)	0.986687	1.000000	0.013405	0.015849	-0.083501	0.193229
MOTLE	0.007732	0.013405	1.000000	0.440513	-0.097083	0.112193
MOTREP	0.009618	0.015849	0.440513	1.000000	-0.048622	0.122926
FEOFA	-0.077994	-0.083501	-0.097083	-0.048622	1.000000	-0.037792
RESIOPP	0.170907	0.193229	0.112193	0.122926	-0.037792	1.000000

## 8.2. Multivariate Analysis

Before starting with this multivariate analysis, let us say that the bivariate analysis, even though it plays a specific role, is particularly incomplete as regards Social Sciences, since social facts are complex. Therefore, as a last resort, we have carried out a multivariate analysis for it gets us closer to the actual situation being studied: the causes of performance of delayed students.

### **The Academic Performance Model (UP)**

After presenting the Bivariate Analysis and the regression successive estimates, the most suitable model to account for University Performance and provide the best functional form is the following: Briefly: the variables accounting for Academic University Performance (UP)<sup>1</sup> are RESIBON (Resilience regarding Bonds), RESIOPP (Resilience regarding Opportunities), COPINA (Lack of Coping Strategies), COPIST (Strategy and Effort), PSGOOD Positive Personalization), AGE (Age) and WORKACH (Work Achievement). This means that the motivational factor is not predictive in the framework of the multivariate model on delay in studies. Other factors, especially psychosocial ones, besides Age and Work Positioning, account for part of the phenomenon.

<sup>1</sup> In Spanish (RU=UP) are RESIVINC (RESIBON), RESIOPOR (RESIOPP), COPINA (COPINA), COPIES (COPIST), PSGOOD (PSGOOD), AGE (AGE) and ROO (WORKACH).

## 9. Future Research Research Directions.

As it has been pointed out, this study extends the investigations conducted by Aparicio (1995-2015), and was carried out with different university populations: graduates from two national universities, UNCuyo dropouts, and individuals who take longer to graduate than the time determined by the curriculum in the system and re-enrol in university courses. All the studies cover more than two decades and have been made at different stages. The problem of retention was agreed to be developed because of its relation to achievement, addressing the factors/dimensions that could – as it has been pointed out by the experts – influence on permanence at university.

Fourth level populations (postgraduate: doctoral students/doctors) in the last ten years as well as in the local tertiary level (Teacher Training institutions) were addressed since they could be somewhat affected by difficulties determined by certain reasons and/or historical and structural circumstances. Finally, university professors working within the scientific system will also be considered (doing different research work: full time CONICET or other organisms researchers, university professors conducting research work within the Teacher-Research Programme sponsored by the National Ministry of Education since 1995).

Aparicio has been working on the issue of Achievement/Failure from the educational point of view, complementing it with the viewpoint of Social, Work, and Organizational Psychology.

The objective is to acknowledge what factors may be positive or negative within each organizational institution so as to produce knowledge-based data, transferring them to the political-managerial decision-makers (specially related to Education and Employment) allowing the change of the practices that generate difficulties and contribute to failure.

## 10. Conclusion/Discussion

We are particularly interested in this issue since we consider Education as an essential factor in personal and societal development. Admission to university without retention or graduation could be taken as personal and community failure and results in increased costs for the state, the organizations and the individuals. The organizations in the labour world also demand trained staff, professionalization of the training institutions and/or individuals, and commitment from all the parties involved.

Our studies have shown that those individuals who do not finish their studies are placed in a more vulnerable situation than the graduates. Such situation could improve by implementing support programs to help students overcome motivational and emotional difficulties and thus graduate. Although a degree does not ensure a higher and/or better positioning in the professional world (as it happened during the last century), it improves the individual possibilities of achievement and the organizational quality prospects.

Finally, whether or not our investigations corroborate the findings done of other developed countries, it is important to highlight that the systemic perspective and the studies carried out over long periods of time are essential to allow the comparison of inter-institutional, inter-disciplinary, inter-country achievement profiles which have as background different macro-societal frames (economical, political, cultural, social). In relation to this, Aparicio 2015 c and d) points out the need to develop a more integrative perspective of analysis which combines quantitative factors (measurable) and qualitative factors ("senses" that underlie the actions) and which, when merging, change the direction of the results on Quality, as when it is measured by figures, whether it is in organizations or in countries.

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## Predictors of School Safety Awareness Among Malaysian Primary School Teachers

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### Abstract

*With rising incidents of school violence worldwide, educators and researchers are trying to understand and find ways to enhance the safety of children at school. The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which the demographic variables of gender, age, length of service, position, academic qualification, and school location predicted teachers' awareness about school safety practices in Malaysian primary schools. A stratified random sample of 380 teachers was selected in the central Malaysian states of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Multiple regression analysis revealed that none of the factors was a good predictor of awareness about school safety training, delivery methods of school safety information, and available school safety programs. Awareness about school safety activities was significantly predicted by school location (whether the school was located in a rural or urban area). While these results may reflect a general lack of awareness about school safety among primary school teachers in the selected locations, a national study needs to be conducted for the whole country.*

**Keywords:** School Safety Awareness, Predictors of School Safety, Multiple Regression analysis, Malaysian Primary Schools

### Introduction

The world has recently witnessed increasing incidences of school violence. In Malaysia, UNICEF Malaysia reported that 16% of Malaysian kids were out of school due to violence (UNICEF Malaysia, 2014). Violence in school includes bullying and others. Moreover, 8,015 arrests that were made in 2014, including 12 years-old children involved in criminal activities such as drug abuse, gambling and social problems. In 2013, 7,816 juvenile cases were recorded, mostly involving school students (Royal Malaysian Police Statistics, 2014).

Among the public, there is a growing perception that schools are not as safe as they were before (The Star, 2000). A review of the literature in Malaysia reveals a dearth of in-depth research on the topic of this study. Nevertheless, one study on "Gangsterism in day school" done by the Education Ministry indicates that 30% of secondary schools in Malaysia are threatened by gangsters. Out of 1641 schools, 459 have been classified as high-risk with Penang being the worst affected state (Simrit Kaur, 2000).

### *The Need for School Safety*

The idea of a positive and safe learning environment is necessary for students to learn (Reeves, Kanan & Plog, 2010). A well-functioning school is not only a school that promotes learning, but also attends to safety and teaches socially appropriate behaviour. Reeves, Kanan & Plog (2010) also listed safe school characteristics including balance between physical and psychological safety to create and maintain safe and positive environment.

Giving another concept on school safety, Mastura (2013) defined safety as "the behaviours and practices that protect children and adults from risk or injury" (p.11). She suggested safety of young children is of special concern because they have no sense of danger and the consequences of their action. Mastura (2013) also affirmed that school's environments or school's climate or have a direct impact on students' well-being. Similar concept on school's environment have effect on



students' well-being found in Simmons (1999) whom defined safety as a concern about physical or emotional security. It is a preference for social and physical settings that provide protection and minimize the chances of being attack or hurt.

As from the school's context, safety is perceived as a school environment where children are safe from all types of hazards and risk (UNESCO, 2012). Carbino (2010) set out a safe school is one, where teachers can teach and students can learn in a warm, encouraging, and nurturing environment without the threat and resulting fear of violence occurring at any moment. This is also to say that safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate fosters greater attachment to school and provides the optimal foundation for social, emotional and academic learning (Osterman, 2000; Blum, McNeely & Rinehart, 2002).

Although there is not one list of factors that shape the quality and character of school's life, virtually all researchers agree that there are four major areas that clearly shape school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the (external) environment. Over the last three decades, educators and researchers have recognized that complex sets of elements make up school climate. There is not one commonly accepted "list" of the essential dimensions that colour and shape school climate. A review of research, practitioner, and scholarly writings suggests that there are four major aspects of school life that colour and shape school climate including safety, teaching and learning, relationships and environmental-structural (Cohen, 2006; Freiberg, 1999).

A growing body of research has indicated that a positive school climate is a critical dimension linked to effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts as well as teaching and learning (Cohen, 2001; Juvonen, Le Kaganoff, Augustine & Constant, 2004; Najaka, Gottfredson & Wilson, 2002; Wang, Heartel & Walberg, 1993). Previous research also found a safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate fosters greater attachment to school and provides the optimal foundation for social, emotional and academic learning (Blum, McNeely & Rinehart, 2002; Osterman, 2000).

The search for tools of psychological resistance and the conditions that reduce threats and mitigate the risk of safety inhibition is not only a social need in modern conditions but also the task of special studies. In the psychological context the search for tools and conditions for studying the perception, cognition and assessment of the educational environment for the development of students and teachers is progressive.

Teaching and learning cannot take place in an unsafe environment. The art of creating a peaceful school environment poses great challenges to school management. It is stipulated in the Bill of Right (Act No.108 of 1996), Section [24] that every person has the right to an environment that is not detrimental to his health or well-being. This right also applies to learners, and in principle protects them from being exposed to harmful environments, including the school. The educator, in addition to this duty to teach and educate, is also required to provide education, physical and mental safety to learners (Oosthuizen, et al, 1994).

Further, many researchers agree that physical and psychosocial environment is significantly correlated in which it gives impact on students' achievement and well-being, affect teaching (American Association of University Women & Lewis Harris Associates, 1993; American Association of University Women & Lewis Harris Associates, 2001; Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2004; Prothrow-Stith & Quaday, 1995) and creates barriers to learning (Edmondson et.al, 2009).

### ***The Role of Teachers' Perceptions***

Teachers are on the frontlines when it comes to issues of school safety. They interact with the children on a day-to-day basis and they are the first to know of any acts of violence at school. Brand, Felner, Seitsinger, Burns, and Bolton, (2008) found in a large-scale study that teachers were not only acutely aware of what was going on in terms of school safety, but also that their perceptions positively correlated with students' perceptions, behaviors, and outcomes.

McElearney & Stead (2011) studied 50 participants including teachers, classroom assistants and allied health professional working in mainstream primary and special schools in the Ballymena District Council area. Focus group discussion was conducted to explore the views and experience of participants and valuable insight into the barriers and facilitative factors to teach "keeping safe" message in primary schools in Northern Ireland. Teachers reported varied states of readiness with the development and teaching of "keeping safe" message through preventive education in primary schools. Teachers and other school staff also have varied practices in how they currently taught "keeping safe" message. The special school sector

reported teaching more sensitive message for example appropriate and inappropriate touch. In contrary with teachers from integrated and Catholic Maintained schools, teaching are focus on accident, prevention, internet safety, bullying and stranger danger.

The study also found that teachers varied in their attitudes on expressing their role in safeguarding the welfare of children in schools. Minority of participants expressed reluctance for schools and teachers to take on the responsibility for teaching keeping safe message. However, all teachers, classroom assistants and allied health professionals working in special school acknowledge that they had a role to play in teaching keeping safe messages to children.

In addition to the findings, participants highlighted the opportunity presented by the revised curriculum to embed the teaching of keeping safe message within primary schools. They were clear that any approach to development in this area should include integration across all aspects of the school, the role of the teacher and the training, development and support needs of school staff in teaching keeping safe message (Stephenson, P., McElearney, A., & Stead, J. 2011).

### **The Present Study**

The previous studies discussed in the foregoing paragraphs, as well as other researchers, including Douglas, Warwick, Kemp, and Whitty, G. (1997); Maxwell (2000); Bradshaw, Sawyer, and O'Brennan (2007); Astor, and Meyer (1999); Stockdale, Saidou Hangaduambo, David Duys, Karl Larson, and Paul D. Sarvela (2002); Behre, Astor, and Meyer, (2001); Price and Everett (1997); and Cothran, and Ennis, (1997), have found teachers' perceptions to play a major role in their commitment to creating a positive school climate and in promoting safe school practices. What is not generally highlighted in these studies however, is the extent to which teachers' perceptions and actions could be influenced by important background variables. Drawing from teacher behavior research, we hypothesized that teachers' perceptions about school safety practices could be influenced by the key demographic variables of gender, age, length of service, position, academic qualification, and school location. As Malaysia is grappling with the increasing incidences of school safety breaches, we hoped that this could add important insights on future strategies for dealing with this problem.

### **Method**

This study was conducted using the survey method. A stratified random sample of 378 teachers was selected in the central Malaysian states of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. A survey instrument was created based on the work of Steve Balen, John Dively, Ronald Ellis, Sanford Farkash, Marilyn Holt, John Hunt, Micheal Kotner, Caroll Phelps, Peter Renfroe, Joseph Saban, Lisa Stewart and Don Strom (1999). In this analysis, 26 items were utilised, divided into four dimensions as shown in Table 1. The reliability coefficients ranged between .35 and .886.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Teachers' Perceptions of School Safety Practices***

In general, the sample had average perceptions about school safety practices in Malaysian schools. On a 5-point likert scale, the mean responses ranged between 2.3 (awareness of delivery methods) and 2.5 (awareness of training programs).

#### ***Predictors of Teachers' Perceptions about school Safety***

In order to test the hypothesis regarding the demographic predictors of teachers' awareness about school safety practices in Malaysian primary schools, the researchers used multiple regression analysis (MRA). Below is a summary of the results of the regression analysis.

*Awareness of Training Programs.* The regression equation was not significant ( $F(8,370) = 1.09, p > .05$ ) with an  $R^2$  of .023. None of the independent variables (gender, age, length of service, position, academic qualification, and school location) was a significant predictor of teachers' awareness of school safety training programs.

*Awareness of Delivery Methods.* The regression equation was not significant ( $F(8,370) = 1.57, p > .05$ ) with an  $R^2$  of .033. None of the independent variables (gender, age, length of service, position, academic qualification, and school location) was a significant predictor of teachers' awareness of school safety delivery methods.

*Awareness of Safety Programs.* The regression equation was not significant ( $F(8,370) = 1.57, p > .05$ ) with an  $R^2$  of .035. None of the independent variables (gender, age, length of service, position, academic qualification, and school location) was a significant predictor of teachers' awareness of school safety programs.

*Awareness of Safety Activities.* Standard Multiple regression was used to test the demographic predictors of Malaysian teachers' awareness of safety activities at their respective schools. Overall, the model significantly predicted teachers' awareness of safety activities,  $R^2 = .048, R^2_{adj} = .027, F(8,370) = 2.335, p < .05$ . This model accounts for about 5% of the variance in Social Adjustment (a small effect according to Cohen, 1988). Of the six independent variables only School Location significantly contributed to the model (Table 2).

While we would predict variables like gender to play a major role, it was quite surprising to find that none of them was actually significant. This shows that teachers' perceptions on most aspects of safety were quite similar. The only difference we found was regarding their awareness about school safety activities where location emerged as a significant predictor. Teachers from rural areas had slightly lower means for perceptions of school safety activities (mean=2.5) compared to their urban counterparts (mean=2.7). In general, however, the overall perceptions about school safety practices were low, indicating that more concrete steps need to be taken to reassure the teachers.

## Conclusion

What is presented here is a preliminary analysis of results from a large study. While these results indicate a low rating for perceptions of school safety practices among teachers, they are not conclusive. Further research needs to be conducted to fully understand the mechanism involved.

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## Tables

Table 1.

Dimensions and reliability of the instrument

Dimension	No. of items	Chronbach alpha
Awareness of Training Programs	7	.88
Awareness of Delivery Methods	3	.35
Awareness of Safety Programs	3	.72
Awareness of Safety Activities	3	.886

Table 2

Model coefficients for Awareness about School Safety Activities

	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	-.373	-.062	-1.181	.238
Age	-.282	-.089	-1.144	.254
Length of Service	-.025	-.008	-.105	.916
Position	-.044	-.009	-.158	.874
Acad. qualification	-.299	-.064	-.810	.418
School Location	1.075	.209	3.288	.001

## Adult Autism - Global Challenge of the Future

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### Abstract

*There is an increase awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder recently. The truth is that tens of thousands face an autism diagnosis each year. Even though the integration of autistic children is the focus of many studies in the last decades, the problem remains unsolved. What happens with autistic children as adults? In addition, one of the biggest challenges in providing services to people with an autism spectrum disorder is that the needs change from person to person. This study is focused on parent's point of view. During the interviews the participants raised some important issues. To have their children in the same classes with non-disabled children, was the first won battle of parents of autistic children, but integrating autistic individuals as adults in society seems to be just the cover of a big dilemma for parents of autistic children. Autistic child as adult is a real challenge for society worldwide.*

**Keyword:** autism, society, child, adult, law

### I. Introduction

Today in USA 1 in 91 new born is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (Kurti, V.2013). Even though the main source of the latest statistics is USA, autism is a global phenomenon. Recently a worldwide study was conducted. Based on the evidence reviewed, the median of prevalence estimates of autism spectrum disorders was 62/10 000. While existing estimates were variable, the evidence reviewed did not support differences in PDD (Pervasive Development Disorder) prevalence by geographic region nor of a strong impact of ethnic/cultural or socioeconomic factors (Elsabbagh, M. et al.2012).

Autism is a debated issue. There are a lot of studies on etiology of autism, but the real cause of autism is still unknown. One of the recent studies confirms that autism risks increase with mom's age. Mothers over 40 compared to mothers aged 20-30, have 50% risk to have autistic children (Kurti, V.2010). Another big issue is the relation of autism with MMR vaccination. Jenny McCarthy, a mother of an ex-autistic child confesses this relation, but she still is not against vaccination. She is for vaccination, but before vaccination every child is better to do some analysis in order to decide when the child should be vaccinated. Still Kanner's idea of "fridge mothers" remains a good point to raise hypothesis. Microanalysis studies have shown a close cooperation between infant and mother during first four months of age. Mother's face expressions indicated children's reactions (Vasta, R & Haith, M. M & Miller, A.S.2007). Another source of autism disorder is believed to be the environment pollution (Kurti, V.2013). Taking in consideration all we said above, it seems that the debate around autism is still a kind of nature-nurture problem.

The spectrum of disorder is wide. It includes: Asperger Syndrome, Classic Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Rett's syndrome. This means that the severity of the disability is different for different individuals. Studies on brain structure show that there is not one damaged area, but there are some of them. Based on the severity of the disorder and for practical reasons, autistic children belong to categories such as: Severe Autism; Mild Autism; Moderate Autism or Low-functioning Autism and High-functioning Autism. One of the most successful therapies used today is Applied Behaviour Analysis. Eventhough it is recommended to be used with all sub-categories of autistic children, the results are not always the same (Kurti, V. 2013). The therapies are the best solutions for children with autism spectrum disorder, but the tremendous truth, for parents, is that there is no cure for autism.

### II. Different parents, the same problem

Globally speaking, the majority parents of autistic children seem to be alone, because there are some real obstacles that make them powerless. First of all, there are parents that are not aware of their children's rights. Two of the world laws on people rights are: Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention on the Rights of the child. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees "the right to education...directed to the full development of the human personality and promot(ing) understanding, tolerance and friendship." OKB 1948

Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 includes:

*“Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child .....to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.” Article 23*

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: *“The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.” Article 29 OKB 1989,*

One of the most important battles for parents of autistic children has been integration of their children. The first schools for disable children were like islands. The children were isolated and they were not learning to get along with non-disabled students. One of the real winning cases for parents concerning their children integration was the Salamanca Statement. The Salamanca Statement of 1994 held in Spain adopted a new Framework for Action, the guiding principle of which was that ordinary schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. They agreed a dynamic new Statement on the education of all disabled children, which called for inclusion to be the norm. Salamanka statement

*“...regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system”.*

The Salamanca Statement was the first global instrument explicitly calling for the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular education. Another instrument in December 2006 was the United Nations General Assembly that adopted the CRPD, ( Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), which secures the right to an inclusive education in international law. The CRPD does not simply recognize the right to inclusive education as an entitlement, but presents a framework of goals for inclusive education systems. It establishes obligations for governments and international agencies to provide the supports and conditions required to make quality inclusive education successful for all children and youth with disabilities. UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) describes inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through inclusive practices in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2006). The disabled children now attend school in the same classrooms with non disabled children. But still there is a lot to do. To include an autistic child in a regular classroom means to improve the infrastructure needed in the classroom. This unresolved problem seems be the next battle of the parents of autistic children.

Secondly, parents are stigmatized about their child's disability. Especially in undeveloped countries, people suffer from prejudices. In addition, Autistic individuals are at extreme risk for bullying and abuse throughout their lives. A 2002 study from Comprehensive Issues in Pediatric Nursing found that 94 percent of students with Asperger Syndrome, are bullied. Bullying can occur in schools, institutions or communities, even at home (Bullying and ASD).

Eventhough not all the parents are aware of their children` rights, on the other side, there are parents that have written books about autism. These parents are not afraid to talk freely about their children disorder. They try to explain what autism is, by using their experience. Tupe, E. (2009) as a father of an autistic child, prays to suffer for his child just to have his child “normal”: *“make me suffer, give me all the terrible diseases of the world- aids, lebbra, alzheimer, cancer, schizophrenia...just and only just Gesi be normal, are you listening, N-O-R-M-A-L!”.*

All parents dream is to have a normal child and they know that therapy is the only way to fulfill this dream. Most of them at the beginning meet a specialist to understand the opportunities their child could have if they follow the therapy. A mother of an autistic child Lala, B (2014) is aware of her child disability limits, but she never withdraws from the difficult road of “recovery”: *“In the afternoon I took him 3 times a week in development and psychomotor therapy”* (Lala, B. 2014).

The attitude of parents towards autism depends on their culture, tradition, experience and economic status, but the same, main unsolved issue remains ‘ the future ’.

## Autistic individual as adult

It seems that the focus of all studies is autistic individual as a child. This is a good point because the earlier the child get an accurate diagnose, the sooner his condition can be better. There are a lot of therapies that children can follow. Early Intervention Program is one of the most successful services used with children with Pervasive Developmental Delay in USA. If this program would be used in 1993 the number of autistic children would be smaller today (Kurti, V.2013). Specialists of the field that work with these children have seen a difference between children that are treated early with therapies and the other children that have never had therapies (Saqellari, S. 2011).

But let us think about those individuals that are over 18 years old. The picture is blurred and little is known about them. There is a gap between the information that comes from autistic children and autistic adults. One of the problems that parents of autistic children face every day is the future of their children. Autistic children cannot live independently and productively in the community and cannot live with the same freedom of choice as a non-disabled person. Sometimes they are violent, self-abusive and in many cases they do not behave properly.

Even though the Article 25 of human rights guarantees that: *“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security .....in circumstances beyond his control.”* for autistic individuals there are not many services to help them as adults. In USA the number of children expected to need extensive adult services by 2023, will be more than 380.000 people. The cost of care for these people will be tremendous. Another problem is the services. Not everyone can take care of an autistic as adult. The caregiver should have the right qualities to take care of these disabled people and above all, the caregiver should be empathic. A mother of an adult autistic person gives us some clues: *“When I look at my pudgy 22-year-old son, Randy...I wonder who will love or at least protect him when he ends up in a group home run by an underpaid, overworked staff”*. She admits that taking care of an autistic person is a real challenge and services in USA are dangerously strained: *“Along with housing, day programs, transportation to those programs or jobs, and higher-than-average medical costs, adults with autism require steady supervision and support. Later she concludes: “This country urgently needs to focus on adult autism”* (Davis, H.L.2009)

As the problem grows beyond USA, we have to consider thousand of parents worldwide that are distressed about their children future. In Albania 20 years ago the notion “autism” was unknown ( Saqellari, S. 2011). Today people are aware of this disorder but still there are no public services for autistic adults. There are some centers that use therapies and give support for autistic children with a modest staff of specialists on the field. There are no statistics about the number of autistic children and adults. Adult autistic families suffer in silence and pray for something to be done.

## Method

The sample for the current study includes mothers, of autistic children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Asperger’s Disorder, Autistic Disorder, Rett’s syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, not otherwise specified) based on DSM-IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disabilities). Parents are members of MEDPAK (Protect the Rights of Parents of Persons with Disabilities), a non-governmental organisation in Albania.

There were five interviews conducted with mothers of autistic children. Their children spend the most of the time at home. Economic conditions and social services were the main topic they were worried about, but above all, these mothers were desperate about the future of their children. The interviews were conducted in different days. The moderator gave an overview of the topic, made them sure that everyone point of view would be appreciated. They were made aware they were free to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. After the moderator created a warm and friendly environment, confidentiality was ensured to all participants.

During the analysis process it was used the textual analysis, which includes a wide variety of things that can be analysed. The process of qualitative analysis aims to bring meaning to a situation rather than the search for truth focused on by quantitative research. In order to minimize the potential bias introduced in analysing and interpreting interviews data, Krueger & Casey (2000) point out that the analysis should be systematic, sequential, verifiable, and continuous.

The first step was indexing and charting as a form to manage the data. It was used a computer-based approach for cutting, pasting, sorting, arranging and rearranging data through comparing and contrasting the relevant information. It was numbered each line of each transcript and two hard copies of each transcript were made; one to cut up and one that stays intact for later reference. Later the transcripts was printed on different colored paper to identify the groups. Then it was



arranged the working transcript in a reasonable order, i.e. categories of participants: age, female. This arrangement helped the moderator to be alert to changes that maybe occurring from one person to another. At the end it was written on each page one of the questions to be analyzed. Because the author had several mothers, lines were drawn to divide the paper into sections and then comments within these sections. Later responses to the same question from all mothers responses were read. The author cut out relevant quotes and taped them to the appropriate place on the large sheet of paper. The quality of quotes varied. The unused quotes were left aside for later consideration. At the end of this process an overview was prepared integrating paragraph that described responses to that question. When this was finished, the author went to the next question, and so on.

For interpretation of coded data Krueger (1994) provides seven established criteria: words; context; internal consistency; frequency and extensiveness of comments; specificity of comments; intensity of comments; big ideas. First of all the moderator thought about the actual words used by the participants and the meanings of those words. The analyst needed to determine the degree of similarity between the responses. Later the analyst examined the context by finding the stimulus that triggered participants responses and interpreted the comment in light of the environment. Sometimes there was a shift in opinion and in order to discover the internal consistency, the researcher traced the flow of the conversation. The frequency relates to consideration of how often a comment is made. There were topics of special interest to participants. The conversation was not video- taped so the intensity was difficult to be spotted. Intensity is communicated by the voice tone, speed or emphases on different words. Based on specificity, responses that were specific and based on the first person experiences were given greater attention. Another thing to be considered by the analyst was 'big ideas'. Krueger (1994) suggests taking a break for a few days at this stage in order to refocus on the big picture.

During the interviews, mothers of autistic children expressed concern about their child life as adult: *" I pray every day for my son. Some time I just want to die....but I have to live for my child. Who is going to help him? I don't want to imagine it...."*  
Mother one

*"I don't know, I don't have time to think about it. May be my other son will take care of his brother."* Mother two

Some parents believe science can do miracles about disabilities.

*"I hope there will be a solution for my daughter. .... You know science will do something."*

There were even drastic decisions like: *"...if I am going to die, he will come with me.... I love him too much to leave him alone."*

### III. Conclusion

This study aimed to understand the parent's point of view concerning their autistic children future. If we try to make a portrait of the situation concerning the autistic as adult, there would be a lot of feelings. The pessimistic one is what we cannot change. Having an autistic child is a burden not a parent can hold, especially when the diagnosis is low functioning autism. Autistic individuals are people that see the reality in a different way. It is our duty to understand, support and try to do our best about their future. At least we should explain our non-autistic children the situation. Eventhough the science is focusing on autistic children, about the factors that cause autism, or their school integration, the main issue remains autistic future. Autistic adults, belonging low functional autistic group, are in real threat. Parents of autistic children around the world seem to be suspicious about society and services. On the other hand, they cannot change the laws of nature and some day their children have to be alone. In this situation they just live for today and pray for the future.

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## Physical Activity of Young Persons and Importance of Involvement of Parents to Increase Their Performance

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### Abstract

*Game and physical activity are the main tools for children to learn because they learn quickly through personal experience and multi-sensor teaching methods which encourage their natural sense of curiosity. Game, in all its forms, presents numerous possibilities for interaction of children with persons and objects in real and imaginary situations. Small children must have a committed specialist to interact even with the parents. In this way children will try hard to improve what they know better by helping and inspiring them as a way promoting interest and will to continue learning. Scholars consider quite positive the involvement of parents in the learning process because parents are constantly informed of the situation and progress of their children. This applies even to the classes of physical education and training sessions in all sports disciplines where teacher-parent cooperation would strongly affect the improvement of their children performance. By knowing better the specifics of sports activities and its role in their psycho-motor development, there have to be used all the possibilities to encourage children to be involved in sports activities and there have to be found all the possibilities to increase their performance. From over experience as teacher of physical education, trainer of young ages and professional basketballer I have learned that involvement of parents and cooperation with them is extremely useful and this is the reason why I have elaborated further on this topic. An ideal environment for the children is a teaching environment of work flow, high quality and careful programme planning.*

**Keywords:** teacher, parent, cooperation, physical activity, motor development

### Introduction

There are various perceptions of scholars concerning parents' involvement in the teaching process. Scholars group parents' involvement into two categories: home-based involvement and school-based involvement. Sheldon (2003) defines home-based involvement as a parent-child interaction in relation to school or other learning activities and he introduces the concept of direct investment of parent's sources in the education of children. School-based involvement concerns the possibilities of involvement and regular communication with the. According to Leving, parents' involvement must be encouraged because positive messages which are important for the education of children, will be send to the latter. It is important for parents to be frequently informed of the performance of their children even through their conversation with the children. In this way children are encouraged to make utmost efforts knowing that they will be supported and their self-confidence will be improved. In the long run, the situation of child, the parent-child relations will be improved and a positive attitude of parents in relation to the teacher, trainer, team and its managers will be developed.

In 1996, Griffit undertook a study in the school premises to see the involvement and satisfaction of parents. School climate is closely linked to the parents' satisfaction resulting from their being informed. Griffit found that parents were mostly involved in educational activities rather than second-hand activities of our academic system. The same finding applies to our country. This wrong approach must be changed because physical activity is extremely important in the psycho-motor development of children and parents' involvement is as important in the attainment of the objectives

### Aim and object of the study

The aim of this study is to promote parents' involvement during training of their children in various sports activities and improve quality of training of children considering the parent as the success key for the young age who are on the focus of this study. Parents must be encouraged to attend and join several activities performed by their child in order to reproduce them in other premises- repeating all the movements and having some joyful moments with their children.

The object of this study is: assessment of involvement of parents in the school system and during physical activity outside the school system in Tirana.

### Methodology

The study is based on two standard questionnaires, one addressed to parents and one addressed to the teachers of physical education and trainers in Tirana based on Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of several questions of Likert scale which define five possible answers: strongly disagree /disagree /undecided/agree/strongly agree. The study will be focused on parents of children aged 6-10 years and also specialists working with this age group because they are the age groups on which the study is based.

### Result

Results obtained from the questionnaire addressed to teachers and trainers are as follows:

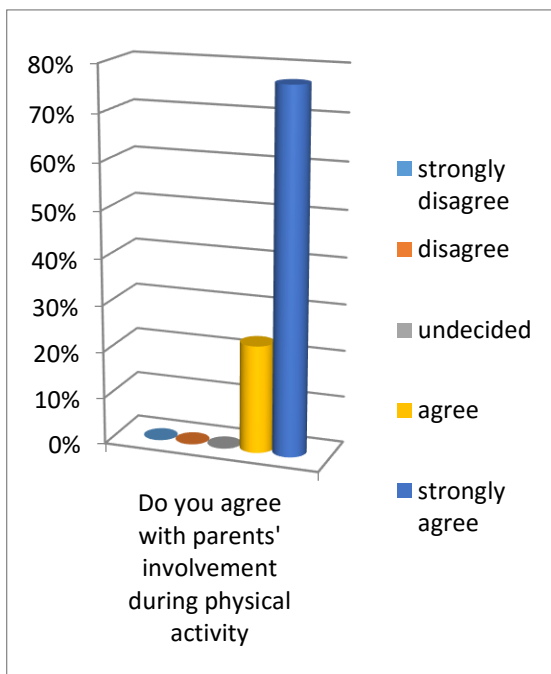


Figure 1.

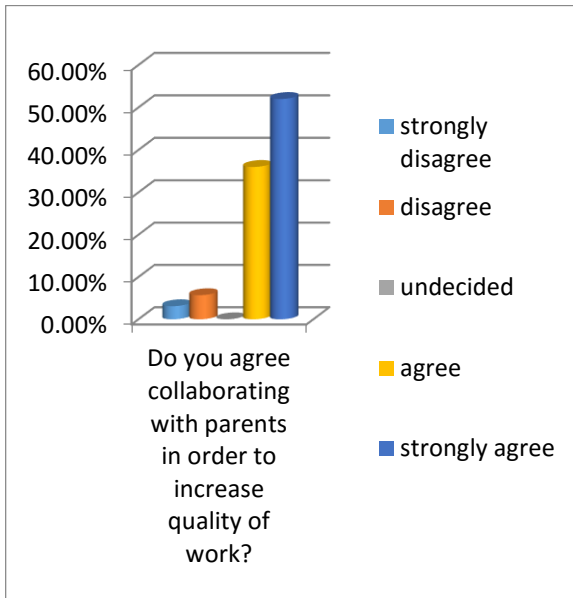


Figure 2.

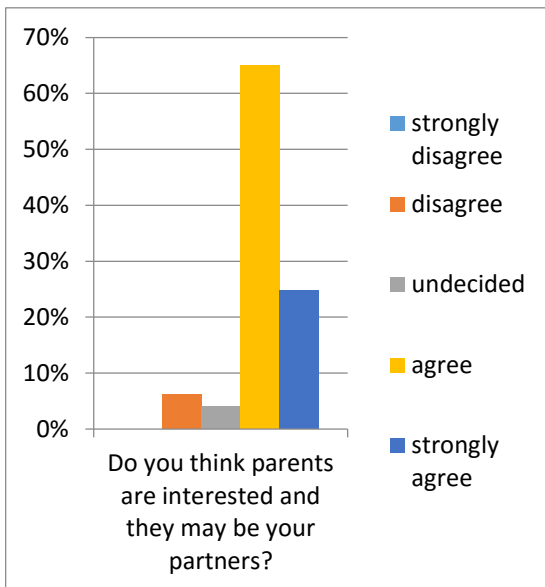


Figure 3

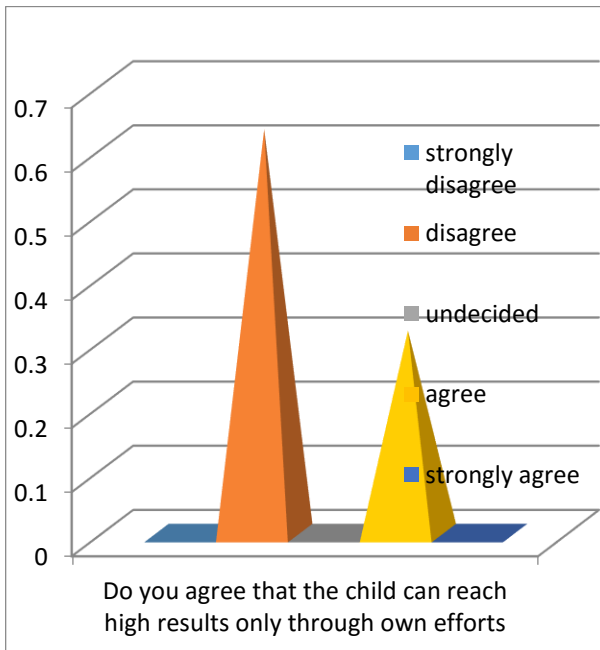


Figure 4

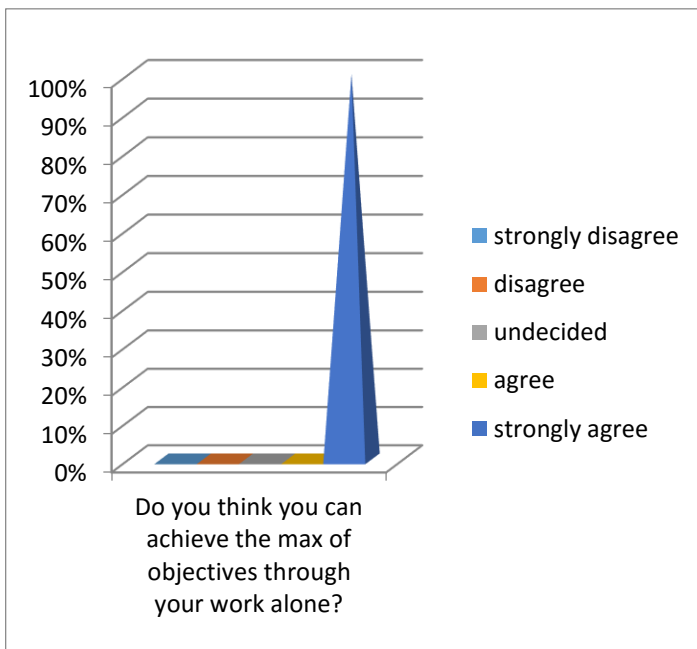


Figure 5

It is quite obvious that 77% of teachers and trainers consider important the involvement of parents during physical activity and the results show that the parent-child-specialist partnership triangle is as important as it is in other subjects (Figure 1). On the other hand, even though only 52% of them strongly agree to collaborate with parents, 36% agree; there are 8.8% of them who disagree (Figure 2). While the respondents emphasize that parents are interested in the performance of their children and obtaining high results (Figure 3).

The question – Do you think that you can achieve the max of objectives through your work alone- gets 100% the answer – agree (Figure 5) and this contradicts the result of the question – Do you think that the child can reach high results only through own efforts? – over which 5.4 % strongly disagree, 63 % disagree and 31.6 % agree.

The teachers and trainers are aware of the importance of involvement of parents because the presence of parents of small age groups is important and encouraging results, but we see that the teachers find it difficult to collaborate with parents and involve them with suggestions and consultation based on the result of answers to the survey – 100% admit that the maximum results may be achieved through their work and 68.4% admit that the child may reach maximum results only through own efforts.

Results of the questionnaire addressed to parents are as follows:

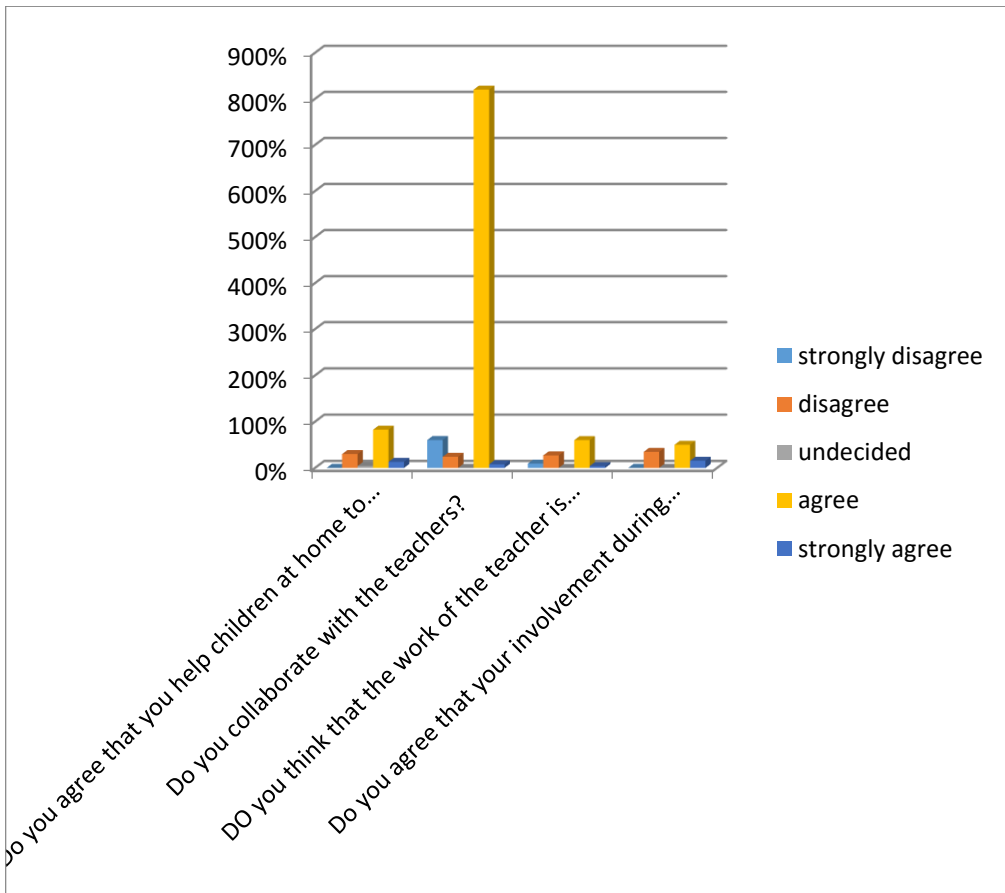


Figure 6

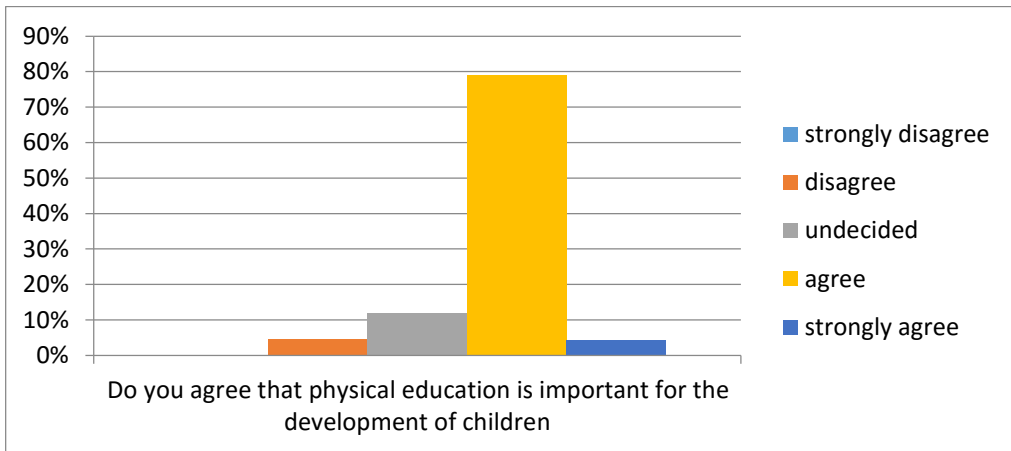


Figure 7

The result shows that parent help children at home and this has an influence in improving their emotional status as a very important element for the development of sports activities. On the other hand, they see collaboration with the parents as very important aspect. There is overall agreement that with the efforts of the trainer/teacher alone, children may not obtain highest results. Most of the respondents consider and accept that physical activity is very important for the psycho-motor development.

## Discussion

Building and developing school-family partnership is one of the current topics of discussion and professional approach of heads of educational, sports establishments, teachers, sports specialists and scientific researcher of this field. This is not only because of the interest of these institutions in improving quality of their service, but also on the fact that the family has a considerable potential and role in the effectiveness of education of children.

The study is focused specifically on this field and the service of responsible structures (school, trainers, teachers etc) and it aims at making not only an analysis of quality of development of this relationship, but also providing an approach concerning this aspect by making it part of the methodology that may be applied in schools and during physical activity outside the institution in order to increase performance of children in the primary cycle of education.

The study analyses several aspects and characteristics which are observed in the experience of our schools and trainers of various sports teams in their cooperation with parents. In this context, the characteristics, barriers and difficulties encountered by the parents in relation to the teachers of physical education who fail to ensure their effective involvement in the education process of their children has been analyzed and presented. The study considering the experience gained and especially the common interest of institutions and parents in the sustainable development of quality in the classes of physical education, introduces and develops the thesis that involvement of and partnership with parents must gain a new dimension, that of commitment of parents in the process of education, specifically learning process. It cannot go without saying that children see their parents as heroes and the latter will be of great help in increasing quality of physical education so as to control and adjust their emotional situation which is an important aspect for their physical activity. Such emotional situation affects to a considerable extent all their actions and behavior. The poor physical condition and frequent tiredness lead to lack of mood of the child and consequently they get angry and bored. As a result they might even abandon classes at school, lack willingness to move and attend various sports with the justification that they are tired, they have headache, their feet hurts etc. This condition will make them even more passive and this will lead to negative consequences on their body. In such cases, intervention of parents with injection of optimism will improve self-confidence which on its turn will be transformed into strength and work by the children. Learning and various sports movement is not tiring if the child has the



will, interest and motivation. However, interests and will to exercise and learn may be encouraged and stimulated through the parent's example.

Personality is mainly defined by features which do not concern the level of knowledge; instead they are closely linked to fundamental positions and goals of a person. Education does not concern with the mind only; it concerns with the heart and spirit. Life skills are qualities that are developed from various daily life phenomena.

## Conclusion

Teachers and trainers consider important the involvement of parents in this process as they consider it useful in obtaining the intended results based on the specifics of each child. Parents' involvement must be considered an important method to achieve results in efforts of children and teacher's work with the children because involvement of parents has a positive impact on the moral situation of children, building self-confidence and overcoming communication skills with peers and teachers, easily overcoming any embarrassing situation caused because of limited physical capacities etc. To conclude, the role of parents of young age groups is very important because the parent is the best example to be followed by them.

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## Modeling the Relation Between Self-Esteem, Loneliness and Engagement as Factors of Children Achievement in Science

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### Abstract

*Students' mental health plays an important role in child's daily life. Many studies declared that self-esteem, loneliness and engagement could be a crucial factors that affect students' learning and performance in school. This study is examining the relationship of these three factors with child's achievement in science. The study involved 260 (grade 4 to grade 6) Arab children studying at Arab schools in Kuala Lumpur-Malaysia. Data were collected via three questionnaires (for self-esteem, loneliness and the third one for student engagement), and student science achievement determined by students' GPA scores from their schools. All the questionnaires are valid and reliable according to the Cronbach's Alpha value. The correlational data analysis yielded a negative correlation between self-esteem and loneliness while there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and engagement and between self-esteem and achievement in science. Furthermore, the results showed that both students' self-esteem and engagement is significantly predicted students' achievement in science. Furthermore, results reveal that all the goodness-of-fit indexes fulfilled the requirement of the acceptable model fit with significant paths and correlation. The Model has provided a reasonable explanation of the structural model of students' self-esteem, loneliness, engagement and achievement in science.*

**Keywords:** Self-esteem, loneliness, engagement, childhood, academic performance, achievement in science.

### Introduction

Many non-cognitive factors (such as, mental health, cultural background, previous academic performances, study skills, and many more) may have an influence on a student's achievement and performance in school and life as well. Many researchers asserted the importance of examining the non-cognitive factors related to academic performance (Coetzee, 2011). Not only that, previous research has tied the quality of children's social relationships to their academic achievement (Tassin, 1999), the quality of peer relations has been associated both with students' academic orientations and with their school performance (Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005). Lu & Zhou (2013) find poorer achievement and greater loneliness among migrant children who are isolated in migrant schools.

### Theoretical Background

Researchers have suggested that achievement in science in secondary school is a function of many interrelated variables. However, there are school-related variables such as students' academic engagement that can be influenced and are

amenable to change by educational interventions. Thus, understanding the role of such factors as motivation, interest, attitudes, and academic engagement on achievement has attracted serious attention in recent years (Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2002). Similarly, results of many researches support the necessity for studying, learning environments and their relation to socioemotional factors such as self-esteem (Booth & Gerard, 2011).

Good theoretical reasons exist for positing a causal link between self-esteem and school success. Healthy self-esteem has been associated with internal locus of control, perceptions of competence, persistence in the face of challenges, coping skills, social support, and a variety of other qualities that are likely to better equip students to succeed in school (Whitesell, Mitchell, Spicer, & Team, 2009).

Early theorists defined and used self-concept in general terms as global perceptions of self-worth, or self-esteem (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Although the terms self-concept and self-esteem are often used interchangeably, they represent different but related constructs. This self-concept is seen in more general terms (Campbell, 1967), it refers to a student's perceptions of competence or adequacy in academic and nonacademic (e.g., Social, behavioral, and athletic) domains and is best represented by a profile of self-perceptions across domains. Self-esteem is a student's overall evaluation of him- or herself, including feelings of general happiness and satisfaction (Manning, 2007)

Theories of self-esteem have been based on one of two fundamentally different assumptions about the essential nature of self-esteem. Traditionally, intrapersonal theorists have conceptualized self-esteem as a person's private self-evaluation. Humanistic approaches that dominated thinking about self-esteem in the middle of the 20th century likewise viewed self-esteem as a personal evaluation of one's goodness or worth (MacDonald, Saltzman, & Leary, 2003).

Issues of self-esteem are likely to arise in middle and late childhood, children become more aware about managing and controlling their emotions to meet social standards. A greater sense of social awareness arises because of the wide increase of significant others, as well as some internalisation of the perceived values and norms of society could lead to those issues. At his stage, statements of self-image will include emotionality, interpersonal references, as well as trait labels (Alpay, 2000) and is so necessary as to be the prime motivator of all behavior (Campbell, 1967).

Promoting high self-esteem is important because it relates to academic and life success (Al Khatib, 2012; Manning, 2007). Research indicates that persons who maintain positive self-concepts with higher self-esteem tend to report more positive affective states, greater wellness, more life satisfaction and fewer depressive symptoms which in turn affect their performance in school (Yaacob, Juhari, Talib, & Uba, 2009) (Campbell, 1967). More recent longitudinal investigations of the link between self-esteem and academic achievement have found as much indication that achievement enhances self-esteem as they have that self-esteem enhances achievement (Whitesell et al., 2009).

According to Booth & Gerard (2011) much research has validated the assumption that high self-esteem is associated with educational achievement. Self-concept is frequently positively correlated with academic performance, but it appears to be a consequence rather than a cause of high achievement. This suggests that increasing students' academic skills is a more effective means to boost their self-concept than vice versa (Manning, 2007).

Moreover, Various research indicated that self-esteem was negatively correlated with some other mental problems such as loneliness (Al Khatib, 2012). In Malaysia, Yaacob, Juhari, Talib, & Uba (2009) examined the degree of relationships between loneliness, stress and self-esteem with depression among adolescents. The findings of the study showed that loneliness, stress and self-esteem have moderate significant relationships with depression and stress emerged as the strongest predictor of adolescent depression.

Loneliness is a distressing, painful experience that humans want to avoid. Most people are probably going to have a significant experience of loneliness some time in their lives (Al Khatib, 2012). Loneliness is a complex emotion resulting from deficiencies in fulfilling intimate or social needs (Tassin, 1999). It is an important aspect of psychological distress in childhood and adolescence (Lu & Zhou, 2013). Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw (1984) found that more than 10% of children from third through sixth grade reported feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. Perlman & Peplau (1984) defined loneliness as an unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is significantly deficient in either quality or quantity. This definition shares three points of agreement with the way most other scholars view loneliness (Alhoot & Abdallah, 2015).

1. loneliness results from a deficiency in a person's social relationships.

2. Loneliness is a subjective experience; it is not synonymous with objective social isolation. People can be alone without being lonely, or lonely in a crowd.
3. the experience of loneliness is aversive, unpleasant and distressing.

Several studies have explored the causes of loneliness, one set of the causes lies in cultural and situational environments such as changes in social networks, and changes in personal relationships especially loss of significant relationships (Al Khatib, 2012).

From middle to late childhood, loneliness appears to be an indicator of internalizing emotional problems and negative self-perceptions such as anxiety, shyness, depression, or low self-esteem (Bonetti, 2009). The available evidence suggests that loneliness is associated with poor mental health, loneliness was associated with indices of poor personality integration (Perlman & Peplau, 1984). Barrett & Mosca (2013) found that social isolation is a significant feature of the lives of return migrants. In a study conducted by Shouqair on a sample of 290 pupils from second grade of middle school in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the results showed a positive relationship between self-esteem and mutual social relations and a negative relationship between the scores of members of the two samples in appreciation of self-esteem and loneliness (Shouqair, 1993).

Salomon and Strobl examined loneliness, social support, and help-seeking behavior in children, ages 9 to 13. Participating were 330 fourth to sixth graders from middle and low income families from the Montreal, Canada region, who completed two questionnaires measuring feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction and help-seeking. Independent variables were sex, school performance, and socioeconomic status (SES). The results indicated that children with lower school performance were significantly more lonely than children with higher school performance, and more particularly expressed feelings of rejection and isolation. Sex and SES had no effect on the loneliness score (Salomon, A.; Strobel, 1996). Similarly, Noramn (2003) examined the identification and perception of 170 middle school children in the seventh grade in a public school in Tennessee to determine the extent and direction of the relationships among children's loneliness scores, The results indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between students' loneliness scores and school performance (Norman, 2003).

From the educational literature, it is clear the relationship between student achievement, loneliness and self-esteem. There is general agreement amongst researchers that students who are underachieving at school are also likely to have low self-esteem, and that improvements in self-esteem will lead to improvements in achievement (Alpay, 2000). A low self-esteem may be exhibited through several operations by the child such as avoidance, compensation, low motivation, and resistance (Alpay, 2000), this could also leads to loneliness as low self-esteem is a one of the most powerful predictors of loneliness (Mahon, Yarcheski, Yarcheski, Cannella, & Hanks, 2006; Harward, 1989).

Recently, the concept of school engagement has been receiving increased attention from researchers, policy makers and educators because they consider it an important precursor of positive school outcomes. literature review revealed that academic engagement has been shown to be amenable to influence through school or classroom practices (Nako, 2015).

According to Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) there has been a substantial variation regarding the terminology of engagement in research. Engagement often appears with other words as shown in the terms: "school engagement", "academic engagement", and "student engagement" ("student engagement in academic work" and "student engagement in/with school") (Fredericks et al., 2004) .

With regard to the use of the terms of "student engagement" and "school engagement", Appleton, Christenson and Furlong (2008) argued that "school engagement" accentuates only the role of school context, not the influences of other contexts such as family and community. Alternatively, "student engagement" is applied in terms of both school settings and academic work in classroom contexts. They observed that student engagement includes academic engagement (e.g., time on academic task), cognitive (e.g., the use of self-regulation and meta-cognition strategies), behavioral (e.g., attendance and participation in both curricular and extra-curricular activities) and psychological engagement (e.g. identification). Thus, "student engagement" can be used to represent both "school engagement" and "academic engagement" (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008).

Student engagement is often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004) (Hoff & Lopus, 2014) (Veiga, 2012). Several types of engagement were noted – academic, cognitive, intellectual, institutional, emotional, behavioral, social, and psychological to name a few (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

However, there are some disagreements across the different conceptualizations in relation to the number of dimensions of engagement. In the literature, three dimensions of student engagement are typically described: cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement and emotional. Fredericks et al. (2004) distinguishes between cognitive, behavioural and emotional engagement.

1. Cognitive engagement, which refer to students' personal commitment with their learning. It can be understood as students' psychological investment in their own learning. When cognitively engaged, students concentrate, focus on achieving goals, are flexible in their work and cope with failure. This is different from high performance: a student who is performing well may still be disengaged if they are coasting and not motivated to exert themselves more than is necessary to get by.
2. Behavioural engagement, which represents students' participation in classroom, school and after-school activities. This includes adhering to behaviour rules, attending lessons as required and arriving at classes on time. Importantly, behavioural engagement refers to the learning behaviours that are important for high student performance, which may include collaboration and communication with peers.
3. Emotional engagement (also as affective engagement), which reflects students' affective reactions to school, teachers and peers. This has also been called 'identification' with school and learning practices. Students are engaged when they feel included in the school and feel an emotional bond with the school, its teachers and their peers.

Overall, there is an agreement that student engagement is a multidimensional construct. All three dimensions of student engagement (behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement) are considered as imperative components in student learning.

Among students who stay in school, there is accumulated evidence that greater student engagement is associated with better academic outcomes (Appleton et al., 2008). Student engagement has primarily and historically focused upon increasing achievement, positive behaviors, and a sense of belonging in students so they might remain in school (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). The positive consequences of the engagement can be felt on psychological development and on the general well-being of the student (Fredericks et al., 2004). There are a number of benefits of students' engagement with school. For example, (Fullarton, 2002):

- Young people who have positive feelings towards school and who are active participants in a variety of school activities are more likely to stay in school and are more likely to become independent learners.
- Other studies have found positive relationships between a student's engagement and academic achievement and with other educational outcomes, including better attendance and aspirations to higher levels of education. While dissatisfaction with aspects of school life has been demonstrated to be a key issue for non-completion of secondary school.

Psychological disengagement refers to “a defensive detachment of self-esteem from one's outcomes in a domain such that self-esteem is not contingent upon one's successes or failures in that domain” (Nako, 2015). Clearly, student engagement is a rich research area. Educators must continue to seek to understand and apply specific, well-considered, if not agreed upon, strategies that support student engagement in learning both in and beyond the classroom (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

### **Statement of the problem**

A lot of attention has been given to the children mental health as one of the most influential factors on their academic achievement (Alhoot & Abdallah, 2015). The deformation of the self-concept can lead to loneliness (Hamza, 2003). Low self-esteem was associated with high levels of loneliness, it emerged as the most significant predictor of loneliness (Al Khatib, 2012; Vanhalst, Luyckx, Scholte, Engels, & Goossens, 2013). A path analysis supported the model; a lack of peer acceptance in the classroom in 4th grade predicted lower academic self-concept and more internalizing symptoms the

following year, which in turn, predicted lower academic performance in 6th grade (Flook et al., 2005). Vanhalst et al., 2013 investigated the direction of effects between loneliness and self-esteem in two independent longitudinal studies, and the underlying role of social acceptance was investigated. Results indicated that self-esteem and loneliness influenced one another in a reciprocal manner. Furthermore, the dominant path from self-esteem to loneliness was partially mediated by perceived—but not actual—social acceptance (Vanhalst et al., 2013).

On the other hand, the consequences of not engaging students in learning are reportedly dire; some educationists consider engaging disengaged pupils to be one of the biggest challenges facing educators, as between 25% and over 66% of students are considered to be disengaged (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

However, while the relationship between mental health and achievement is well established, the nature of the link remains a matter of considerable debate. Therefore, the major purpose of this study is to test the relationship between Arab children's self-esteem, loneliness and their achievement Arabic schools in Malaysia. It also investigate if self-esteem and loneliness are predicting factors of arab children achievement.

For more specification, the study aims at answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of loneliness, self-esteem and engagement among Arab children's in Malaysia?
2. Is there any significant correlation between loneliness, self-esteem, engagement and achievement in science of Arab children's in Malaysia?
3. Do the hypothesized measurement model for the loneliness, self-esteem, engagement and achievement in science fit the collected data from Arab children's in Malaysia?

Based on the literature review of motivation and engagement; the research hypotheses are presented as follows.

H1: Students' Loneliness has a negative relationship with students' self-esteem.

H2: Students' Loneliness will predict students' engagement.

H3: Students' Loneliness will predict student achievement in science.

H4: Students' self-esteem will predict students' engagement.

H5: Students' self-esteem will predict their achievement in science.

H6: Students' engagement will predict their achievement in science.

H7: Students' engagement mediate the relationship between their self-esteem and their achievement in science.

## **Research Method**

### **Research design**

This research is a descriptive in nature; its key purpose is a description of the state of affairs, as it exists at present. Surveys are concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions that either exist or existed (Kothari, 2004). According to this research methodology, the researcher achieved the objectives of the study by using suitable methods for data collection such as, a questionnaire to identify the level of self-esteem and loneliness among Arab children's in Arabic schools in Malaysia.

## The Sample

The sample in this study was randomly selected from four Arab schools in Kuala Lumpur city: which resulted in 260 students (age average 10.8 years) in the middle stage. Table (1) illustrates the research sample in terms of gender and class. The male students formed 43.1% of the sample while the female students formed about 56.9%. Concerning the students' class, (28.8%) from the fourth class, 39.6% fifth class and 31.5% are from sixth class.

## Materials

In order to model the relationship between children level of loneliness, self-esteem and engagement, the researchers adapted three instruments; revised version of the self-report UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale developed by Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona (1980), and Index of Self-esteem (ISE) A 25-item questionnaire developed by Hudson (1982), and Fredricks and his collages scale to measure school engagement in elementary school students.

The adapted UCLA-R Loneliness Scale comprises 20 items that presented statements about children's feeling of Loneliness. The items are 3 Likert scale (usually, sometimes, never). The scale divided into three sub-scale: social relationship (6 items), rejection (9 items) and loss of mutual intimacy (5 items). Cronbach's alpha, the measure of reliability, was calculated for the scales and subscales; " social relationship " had an alpha of 0.71, "rejection" had an alpha of 0.76, and " loss of mutual intimacy " had alphas of 0.706. The overall scale had an alpha of 0.75. All scales and subscales were greater than 0.7, which is considered "acceptable" for exploratory research.

This study utilized the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) (Hudson, 1982). This 25-item index is intended to measure the amount, intensity, and/or significance of a problem an individual has with self-esteem. The items are rated on a Likert scale from 1-3 (usually, sometimes, never). 3 items has been deleted according to the results of validity and reliability test. The researchers test the reliability using Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient. The results of Cronbach's Alpha for the 22 items scale indicate that the overall scale had an alpha of 0.85. This means that the instrument has a good reliability and can be used to measure children self-esteem.

Fredricks and his collages developed this scale to measure behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of school engagement in elementary school students. The scale includes 15 items (4 items for behavioral, 6 items for emotional and 5 items to test the cognitive domain) which were drawn from variety of measures and several additional items. The reliability of the scales was also examined across demographic characteristics. In general, the results were similar for boys and girls. The reliability for the behavioral engagement scale ( $\alpha = .67$ ) was slightly lower for third grade than for fourth ( $\alpha = .74$ ) and fifth grade ( $\alpha = .73$ ). The reliability for emotional engagement was similar across the grades at both waves. (Fredricks et al., 2004).

## Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling using AMOS 22 was used to test the hypothesized model. To evaluate the fit of overall model fitness, the following tests were employed: Chi Square Statistic ( $\chi^2$ ), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI). All these indices are among the most frequently used.

Chi Square Statistic ( $\chi^2$ ) tests the independence of the hypothesized model and the analyzed covariance. If the  $\chi^2$  is not significant, usually if  $p > 0.05$ , then the null model is accepted. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is based on the assumption that a perfect model fit is unrealistic and that reality can only be approximated. If the value of RMSEA is less than 0.05, it indicates a reasonable approximation to the data. Some authors have also suggested that a value 0.08 can also be regarded as a reasonable fit indicator. Normed Fit Index (NFI) compares the proposed model to a model in which no relationship is assumed. NFI values of 0.90 and above are generally assumed to be good indicators of model fit. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is the "standardized summary of the average covariance residuals". When the value is fairly close to zero the model is said to be of reasonable fit. Lastly, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) measures the proportion of variance and covariance that the proposed model is able to explain. The GFI indices



range from zero to one, where one indicates a perfect fit. Models with GFI values of 0.90 or above can be considered to be reasonable approximation of the data. Along with all these indices, the path coefficients have been scrutinized carefully.

## Results

The main aim of this study is to model the relationship between children level of loneliness, self-esteem, engagement and their effect on science achievement of grade 4-6 children in Arab schools in Malaysia. It also investigate if loneliness, self-esteem and engagement are predicting factors of arab children achievement in science. Therefore, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized model.

### 1. Results of descriptive statistics

The questionnaires were used to asked children to report their feeling of loneliness and self-esteem and engegment. table (2) includes the means and standard deviations about Arab children's feeling of loneliness, self-esteem and their engegment in science classroom.

The results in table 2 show that Arab children have a moderate level of loneliness with 53.3% (M = 1.606, SD = 0.413). On the other hand, Arab children have high level of self-esteem with 79.7% (M = 2.391, SD = 0.417). Regarding the engagement scale, the results in table 2 show the highest percent 81.6% (M = 2.447, SD = 0.314). Such results reveal that the Arab children have a moderate level of loneliness, high level of self-eseem and high level of engagement in science classroom.

Table 3 displays the correlations between the variables, each variable has a significant correlation with each other variable. Engagement was positively correlated with self-esteem, and negatively correlated with loneliness.on the other hand, self-esteem is negatively correlated with loneliness .

### 2. Results of SEM

The model testing process of this study followed the two-step procedure proposed by Kline (Kline, 2011). The first step is a confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model. This is conducted by freeing the parameters among the constructs to allow them to correlate. This two-step modelling approach provides an accurate representation of indicator reliability through the measurement model then focuses on the interaction of the structural model or latent variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2009).

Confirmatory factor analysis of overall measurement models for each of the construct was conducted by constraining all of the items on the three scales. The CFA results for overall measurement model indices indicated poor fit for the model, to modify the measurement model the researchers excluded the many items that have high error and the low factor loading using modification indices (MI).

A test of structural relationships using AMOS version 22 was conducted to assess the model data fit and the hypothesized relationships between theoretical constructs that include loneliness, self-esteem, engagement and achievement in science of grade 4-6 children in Arab school in Kuala Lupur. The structural model did not achieve an overall good fit. The relative chi-square of this model is more than 5 (chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio /df= 7.272), Kline (2011) recommended normed chi-square value ranging from less than 2 to less than 5. (Table 4 and Figure 2 show the result of structural model). In addition, all goodness-of-fit indices were lower than the desirable ranges.

To improve the model fit, the researchers deleted some paths especially the direct path between loneliness and achievement, the direct path between loneliness and engagement, and the direct path between self-esteem and achievement. The structural model achieved an overall good fit. The relative chi-square of this model is less than 3 (chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio /df= 1.638), indicating an accepted fit, and all goodness-of-fit indices were in the desirable ranges. Table 5 and Figure 3 show the result of structural model.

Since all model fit indices shows a better fit to the data, the path coefficient that estimates the hypothesized relationships of the model are then evaluated. The path coefficients in Figure 3 and Table 6 shows the result of testing the hypotheses, and Table 7 shows the indirect effects between the variable stated in hypothesis 7.

All of the hypotheses were examined through the path coefficient and the statistical significance to direct effect. Based on the result in Table 6 we can bring forward the result of hypotheses testing.

***Hypotheses H1: Students' Loneliness has a negative relationship with students' self-esteem.***

Based on Table 6, the result of path analysis indicated a significant positive relationship exist between the students' loneliness and students' self-esteem ( $\beta=-2.033$ ;  $CR= -7.168$ ;  $P = .000 <.05$ ), hence Hypotheses **H1 is** supported by the data; the hypothesis is accepted, meaning that students' loneliness has a negative relationship with their self-esteem. Therefore, we can predict of both of them from the other one.

***Hypotheses H2: Students' Loneliness will predict students' engagement.***

Results from Figure 3 and table 6 show that no direct effect between the two factors, therefore we reject the hypotheses that we can predict students' engagement by their loneliness level.

***Hypotheses H3: Students' Loneliness will predict student achievement in science.***

Results from table 6 and Figure 3 show that no direct effect between the two factors, therefore we reject the hypotheses that we can predict students' achievement in science by their loneliness level.

***Hypotheses H4: Students' self-esteem will predict students' engagement.***

Based on Table 6 and Figure 3, the result of path analysis indicated a significant positive relationship exist between the students' self-esteem and students' engagement ( $\beta=.042$ ;  $CR= 4.811$ ;  $P = .000 <.05$ ), hence Hypotheses **H3 is** supported by the data, the hypothesis is accepted, meaning that students' self-esteem is a strong predictor of engagement.

***Hypotheses H5: Students' self-esteem will predict their achievement in science.***

Results from table 6 and Figure 3 show that no direct effect between the two factors, therefore we reject the hypotheses that we can predict students' achievement in science by their self-esteem.

***Hypotheses H6: Students' engagement will predict their achievement in science.***

Based on Table 6 and Figure 3, the result of path analysis indicated a significant positive relationship exist between the students' engagement and their achievement in science ( $\beta=11.491$ ;  $CR= 4.196$ ;  $P = .000 <.05$ ), hence Hypotheses **H6 is** supported by the data, the hypothesis is accepted, meaning that students' engagement is a strong predictor of their achievement in science.

***Hypotheses H7: Students' engagement mediate the relationship between their self-esteem and their achievement in science.***

To test the hypothesis that students' engagement mediate the effect of students' self-esteem on student achievement. Based on the result in Table 6, the interaction between self-esteem and engagement is significance at .05% level. Furthermore the interaction between self-esteem and achievement significance in which is  $\beta= 0.242$  and  $p = .000 <.05$ .

Evidence consistent with mediation has been found. Thus, it appears that mediation through students' engagement, while statistically significant, explains substantial part of the total effect of students' academic achievement in this study. Thus, students' engagement Mediation effect on the relationship between self-esteem and achievement (H3 accepted).

In summary, results reveals that all the goodness-of-fit indexes fulfilled the requirement of the acceptable model fit with significant paths and correlation. The Model has provided a reasonable explanation of the structural model of motivation, students' engagement and academic achievement employed in this study.

## Discussion

Children's mental health could be one of the crucial factors for their achievement. As a result, it is important to test the relationship between children achievement and some of the non academic factors related to children's mental health. The present study employed a SEM to model the relationship between children's level of loneliness, self-esteem, engagement and their achievement in science.

The findings indicate that students' engagement was positively correlated with self-esteem, and negatively correlated with loneliness. On the other hand, self-esteem is negatively correlated with loneliness. This means that children who feel lonely have a low self-esteem level, therefore they will not engage well in the learning process.

Regarding modeling the relation between the factors, a test of structural relationships using AMOS version 22 was conducted to assess the model data fit and the hypothesized relationships between theoretical constructs that include loneliness, self-esteem, engagement and achievement in science of grade 4-6 children in Arab school in Kuala Lumpur. The structural model did not achieve an overall good fit. To improve the model fit, the researchers deleted some paths especially the direct path between loneliness and achievement, the direct path between loneliness and engagement, and the direct path between self-esteem and achievement. The structural model achieved an overall good fit.

The result of path analysis indicated a significant positive relationship exist between the students' self-esteem and students' engagement; this meaning that students' self-esteem is a strong predictor of engagement. To test the hypothesis that students' engagement mediate the effect of students' self-esteem on student achievement. Based on the result, it appears that mediation through students' engagement is statistically significant; this explains substantial part of the total effect of students' academic achievement in this study. Thus, students' engagement Mediation effect on the relationship between self-esteem and achievement in science among grade 4-6 Arab children studying in Malaysia.

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Table 1. The Sample

Age	Gender				Row Totals	
	male		female			
4	27	24.1%	48	32.4%	75	28.8%
5	47	42.0%	56	37.8%	103	39.6%
6	38	33.9%	44	29.7%	82	31.5%
All	112	43.1	148	56.9	260	

Table 2. Basic Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	% of Mean	Std. Deviation	level
Loneliness	1.606	53.5%	.41301	Moderate
Self-esteem	2.391	79.7%	.41739	high
Engagement	2.447	81.6%	.31394	high

Table 3. Correlations Between Predictor Variables

	loneliness	self-esteem	engagement
loneliness		-.705**	-.290**
self-esteem	-.705**		.280**

engagement	-.290**	.280**	
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\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Model Summary

Table 1: Summary of Goodness of Fit Analysis Structural Model

Variables	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	CMIN/df	RMSEA
Structural Model	.000	.895	7.272	.112

Table 5. Summary of Goodness of Fit Analysis Structural Model

Variables	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	CMIN/df	RMSEA
Structural Model	.033	.990	1.638	.036

Table 6: Direct Impact of Structural Model:  $\beta$  for Structural Model and Hypotheses

	( $\beta$ )	S.E.	C.R.	Estimate	P	Hypotheses
lonley <--> self_esteem	-2.033	.284	-7.168	0.818	***	H1:Significance
engagement <--- lonley						H2:Not Significance
achievement <--- lonley						H3: Not Significance
engagement <--- self_esteem	.042	.009	4.811	0.275	***	H4:Significance
achievement <--- self_esteem						H5: Not Significance
achievement <--- Engagement	11.493	2.739	4.196	0.242	***	H6:Significance

$\beta$ : Standardized Regression Weights; S.E: Standardized Error; C.R.: Critical Ratio \*:  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*:  $p \leq 0.001$

Table 7: Summary of Direct and Indirect Effect of Variables of SMQ

Predictor Variables	Student engagement			student achievement in science		
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Self-esteem	.275	-	.275	-	0.067	0.067

Note: Standardized path estimates is reported

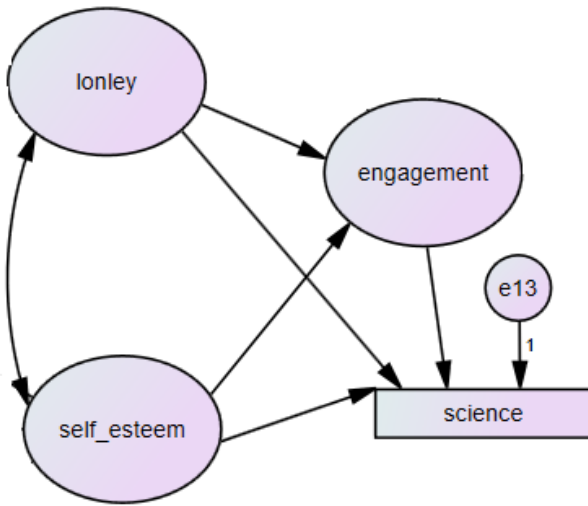


Figure 1 The purposed model

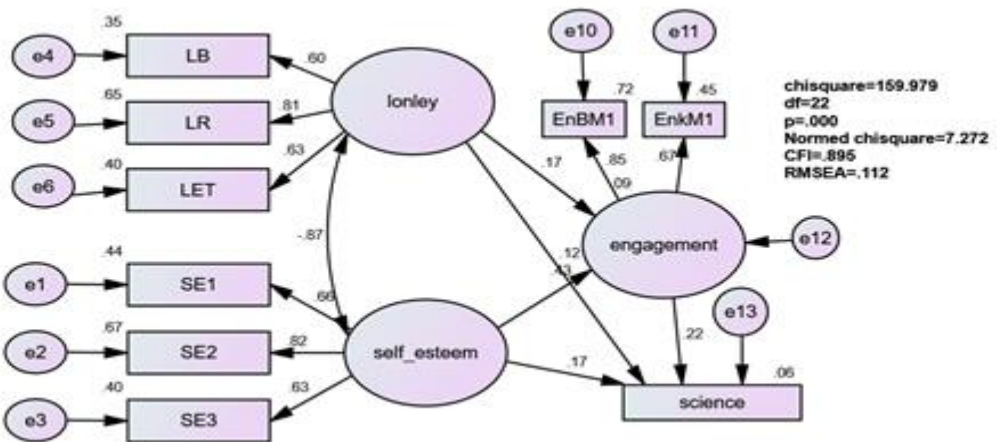


Figure 2. The Fit of the proposed model

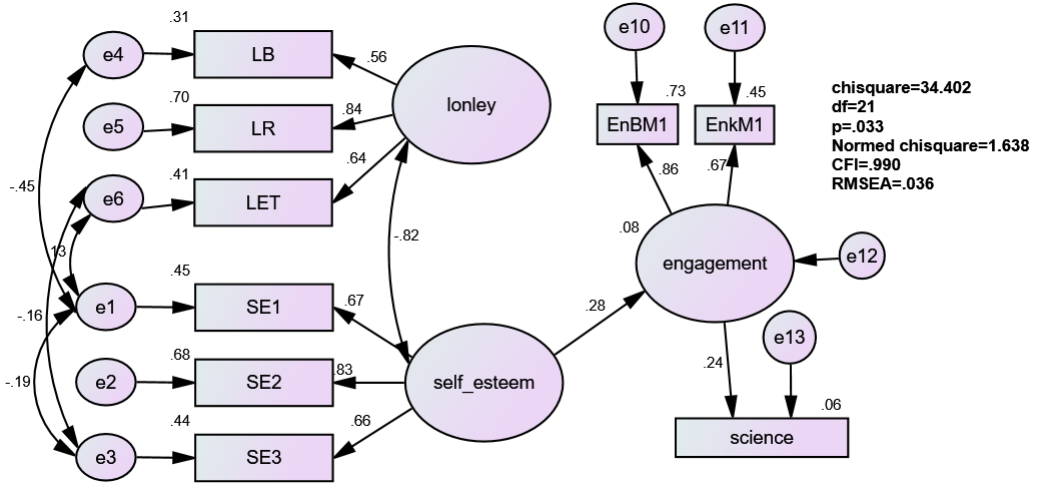


Figure 3. The Fit of the final model



## Using Case Study Method in Project Management Education as a Tool for Improvement of Project Manager's Skills

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### Abstract

*Project management education is a kind of education which aims to equip students with necessary skills that they would need in real business life in their career as a project manager. For being succesful in project management education, case study method of teaching holds a very important position between the other methods. This study examines contributions of the case study method to the project management education in terms of improvement of the project manager's skills. For this purpose in the scope of the study work flow process of the case study approach and main benefits of the approach are defined. Defined benfnits` impacts on improvement of the project manager's key skills are revealed. It is found out while the students are starting to improve their human skills when they begin to work as a group, improvement of technical and conceptual skills are provided during all phases of the process.*

**Keywords:** case study, project manager, skill, technical skill, human skill, conceptual skill

### Introduction

Project management education is distinct from other educational programs because of its unique structure. Diversity of a project manager's duties during a project lifecycle, requires the project manager to have different skills. In real life, project managers need to deal with a range of issues for successful delivery of construction projects. Project managers therefore need to equip themselves with an appropriate set of various skills and/ or attributes, not only to successfully carry out their works in terms of technical ability, such as those relating to time, quality and cost; but also to effectively mobilize coordinating, motivating and collaborating efforts in terms of relational harmony, such as approach to teamworking (Rahman et al., 2007). As a result it is expected from project management education to improve project manager candidates' skills in many different areas. One approach to satisfy this need is using case study approach in project management education.

Although law schools first showed the way for the case study approach, beginning in 1870 (Breslin and Buchanan, 2008) references point out that the case study method is useful for different fields of educational programmes. Francis (2001) asserts that case studies have a long and well- established history in landscape architecture. Breslin and Buchanan (2008) emphasize the importance of using case study method in design. They also defend that act of researching and writing a case study can be seen as an application of the design process. Raju and Sankar (1999) assert the importance of using case studies in engineering education. The case study method was first used as a learning method for management in the beginning of the XX century, and since then has been widely use, and has been quite successful as a learning methodology for management (Mintzberg, 2004; Gonzalez, 2011). Today using case study method is an important tool for lecturers in project management education. The purpose of this study is to explore contributions of the case study method to the project management education in terms of improvement of the project manager's skills. For this purpose in the scope of the study to explore interaction between using case study method in project management education and project manager's skills, benefits of the case study method will be determined by defining flow process of the method, and impact of determined benefits on skills expected from the project managers will be examined.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two main points of the study. The first main point is to determine the benefits of using case study method. The benefits of the case study method will be determined by defining flow process of the method. Identifying the skills that is

expected from project managers constitutes the second important point. When previous studies are investigated, it is found out that project managers skills have been categorized different from each other. Katz (1974) (also cited in Odusami, 2002) proposed a three skill approach to understand the skills of an effective administrator. These are:

- Technical skill
- Human skill
- Conceptual skill

Technical skill, is defined as an understanding of, and proficiency in, a special kind of activity particularly involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. This skill, he argued, is the skill required of the greatest number of people. Human skill, is an executive ability of a leader to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads. This type of skill is required in order to work with people perceptions and behavior to supervisors, equals, and subordinates. Conceptual skill, is the ability of a leader to see the enterprise as a whole and recognize how the various functions of the organization depend on one another and how changes in any part affect the other. It can also be described as the ability to coordinate and integrate all the activities and interests of the organization towards a common objective. Since Katz's proposition of the three-skill concept, many authors have expanded these basic skills further to add more (Odusami, 2002). Robert and Goodwin (1993) categorized skills same as Katz approach but they added negotiating skills to these three skills categorization. Fisher (2003) defined ten knowledge areas of project manager divided into 77 subcategories. In this study, as a starting point Katz's approach was used due to he had drawn a general frame for explaining main skills.

## CASE STUDY APPROACH

Bonoma (1989), Grant (1997) and Jerrard (2005) define the case study method as an approach that implements active learning strategies for students based on a description of a situation or context in which a problem or set of issues arises. According to Raju and Sankar (1999) a case study typically is a record of a technical and business issue that actually has been faced by managers, together with surrounding facts, opinions, and prejudices upon which management decisions have to depend. Tal (2010) (cited in Habasisa and Hlalele, 2014) defines case study as a meta-skill that integrates cognitive perceptions, self-regulation skills, and interpersonal relationships with learners and teachers. Grant (1997) outlines the benefits of using case studies as an interactive learning strategy, shifting the emphasis from teacher-centred to more student-centred activities. On the other hand Breslin and Buchanan (2008) defend that case studies are not a perfect solution to the problem. They also state that case studies cannot tell what decisions should be made, but they can connect the student to social phenomena, real life experience, and existential situations in a way that helps to sharpen thinking and inform decision-making.

Formal case study structure requires researchers to determine a problem, make initial hypotheses, conduct research in gathering information and making observations, revise hypotheses and theory, and tell a story (Breslin and Buchanan, 2008). The most important issue to be succesful in using case study approach is to conduct the case study flow process accomplishedly. Definition of the flow process and benefits provided from this process could be summarized in five phases:

- 1. Submission of the case study:** The lecturer gives every student a case and questions about the case in a written format. This is the first time for students to be faced with real word situations. It is possible to reflect the real world of business and employment relations by designing case study-based assessment that encourages students to consider the changing environment and the implications of their decisions with regard to other parties in the case study scenario (Jerrard, 2005). Unlike case histories the final outcome regarding the case is usually not presented, rather it is an open-ended approach. This phase provides a description of specific circumstances that confront an individual (Russell and McCullouch, 1990) in real life.
- 2. Identification of the problems by the students:** The students have to read that through thoroughly, identify the problems and prepare their response to the case beforehand (Kooskora, 2002). The students use theory and knowledge, obtained in course work, to solve the problem or situation (Russell and McCullouch, 1990). For preparing their response to the case, they need to use their previous knowledge. Many case studies require resource investigation and encourage students to utilise a number of different sources. This phase provides significant benefits due to it promotes information gathering and analysis, also promotes retention of knowledge.

**3. Introducing the case and giving information by the lecturer:** The lecturer gives students a technical note with some questions he wants to highlight. Because of complication of the cases it may not be really possible to participate in the case discussion without having read the case before (Kooskora, 2002). The lecturer also should present in class tools required to solve the case by describing relevant concepts and theory of the case study (Russell and McCullouch, 1990). He also should make a short introduction to the case and give some background information (Kooskora, 2002). The case study approach is a motivational tool that raises the level of the students' interest by offering problems they may encounter in the "real" world (Russell and McCullouch, 1990), and also it is beneficial because it promotes interaction between learners and teachers.

**4. Answering questions and solving case study as a group by the students:** The class is divided into groups. The size of the group depends on the number of students in the class. Usually there are 4-6 students in one group. At first the students have to answer the questions the lecturer has given them and they have to reach agreement between themselves. This stage can also be viewed as an exercise for practising the skills involved in team-work (Kooskora, 2002). This phase enables group working and develops communication, integrates theoretical principles with practice. Students can evaluate the case from multiple perspectives. It promotes the ability to develop a reasoned response to circumstances and can be used to encourage critical and strategic thinking (Jerrard, 2005). On the other hand students have to learn coping with effective use of given time for solving case. This provides students experience in time management.

**5. Presentation and discussion of proposed solutions by the groups:** The groups have to put down the answers on paper in written form and they have to prepare to make a presentation in front of the others and be ready to discuss the subject with all participants. It is important to highlight the real problems and be ready to analyse all the aspects of the situation (Kooskora, 2002). Problems provide an atmosphere of learning through example whereby the student actively participates in the educational process (Russell and McCullouch, 1990). Due to case studies require students to present their work in a variety of formats, the method provides presentation experience to them.

When it is needed students may turn back to upper phases for feedback. Work flow process and benefits provided from defined phases are shown in Figure. 1. Although most of the benefits are valid for multiple phases, in Figure 1 they are shown in the phase where maximum benefit is provided.

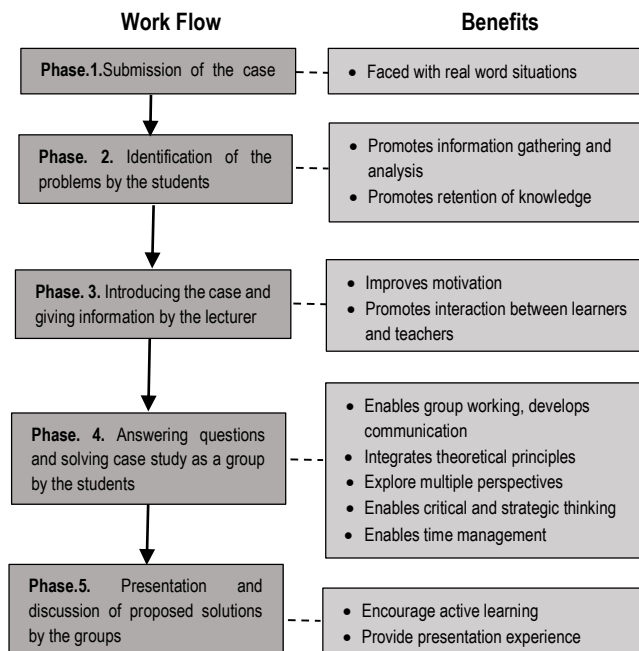


Figure.1 Work flow of the case study method and benefits provided

## PROJECT MANAGER'S KEY SKILLS INFLUENCED BY CASE STUDY METHOD BENEFITS

A skill implies an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential (Katz, 1974). Because of the fast developments in construction industry such as using new technologies in construction means and methods, ability of managing a project requires project managers to have much more skills. The key role of the project manager in construction process related to competitiveness and productivity, shows the significance of his sufficiency in all aspects. Therefore definition of the project manager's key skills has an importance for continuation of the management process. Katz (1974) defined project manager's key skills in three different categories as:

**1. Technical Skill:** Technical skill implies an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one that involves methods, processes, procedures or techniques. Successful project managers should have relevant experience or knowledge of the technology required by the project they manage. Technical skill involves specialized knowledge and analytical ability in the use of the tools and techniques of the specific discipline (Katz, 1974; cited in El-Sabaa, 2001). Most of vocational and on-the-job training programs are largely concerned with developing this skill (Katz, 1974).

**2. Human Skill:** Human skill is the executive's ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads. As technical skill is primarily concerned with "things" (process or physical objects), human skill is primarily concerned with working with people. A project manager with a highly developed human skill is sufficiently sensitive to the needs and motivations of others in his project. He is skillful in communicating with others, in their own contexts, what he means by his behavior (Katz, 1974 ;cited in El- Sabaa, 2001). According to Katz (1974) an effective administrator must develop his own personal point of view toward human activity, so that he would: (a) recognize the feelings and sentiments which he brings into a situation; (b) have an attitude about his own experiences which will enable him to re-evaluate and learn from them; (c) develop ability in understanding what others, by their actions and words (explicitly or implicitly), are trying to communicate to him; and (d) develop ability in successfully communicating his ideas and attitudes to others.

**3. Conceptual Skill:** This skill is used to connote the ability of a project manager to envision the project as a whole. It includes recognizing how the various functions of a project depend on one another, and how changes in any single part could affect all the other parts. It extends to visualizing the relationship of an individual project to the parent organization. Recognizing these relationships and perceiving the significant elements in any situation, the project manager should then be able to act in a way that advances the overall welfare of the project and the parent organization (Katz, 1974;cited in El-Sabaa, 2001). In applying this definition to the project management situation, the point can be made that it is crucial to project success that the project manager be able to conceptualize all elements of the project situation and the extent to which the elements interact with each other (Goodwin, 1993).

Different people learn in different ways, but skills are developed through practice and through relating learning to one's own personal experience and background (Katz, 1974). In project management education most of the students do not have firsthand experience in construction projects. Although some of them have indeed interned on a project or visited construction sites, very few have actually generated schedules, estimated cost, or developed earned-value reports (Damjanovic and Rispoli, 2014) and have required skills. For management education using case studies has important effect on management skills. Chakrabarti and Balaji (2007) conducted a survey related to perception of selected faculty on case study method of teaching in management education. They found out that the case study method enables students to pick up the skills required to solve the complex problems in practical business situations.

Learning with case studies is an important opportunity for the students due to they have chance to be faced with real word situations before they graduate. Students may benefit from case studies to improve their skills in learning process. Relationships between benefits of the using case study method defined above and skills that could be improved by means of these benefits are summarized in Figure 2. Although all of the phases have influence on three of the skills, in the scope of the study the most influenced skills are defined.

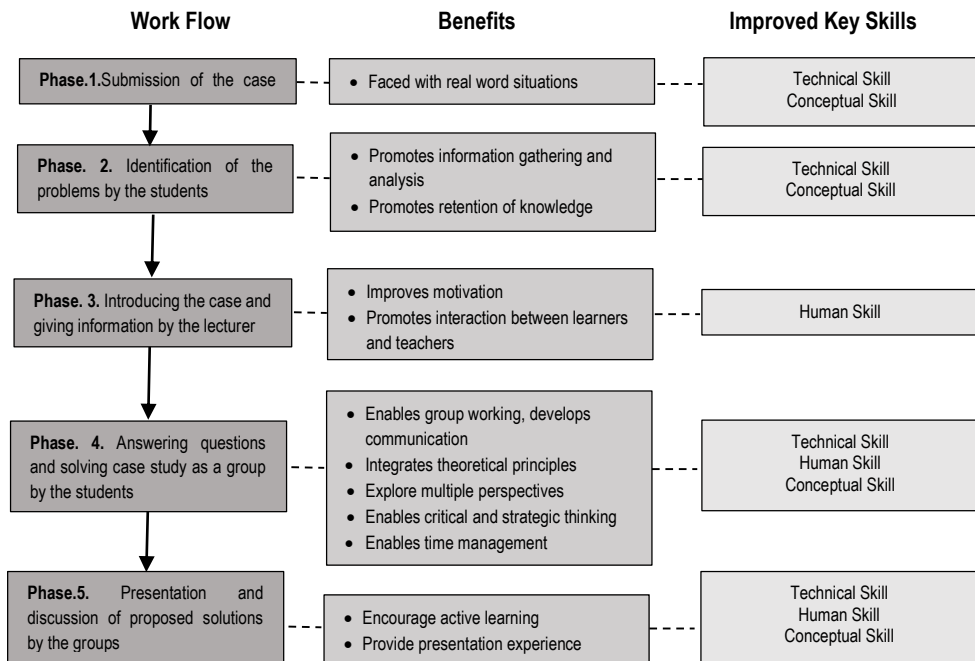


Figure.2. Relationships between benefits provided from the case study method and key skills of the project manager

The case studies can be valuable for a profession in a number of ways. For practitioners, they can be a source of practical information on potential solutions to difficult problems. For professional education, case studies are an effective way to teach by example, to learn problem- solving skills, and to develop useful evaluation strategies. For the profession as a whole, case studies are a way to build a body of criticism and critical theory (Francis, 2001). Contributions of the case studies to the project manager candidates shown in Figure.2 are described below.

- Phase.1:** Submission of the case by the lecturer provides students to be faced with real world situations. The students have to be prepared and ready to contribute to an active discussion, to find connections between different issues and take actions as well as foresee the consequences. It is important that the students have some general knowledge, some specific knowledge and also the necessary skills for using that knowledge (Kooskora, 2002). In this process these defined real world situations will be integrated with the theoretical knowledge learned in lectures by the students. The students will also need to use their technical skills in both understanding and solving the case. The case-based teaching and learning allows participants to consider multiple solutions for a single problem or dilemma, promotes a tolerance for ambiguity and intricacy, builds students' confidences in the analysis of complex problems, and compels students to visualize themselves in a real-life scenario (Sankar et al., 2008). Conceptual skill involves the ability to see the problem as a whole. By facing with real word examples students will comprehend the problem from a bigger perspective that will help to improve conceptual skill.
- Phase.2:** Identification of the problems by the students at the beginning of the process will help students to improve their technical and conceptual skills. By this way students will have chance to gather and analyse information and knowledge related to situation. This also will help retention of these knowledge.
- Phase.3:** Introducing the case and giving information by the lecturer will ensure interaction between learners and lecturers, and this will provide to establish a closer dialogue with each others. The dialogue established will increase the students's motivation to the lecture. This situation will have an important impact on the development of human skills.
- Phase.4:** Answering questions and solving case study as a group by the students has influence on three of the defined skills. In this phase students are expected to work as a group. Communicating in a group will improve human skills of the students. This phase also develops the student's analytical and problem-solving abilities by encouraging them to

perform analysis, and look for different perspectives (Gini, 1985). The use of case studies has the potential to encourage students to use their critical thinking skills to solve engineering problems and understand other related issues such as plausibility, cost and ethics, to appraise content, to understand the process and its limitations, to have a more positive attitude toward learning engineering concepts, and to be able to ask more critical questions when faced with a technical crisis. Unlike problems normally assigned to students at the end of a lesson, cases do not set the problem out in clear steps; nor do they lead to a single correct answer. This forces the students to think beyond the obvious and seek out other resources/sources of information to help them understand the issues involved (Sankar et al., 2008) These benefits have influence on both technical and conceptual skills.

- **Phase.5:** Presentation and discussion of proposed solutions by the groups have influence on three of the skills too. A case method helps develop the students' abilities to articulate a point of view, defend it, and inform their own views with the opinions of others. These discussions are an important component of case method learning, and of success in the "real world" (Kooskora, 2002). The case studies help in engaging students in exploratory discussions and find a "best possible solution" rather than "right/ wrong" solutions (Gini, 1985). In this phase students will be encouraged to be active for defending their solutions with a presentation. This will make learning process to be more student-based process for the participants.

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## CONCLUSION

As a key participant project manager's skills are directly associated with project success. So for ensuring an effective teaching, lecturers should focus on improvement of the project management students key skills. Case study method has been used in different fields of education since a long time ago and the method can be used as an important teaching tool in project management education. Success of the method for improvement of defined key skills is directly related with the process of the method and also related with benefits gained from this process. It is found out while the students are starting to improve their human skills when they begin to work as a group, improvement of technical and conceptual skills are provided during all phases of the process.

The case study method creates a simulated atmosphere where students will face with real word situations. Being in this atmosphere will provide students to think analytically and to understand engineering decision-making process. In addition, student based learning style of the method will encourage students actively participate in learning process. This will lead to increase efficiency of the lecture. Due to the case study method requires students working as a group, the case study method will provide students to see their tendency for being a group member. With this method it will be also possible for the lecturers to explore leadership characteristics of the students. All of these aspects of the case study method have impact on project manager candidates as a whole. The most critical point about using this method is selection of the right case to the right situation and following the case study process properly by the lecturer, which can be the subject of a new research.

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## The Role of Entrepreneurship Education on Internationalization Intention. A Case Study from Izmir-TURKEY

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### Abstract

*Acting in a domestic market can be risky for new ventures in developing countries because of vulnerable economic and politic conditions. From the beginning of establishment, focusing on international markets can prevent local market risks which new entrepreneurs will probably encounter. Internationalization, entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship are the main topics which scholars given more attention in the world. In this study, entrepreneurship education and it's effects on generating internationalization intention were evaluated by in depth interviews. Findings has shown that type of the institute, course content, classmates, qualification and background of the lecturer, plays important role on initiation of starting international business.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurship Education, Internationalization.

### 1. Introduction

There are strong links between Entrepreneurial activity and economic outcomes such as economic growth and innovation, and creating economic efficiency, creating new jobs, (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Oosterberbeek, Praag & Ijsselstein, 2010). Thus, there has been seen growing attention on entrepreneurship education organized by governmental institutes and universities.

In USA, Office of Entrepreneurship Education (OEE) develops and promotes innovative resources for small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs for 40 years . (<https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oeo/about-us>) In Europe, According to EC (European Commission) Entrepreneurship is a key competence for lifelong learning, as defined in the 2006 European Framework for Key Competences. The commission states that, they are committed to promoting education for entrepreneurship at all levels, from primary school to university and beyond.( [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/education-training-entrepreneurship/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/education-training-entrepreneurship/index_en.htm)). The dominant entrepreneurship education program in secondary school and colleges in the US and Europe is the Junior Achievement Young Enterprises student mini company (SMC) program. In Europe, it is effective in 40 countries and more than 2 million students have participated in the year 2005/2006 (Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Europe Annual Report, 2006; Oosterbeek, et.al., 2010:443).

In Asia, especially ASEAN member countries focused on entrepreneurship education. The ASEAN secretariat and Japan Overseas Development Centre (JODC) has implemented entrepreneurship education for in Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia since 2003. Asia SEED as the executing organization that implements the seminars for entrepreneurship education for Vietnam, Myanmar and Philippines (<http://www.asiaseed.org>. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup>.Nov.2015).



Kaijage and Wheeler (2013), made highly appreciated study on East Africa and shared suggestions about entrepreneurship education according to their research implications. Jesselyn Co and Mitchel (2006) has conducted a survey among academic staff and tried to find out, status of entrepreneurship education in South Africa. In 2007, Isaacs and friends also focused on level of South African Entrepreneurship Education. Even these kind of studies, there has not seen concrete effort on entrepreneurship education yet. According to stated authors these educations are still in developing phase.

Entrepreneurship education effects people positively in the journey of entrepreneurship (Kigechi, et.al., 2013). Qualification of educators, their experiences, leadership and vision plays great role for the future of entrepreneurship (Vesper,1999; Stevenson,2000; Solomon, 2002) According to Kuratko (2005), educators should use their ability for leading , pioneering their universities into a new horizon. McMullan (et al., 2002) provide some evidence that these programs are successful in encouraging entrepreneurs to start businesses, or improve the performance of businesses. (Peterman and Kennedy,2003:131 ).

## **2. Entrepreneurial Intention**

Research on entrepreneurial intentions mainly depends on Ajzen's (1991)theory of planned behaviour(TPB), and Intentions-based models provide practical insight to any planned behaviour (Krueger and Carsrud 1993; Krueger,et.,al.,2000; Gelderen, et.,al., 2008; Wu and Li 2011), Entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurs' states of mind that direct attention, experience, and action toward a business concept, set the form and direction of organizations at their inception (Bird,1988:442). Applied to the entrepreneurial context having stronger feeling, and intention on entrepreneurial activity, supports entrepreneurial activity (Kautonen et.al.2013) and entrepreneurial intention means someone who is willing to start a new business (Krueger,1998). Entrepreneurial behaviour has become more and more common, calling for better entrepreneurial skills and abilities for dealing with current challenges and uncertain future (Heionen and Poikkijoki, 2006:81).

## **3. Entrepreneurship Education in Turkey**

In Turkey entrepreneurship courses are given by Universities and in the coordination of KOSGEB (Republic of Turkey, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization) and Turkish Labour Agency. For technology oriented entrepreneurship TUBITAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) has the authorization of organizing entrepreneurship courses.

In universities this courses are especially designed for last year students of Business Administration as compulsory, for engineering students as elective and takes approximately 40 hours per one semester.

KOSGEB Entrepreneurship, includes training and workshop studies of minimum 70 hours (testing of entrepreneurship abilities, business idea exercises and business plan preparation) Applied Entrepreneurship Trainings can be organized by KOSGEB (or other foundations or institutes (universities, ISKUR, Turkish Labour Agency), professional organizations, municipalities etc.) Trainings are arranged for general and specific (young, women, and disadvantaged groups) target groups. TUBITAK mainly focuses on technology oriented start-ups and provides funds from the beginning of establishment till getting patents for developed new products.

## **4. Research Method**

In this is study interpretive and exploratory approach is used for understanding , the role of entrepreneurship education - not only by course content , but also other environmental and lecturer based issues-on internationalization intention of entrepreneur candidates. Research Sample was chosen by the population who have right to got certificate after 70 hours of course between May 2014-November 2014 in Izmir-Turkey, given by Universities, ISKUR (Turkish Labor Agency) , Municipalities, Governor and Chambers Of Commerce (Organized by KOSGEB). There are 5 people from different institutes from different locations; totally 15 people was chosen for research. Totally 15 series of interviews made in 10 hours between 1th Dec.2014-30thDec.2014.Compherensive framework is developed for better understanding of internationalization intention after entrepreneurship education.

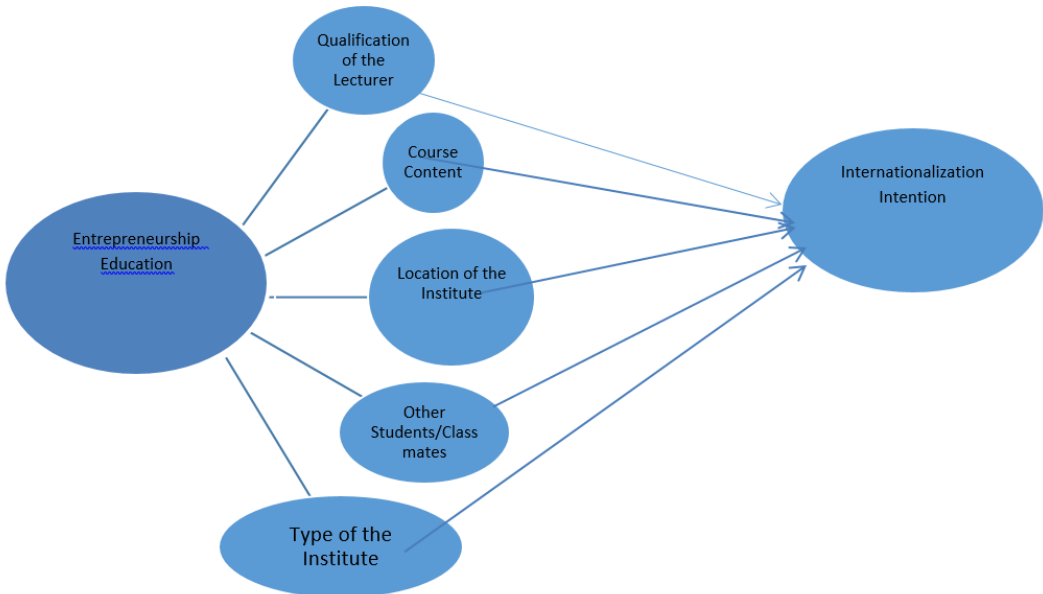


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

#### 4.1. Findings

In this study, qualification of the lecturer, course content, location of the institute, classmates, type of the institute were found as basic determinants of entrepreneurship education, which were also effects internationalization intention of new candidates.

##### 4.1.1. Location

*“Our course centre was one of the small campuses of a university in the centre of Izmir. We were having lunch in restaurants where white collar staffs, businessmen and businesswomen went usually. This was really important for me, because observing them was motivating me” (Age 23, University Student, Woman, S.K.).*

*“We took this course in Chamber of Commerce in City Centre of Izmir, where high businessmen from different sectors is seen inside and outside. And after course times we are hanging out with classmates, during this period, we had chance to know each other, and share future plans, It was a great experience for me” (Age 27, Man, Bachelor Degree, GB).*

*“Our course centre was 80 km far from city centre, in a small town. I did not have chance hang out with my friends because there is no proper cafes, something like that around us. After course time we were leaving to go home. I wish I listened to my classmate’s projects after course times”(Woman, 34, Primary School Graduate F.E).*

According above data, it is not easy to find out the role of location on internationalization intention of entrepreneurship students. But it is clearly seen that, location affects, entrepreneurial motivation of entrepreneur candidates. Spending time together after course period, helps students to discuss entrepreneurial issues and providing network potential to them.

#### 4.1.2. Type of the Institute

*"In university during the break times, I saw students from different countries who are in the same age with my daughter. It was really exciting experience for me. I came this course for get incentive from KOSGEB for running coiffeur business. I have no chance, or qualification for doing business abroad. But I will motivate my daughter about focusing on international entrepreneurship for her future career, who is now university student" (Age 46, Woman, Secondary School Graduate, F.E.).*

*"We took this course in Chamber of Commerce in City Centre of Izmir, where high businessmen traffic is seen inside and outside. After I start my own business I will be there as businessman like others. Experiencing this atmosphere during the course is valuable"(Age,29, Woman, Bachelor Degree, I.C.).*

*"Our entrepreneurship courses organized by local businessmen association, which held in small conference room of primary school, but our lecturer was from an university. I preferred to be different place which will more suit us as entrepreneur candidates, future's businessmen and businesswomen. There were no motivational instruments, surrounded us" (Age 30, K.E.Woman, High School Graduate).*

Getting entrepreneurship education from universities has strong impact on becoming entrepreneurs (Peterman and Kennedy,2003;Saeed, et.al.,2013). According to Hamidi et.al., (2008) academic entrepreneurship programs provide higher intention to the audiences for starting their own business in the future. Our study also confirms that, universities which have international students has strong impact on entrepreneurial intention as well as internationalization. Chamber of Commerces because of providing experience of breathing same air with active businessmen or businesswomen, has significant impact on generating entrepreneurial intention.

#### 4.1.3. Classmates

*"80% of my classmates are older than me and they are not well educated. They came course for getting fund from KOSGEB and open a small restaurant , Café something like that. I did not see any innovative business project ". (Age 24 , Man, Bachelor Degree M.T)*

*"One of my friend from the class was thinking about glass jar import. She told, she found contacts who were in need for glass jar. When I heard profit margin, I was shocked. After entrepreneurship course I've started foreign trade course. Now I am thinking about importing promotional staff from China to my friends"(Age 41, Man, High School Degree,O.D. ).*

After these interpretations, we can refer to Brockhaus (2001), in entrepreneurship courses, student profiles are heterogeneous. Different education levels, different demographic structures can be seen in classes. Lans et al (2013), found that heterogeneity including disciplinary and cultural differences –contributed to learning within the groups but also caused confusion and misunderstandings. Segmentation among audiences is meaningful because of having different learning needs and own characteristics (Ghosh and Bloch, 1994). According to Rasmussen and Sorheim (2006), entrepreneurship programme may be generalising too much and contextualizing too little, and added an example "they are paying little attention to the selection and composition of the students".

#### 4.1.4. Course Content

*"I think 70 hours of course content was not enough. Especially for financial management part of that course is not satisfactory. As new entrepreneurs we should learn more details about financial statements, and we did not focused on preparing business plan so much" (Age 39, Woman , Bachelor Degree, N.A.).*

*"The course content is far from practical life. I have more than 10 years of business experience" I am not planning to establish holding company, those information given during classes are useless"(Age 33, Man, High School Degree, R.S).*

*"I attended to the entrepreneurship course, because i want to establish a company for exporting hazelnut oil to the UK. We learned basic issues of how to run a business, but in the course content there is no any special topic related with international business or internationalization" (Age 47, Women, Vocational School Degree, F.C.Y.).*

For effective learning, business plan plays crucial role. Focusing on business plan can provide experiential aspects to target audiences, which they will in need for their future's active business life (Timmons,et al.,1987; Hills,1988; Gibb,1997;Henry et.al., 2005).

Predictable and classical teaching methods can be boring for entrepreneurship students (Fiet, 2000a), instead of that kind of methods learning by doing methods, providing set of circumstances which entrepreneurs will encounter in the future will avoid risks of demotivation (Fiet, 2000b).

#### 4.1.5. Qualification Of The Lecturer

*“Our lecturer gave some examples from import-export business because of having experience in this area, multi-cultural nature of this business, attracting me” (Age 40, Woman, Bachelor Degree, B.C.).*

*Our Lecturer has 30 years of field experience, he is lecturing marketing and foreign trade courses in University as well. He lived in Australia, he has international view on entrepreneurship. He gave us practical and current examples, local and international basis (Age 28, Woman High School Degree, C.Y.).*

*“Our lecturer in Chamber of Commerce told us there is huge potential in the field of international business. %90 of Chamber of Commerce Members do not know anything about import and export, and they’re always seeking new markets” (Age 35, Man, Vocational School Degree, R.Y.).*

*“Our lecturer gave us an example about one his student from entrepreneurship course, 3 years ago she came to course for establishing a small production unit for baby textile. After the course, she went to the import-export course, and in the same year she exported organic fabric to the Germany. As English Literature graduate, it is hard for me to find a job as English Teacher in our country’s condition. After I heard that example, I made a decision that, I should become intermediary, who finds customer abroad for local manufacturers, our finding suppliers for local buyer” (Age 25, Man, Bachelor Degree, T.D).*

Vesper (1998) stated that, business general knowledge, venture general knowledge, opportunity specific knowledge and venture-specific knowledge are knowledge types which entrepreneurs need. For entrepreneurs there are mainly four kind of useful knowledge. First two can be provided by academic educators but the sensitive last two, should be given by who has experience in the field and easily provide information about existing markets and production technologies.

Educators can invoke intention models to better understand our students’ motivations and intentions, and thus provide better training (Krueger, et al., 2000b). Entrepreneurial learning process to be enhanced through the provision of role models (Jack and Anderson, 1999:117). Role models have influencing potential for choosing self-employment as a career (Sherer et al. 1989; Matthews and Moser 1995; Tkachev and Kolvereid, 1999). From this point of view, even having not so much experience in the field, teachers should invite someone to the classes who locally or internationally doing business.

#### 5. Conclusion

Getting more share from the world trade is always stated as main objective by developing countries. However in Turkey as developing country, 40% of the company owners have primary school graduation and only %2 of SME’s are making Turkey’s %59,2 of export (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18521>).

Current entrepreneurship educations should provide vision for internationalization. In Turkey, entrepreneurship educations has maximum ten years of past. And it is not easily said that standard methods using during the courses. Some courses are effective some are not.

Normally 70 hours of entrepreneurship educations are given by only one or two lecturers for KOSGEB Entrepreneurship Courses; in universities only one lecturer conducts entrepreneurship courses. But these courses have different modules; as entrepreneurial skills, marketing, production, finance, organization and management and business plan. Because of requiring more specialization, number and variation of lecturers (from academia and field) should be increased.

Interestingly during our interviews most of the people gave strong importance to the location of the institute and type of the institute. Most of the candidates even has primary school graduation has more motivation than the candidates even having undergraduate degree, who had the course far from the city centre. Courses given in Chamber of Commerce’s provide strong contribution to the intention of entrepreneur candidates because of seeing active businessmen during break times.

Universities which have international students also provide quite contribution to the vision of entrepreneur candidates. Different languages, different races attract them and this tends to thinking about international businesses.

Courses should be designed for the needs and qualification of entrepreneur candidates. In the first step of entrepreneurship education ,general aspects of entrepreneurship and main business functions should be given with the business plan and Course content should has some international business issues inside. According to motivation and interests of the entrepreneurship candidates ,the second step should contain, details of international business .And this courses should be given by experienced lecturers, in main business areas of the cities.

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## Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Learning from the Best

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### Abstract

*In this paper we discuss organizational culture of higher education institutions whose components have been thoroughly described by authors such as Tierney (1988) and Valimaa (1998). We focused on the elements of organizational culture which outlines the identity of a higher education institution: why does the institution exist? How does the institution reach its goals and mission? What does the institution offer to its internal and external public? As such, we analyzed the mission, structure, governance and decision making processes, teaching and research in a comparative perspective: Harvard University (HU) and the University of Bucharest (UB), Romania. By looking into the organizational culture of the best, we learnt some lessons that may inspire, motivate and urge action if UB wants to progress so as to become one day a top leader in higher education worldwide.*

**Keywords:** organizational culture, mission, governance, values, teaching and research

### Introduction

Organizations today are knowledge-based and their success depends on flexibility and innovation. An effective reaction to these demands leads not only to changes in individuals and their behavior, but also to innovative changes in organizations to ensure their existence (Read, 1996). It appears that the rate of change is accelerating rapidly as new knowledge and its global diffusion increases (Senge et al, 1999). Creating innovative and adaptable frameworks have a role to play in this change process for survival. The result is that organizations and their leaders try to create an institutional framework in which new ways of motivating people and taking actions will be accepted as basic cultural norms in the midst of technological and societal change. Authors such as Ahmed (1998), Martell (1989), Pheysey (1993), Robbins (1996), Schuster (1986) have emphasized the importance of organizational culture in this context. Organizational culture seems to have an influence on how individuals perceive identity and openness to change in organizations, including higher education institutions.

Students come to believe in their university as the university communicates messages and interacts with them. When the university speaks of its mission, it speaks of helping students. Faculty members and administrators should start from the assumption that the student is a learner who should trust the institution where he/she studies and who should be encouraged to see the learning experience as a personal transformation; this process, at times, will challenge the tastes, desires and preconceived opinions they might have held up till that moment. The student is raw material during the learning process and progress toward a finished product, but a product of their own choosing.

An analysis of organizational culture endows administrators and faculty with information rather implicit about their institution which in turn may help solve some critical dilemmas: how can we design a more flexible structures and governance given

the rapidly changing environment and declining resources? How can we implement a system of decision making so as to diagnose problems, find solutions and offer programs enrichment to support academic innovation and excellence? How can we use values such as autonomy and freedom to design structures and practices to motivate academics reach their potential while helping students to find their way? The answer to these questions is a good start for managers and administrators who try to improve institutional performance.

To say that higher education institution has excellent results is similar today with acknowledging that it offers excellent research and teaching. An investigation of these activities is useful because they embed skills, qualifications but also symbols and meaning. From this perspective, teaching and research are carriers of organizational culture seen as an interconnected web whose components overlap and connect with one another. Moreover, increasing performance in both teaching and research sends the right message to students and the general public regarding to what the institution does to reach its mission and goals, solve critical problems and build trust in its capacity to do what it has promised.

This paper intends to offer some answers to questions related to organizational culture in higher education institutions. The paper starts with a literature review of organizational culture and its components. We then turned to what we believe is relevant for the identity of a higher education institution: mission, structure, governance and decision making as well as teaching and research. Each of the analyzed elements answers to some questions: why does the organization exist? (mission); how does the organization reach its goals? (structure, governance and decision making); what does the organization do (teaching and research) to effectively meet the needs of internal and external public? In search of answers we made use of a comparative approach, having as mentor Harvard University and as a disciple, the University of Bucharest, Romania. Some answers and lessons are learnt in the end as to how, why and what to improve in order to strengthen the organizational culture and help the disciple innovate and progress.

### **Organizational culture – a literature review**

Numerous definitions related to the organizational culture are dealt with in the literature. One of the most popular is “the way we do things around here” (Lundy and Cowling, 1996). Martins and Terblanche (2003) understand an organizational culture as the set of subconscious values and beliefs deeply seated in the organizational structure and shared by its members. According to Schein (1985), organizational culture also refers to a set of basic assumptions that worked well in the past and therefore they are accepted as valid assumptions that are maintained within an organization. Since these assumptions are continually tested in attitudes and behaviors and human interactions, we refer to the organizational culture as to the right/appropriate way for taking actions, understanding and solving problems within an organization. Beliefs, norms, values, philosophy, rules of the game and feelings, the components of routine behavior, all are part of organizational culture (Hellriegel et al, 1998).

An organizational culture is an integral part of the general functioning of an organization. A strong culture is based on shared values and beliefs that ensure that everyone in an organization is on the same track (Robbins, 1996). The role of an organizational culture may be inferred from the general functions and influences that organizational culture exerts on the organization's different processes.

According to Furnham and Gunter (1993), *the functions* of organizational cultures consist in internal integration and coordination. Internal integration refers to the new members' socializing processes, creating the boundaries of the organization, the feeling of identity and commitment of its members. The coordination function refers to creating a competitive edge, making sense of the environment in terms of acceptable behavior and social system stability which is the social glue that holds the organization together (Martins, 2000). Effective communication is based on shared meanings and beliefs. If the organizational cultures fail to fulfill these functions in an acceptable manner, most likely they may contribute to reducing the organizations' efficiency (Furnham and Gunter, 1999).

Organizations use different resources and processes to guide behavior and change. Managers use *rational tools and processes* such as setting strategic direction, goals, technology, structures and communication, decision making, cooperation and interpersonal relations meant to do things. Culture, on the other hand, describes *the character of an organization* and is expressed through symbols, feelings, meanings, behavior, physical settings and artifacts. Resources and processes are *tools* while culture is *thought* (Chiritescu, 2016). Therefore, organizational culture complements the rational managerial tools by playing an indirect role in shaping and influencing behavior. The expressive practice of culture



is rather a reflection of how an organization says things (Coffey et al, 1994). Moreover, the art of expressing why you do what you do, from an organizational culture perspective is a compelling indicator that the organization is on the right track (Sinek, 2009).

There is not abundant research into higher education institutions as organizational cultures. Burton Clarck, for example, has pioneered work on distinctive colleges as cultures (1970), the role of belief and loyalty in college organizations (1971) and organizational sagas as tools for institutional identity (1980). Earlier work has included the study of academic cultures (Becher, 1981; Freedman, 1979; Gaff, J. G. and Wilson, R., 1971), leadership (Chaffee, E. E. and Tierney, W. G., 1988; Tierney, W. G., 1988) and the system of higher education as a culture (Bourdieu, P., 1977; Clark, B. R., 1984).

Higher education institutions are similar with business organizations in many ways. They have structures and processes, missions, goals and strategies to reach those goals. And, as in the case of business organizations, higher education institutions are influenced by powerful, external forces such as demographic, economic and political conditions; yet they are also shaped by strong forces that emanate from within (Tierney, 1988). This internal dynamic has its roots in the history of the organization and derives its force from its values, processes and goals. A higher education institution's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions and communication, both on an instrumental and a symbolic level. It involves stories, special language, norms, institutional ideology and attitudes that emerge from individual and organizational behavior (Tierney, 1988).

According to Geertz, cultures are "webs...the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Thus, an analysis of organizational culture of a university occurs as if the institution were an interconnected web that cannot be understood unless one looks not only at the structure and natural laws of that web, but also at the actors; interpretations of the web itself. Organizational culture then is the study of particular webs of significance within an organizational setting.

In universities, leaders and administrators often have only an intuitive grasp of the cultural conditions and influences that enter into their daily decision making. They have only a passive awareness of cultural codes, norms, symbols, beliefs and conventions and tend to recognize organizational culture only when conflicts are about to burst and adverse relationships manifest in a variety of forms. As a result, individuals find themselves dealing with organizational culture in an atmosphere of crisis instead of calm reflection and consensual change (Tierney, 1988).

Our lack of understanding of the role of organizational culture in improving management and institutional performance inhibits our ability to address the challenges that face higher education (Tierney, 1988). As decision making contexts grow in complexity, costs increase and resources become more difficult to allocate, leaders and administrators of higher education may benefit from understanding their institutions as cultural entities. As they make difficult decisions, these need not upscale conflicts. Instead, if they are properly informed by an awareness of culture, an administrator's decisions may contribute to creating a sense of purpose and identity within the institution. Moreover, to implement decisions, leaders and administrators need to understand the university's culture. Only then can they articulate decisions in a way that will speak to the needs of all actors and attract their support (Tierney, 1988).

It is important to understand that as much aware of organizational culture as one can be, recognizing its role and power is not a panacea for solving administrative problems. But a correct interpretation of the organization's culture may provide a critical insight into which of the many possible avenues one may choose from in search of in "one best way" to meet both the academics' needs and the goals of the institution.

### **Models of organizational culture**

Several authors have tried to describe the relationships between variables of organizational cultures using models: Sathe (1985), Schein (1985), Kreitner and Kinicki (1992).

Starting from the work of Schein (1985), Martins (1997) developed a model bearing in mind the ideal business organization and the role of leadership in creating the ideal organizational culture. Martins' model describes the interaction between the organizational subsystems (goals, values, structural, managerial, technological and psychological and sociological subsystems), the survival functions of external environment (social, industrial and corporate culture) and the internal systems (artifacts, values and basic assumptions) and the dimensions of culture. According to Martins (1997), these

dimensions of culture refer to the following: mission, external environment, means to achieve objectives, image of the organization, management processes, employees' needs and objectives, interpersonal relationships and leadership.

*Organizational mission* refers to how the institution's participants define the overarching ideology of the university. The mission of an organization is an interpretive act that provides meaning, direction and purpose (Tierney, 2008). In part, an organization's mission is defined by the history of the institution.

Further, to speak of any social institution is to speak of an organization that exists in an *environment*. As with the idea of organizational mission, however, how an institution's participants define the environment gets worked out within a cultural framework. That is, from a cultural perspective, the world is socially constructed and how concepts such as environment get defined is not so much a given fact but rather is something constantly considered, redefined and reinterpreted (Tierney, 1994).

*Leadership* is also a cultural construct that demands investigation when studying colleges and universities. Leaders enact scripts through an interpretive lens that enables them to act and communicate in one way in the organization and another in a different organization. Indeed, who the leaders are and whether the organization permits only formal leaders or relies on informal leaders is contingent on culture. Similarly, the manners in which the organization defines *strategy and information* are not fixed definitions irrespective of organizational type, but instead revolve around cultural interpretations of what the actors have come to expect about "how we do things around here". People come to believe in their institutions by the manner in which they interact and communicate with one another. Cultural norms surrounding such key issues as how *decisions* get made and by whom, who is privy to information and how information gets conveyed plays a key role in facilitating or impeding organizational change. Finally, *socialization* helps actors determine what is important to the organization. Indeed, how individuals learn about the organization and what they learn are key signals for newcomers about what the organization values and how they should act (Tierney, 2008).

All these elements are part of a university's organizational culture. We decided to discuss only a few in this paper, namely mission, structure, governance and decision making as well as teaching and research as they are relevant for the identity of a higher education institution. The design of selected elements answers to some questions: why does the organization exist? (mission); how does the organization reach its goals? (structure, governance and decision making); what does the organization do (teaching and research) to effectively meet the needs of internal and external audiences?

Our approach is a comparative one because we think that learning from the best is not only useful but also inspiring: a model of success makes people and institutions hope that if you find the correct answers to the fundamental questions of why, how and what, there is a chance to make it. In this case, our model is Harvard University (HU), ranked first in the world as the best higher education institution. The disciple is the University of Bucharest (UB) ranked first as in teaching and second in research in Romanian higher education (2014).

## Learning from the best

### Mission

As mentioned before, organizational mission refers to how the institution's participants define the ideology of the university. It is an act of interpretation (with roots in the organization's history) of what the organization stands for. A mission speaks to the internal and external public about its meaning, direction and purpose. It is (or should be) an answer to a question: why does this organization exist?

A good answer to the question "why" is that of Harvard University: "The mission of Harvard College is *to educate the citizens and citizen-leaders* for our society. We do this through our commitment to the transformative power of a liberal arts and sciences education. Beginning in the classroom with exposure to new ideas, new ways of understanding and new ways of knowing, students embark on a *journey of intellectual transformation*...From this we hope that students will begin to fashion their lives by *gaining a sense of what they want to do* with their gifts and talents, assessing their values and interests and learning how they can best serve the world" ([www.harvard.org](http://www.harvard.org)).

As anyone can easily notice, this mission is centered on the student: he/she needs to be educated so as to become a (trustful) citizen and citizen-leader; therefore, he/she is invited to embark on a journey of intellectual transformation. It is by

exposure to new ideas and ways of understanding along this journey that students become familiar with what happens in society and get a clearer picture of what they want to become in this life.

The mission of the UB is less clear: "The University is one of the leading higher education institutions in Romania and South-East Europe by actively contributing through research and teaching to the development and use of knowledge. The University's main objective is to offer high *quality academic programs* and *research facilities* and becoming a *forefront of research and teaching*. The University is an important academic institution, part of a global intellectual community working towards protecting and reinforcing academic values as well as towards promoting diversity and international collaboration" ([www.unibuc.ro](http://www.unibuc.ro)).

The mission of the UB is focused rather on *the institution itself*. There is no specific reference to students as the main beneficiaries of what the university has to offer, as if the academic programs and research facilities have one single, central and important objective: to serve the university so as to become a forefront of research and teaching. Moreover, it is stated that the university is an important institution (?) that promotes values, diversity and international collaboration as part of a global community. It may be an important institution but in what context? Compared to what? We believe that it may be useful to redefine the mission of the university as long as there is no doubt that institutions of higher education are meant first of all to *educate* students. How they do it or if they become important while they are doing it is rather a different story.

Unlike business organizations, higher education institutions do not work with products and services; instead, they work with people and their potential. By modeling this potential with specific tools, universities contribute directly to creating individual personalities and characters, professionals and citizens. This is the reason why we believe that the answer to the question why the university exists is important to be clearly stated in its mission. Second, because universities work with young people, we think that when sharing their mission, this should be a source of inspiration: we educate students and offer them everything they need to find their own identities and grow; in the end, it is these young educated people that will be in charge of tomorrow. We believe that a convincing answer to the question *why* may help universities build the foundation of trust, as a social glue that makes the system work (Tierney, 2008).

### **Structure, governance and decision-making**

Universities are entities that by definition should explicitly promote *values* such as autonomy and freedom, encourage *cooperation* between departments and faculties and support *access to information* and communication between administrators and faculty.

According to Armstrong (1995), an organizational culture has an influence on the *organizational structure* and operational systems within an organization. The structure seems to emphasize certain *values* such as flexibility, freedom and cooperative teamwork. It is especially the values of flexibility as opposed to rigidity and freedom as opposed to control that are emphasized in the literature (Arad et al, 1997). A high level of responsibility and adaptability in university structure also accompanies an organizational culture that allows for flexibility.

*Freedom* as a core value promoted by all institutions of higher education in general is manifested in autonomy, empowerment and decision making. This implies that academics are free to achieve their goals in an automatic and creative way within guidelines (Judge et al, 1997). Academics therefore have the freedom to do their work and determine procedures as they see fit within guidelines. Management should also encourage academics to be more creative and empower instead of control them (Judge et al, 1997). The degree to which they have freedom and authority to participate in decision making and in solving problems determines the level of empowerment which is positively related to the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education institutions (Arad et al, 1997).

*Cooperative teams* are identified by some authors as being essential for the degree to which creativity and innovation is promoted and sustained within universities. Well established teams which encompass diversity and individual talents that complement one another promote creativity in everything they do whether research or teaching (Arad et al, 1997, Mumford et al, 1997). Cross-functional teams which encourage social and technical interaction between its members can improve collective creativity which is further reflected in a course design or a project that opens a new line of research. In other words, a team's creativity depends on their way of making cooperation work with each other and other groups and sharing information. It is trust and mutual respect that make cooperation possible in a variety of forms. Again, trust as the social

glue of organizational culture has an influence upon institutional creativity (Tierney, 2008). Academics need to understand different opinions and styles of doing things, solve conflicts, communicate effectively and be open to new ideas and question them. Such effective teamwork is partly based on the team members' skills and abilities and partly on the shared values within the group (Tushman and O'Reilly, 1997).

If a university is compared to a business organization, most often than not we have to consider rather confusing relationships between administration and faculty as reflecting disorganization, willfulness or the pursuit of self-interest in preference to college interests. Corson (1960) was among the first to identify the administration of colleges and universities as presenting "a unique dualism in organizational structure" (p. 43). Corson saw the university as including two structures existing in parallel: the conventional administrative hierarchy and the structure through which faculty made decisions regarding those aspects of the institution over which they had jurisdiction. This dual system of control was further complicated by the fact that neither system had consistent patterns of structure or delegation. The faculty governance structure on every campus was different and each administration seemed to have been established "to meet specific situations in particular institutions or to reflect the strengths and weaknesses of individuals in various echelons" (p. 45).

Although Harvard University is top of list of higher education institutions, it has only a very small administrative group at the top. Harvard is significantly decentralized with activities occurring within a few square miles of Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Most employees are housed in the university's four schools. Each school has its own dean and its endowment and, in accordance with Harvard's philosophy, "every tub on its own bottom", largely controls its own destiny.

Harvard is one of the few universities in which each school chooses its own academic calendar. Each school has its fiscal *autonomy* and *responsibility*. Individual professors also have enormous autonomy and discretion. In many schools, they have almost total control over courses they teach, research they do and which activities they pursue, if any. Faculty meetings are typically sparsely attended. If a dean or a department head wants a faculty member to chair a committee or offer a new course, the request is more often a humble entreaty than an authoritative command. Everybody expects each course at Harvard to be the unique creation of an individual professor. Two schools might offer courses with the same title, covering entirely different content with widely diverging teaching styles.

It is *autonomy* and *decentralization* that allows Harvard to be extremely flexible. Each school has its own administrative structure. Administrative staff is perceived rather as a support structure that is in charge with managing resources (money, buildings and other facilities) in order to support a school's activities: teaching, research and service. Each school is managed by a dean and his/her team. Decision making related to teaching and research activities is an extremely transparent process; it also involves participation of all faculty members.

The situation looks different at UB: the self-evaluation report of the UB in 2012 has revealed that governance structures and decision-making processes are not always clear, efficient and transparent. In some cases, similar administrative tasks are carried out in a variety of departments at various levels, resulting in inefficiencies and confusion for the users of their services (SER 2012).

Administrative and academic staff experience constraints due to bureaucracy which is often attributed to the numerous and constantly changing regulations from the governments. These changes often result in a waste of time and resources. Some examples of such consequences are: delayed implementation of projects; not being able to hire academic and administrative staff despite of the high number of students and research projects; rigid budgeting and public procurement procedures. However, following the Law on Education which issued some governance and human resources arrangements and procedures to universities, UB needs to address the internal governance and decision-making within its own organization more effectively.

There is a strong awareness of the necessity to rethink the balance of responsibility between the central and faculty level. The university aims to make its administration more efficient and transparent. It is important to draw up an overview of structure of the administration and its administrative processes. University governance structures and processes should be reviewed to see whether they are functional and should be adjusted accordingly, in order to at least reduce inefficiencies.

The university should have a more coherent administrative structure serving the university community in a simple, one-stop manner. For example, maintaining one central statistical database for all institutional information including teaching, research, services, students and staff, and providing necessary analysis upon request to inform its own decision-making processes is a precondition for well-informed and timely decision-making. Having institutional statistical data gathered and

kept in different departments and research units is not helpful for entering quality management processes or helping decision-making at the UB (SER 2012).

There should be a better distribution of academic responsibility and decision-making between the Rectorate and the faculties on the one hand while it should be investigated if some additional practical services should be provided by the central level, on the other hand. There is an example of this with the research office where one office is located centrally at the university and aims to assist academics with various grants. Research grant management is an important part of the academic work portfolio, but it is difficult to have just one central office without administrative staff in the faculties who can help academics to submit and administer external grants.

It is important to note that “governance” as well as management and administrative staff should serve and support teaching, research and service of the academic community at the UB.

## Teaching

HU developed Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching (HILT). This structure's mission is to catalyze innovation and excellence in teaching and learning at Harvard. Its four goals are: to build on Harvard's strengths in teaching and learning; to meet the educational needs of students (both technological and pedagogical); to strengthen the science of learning and to develop a robust network at Harvard around teaching and learning innovation. These challenges require the combined efforts of students, faculty and staff and the thoughtful coordination of programs, centers, departments and schools with each other and the University as a whole. As HILT's President, Drew Faust, mentioned: “We must deploy Harvard's exceptional scholarship to redefine teaching based on the ideas, evidence and technology of today's world”.

Over the next ten years, HILT aims to have demonstrably seeded hundreds of local innovations and experiments; to facilitate the “institutionalization” of innovations and experiments that are successful such that they become self-sustaining; to have developed a large community of practice around teaching and learning excellence that involves all Harvard schools; to facilitate high quality research on learning and teaching that is used by Harvard instructors and students and beyond.

HILT uses a variety of tools for accomplishing its mission and goals. One of them is the Spark Grants, offered on a semester-basis. These are awards designed to help “spark” promising teaching and learning projects from idea to reality and position innovations for future success. To create the best 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and research environment at Harvard, the Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning (VPAL) offers faculty and students support and services. The number of tools and means to support innovation that Harvard has already created is quite impressive and they are functional and efficient: Teaching and Learning Consortium network, HILT Spark Grants, Scholar to Practitioner Speaker Series (a web page for expert scholar speakers), Talking about Teaching Series (a seminar that explores pedagogical connections across disciplines and schools), University-wide video infrastructure support, to name just a few.

Teaching at HU is extremely challenging. For example, Harvard Business School (HBS) offers about 100 courses in economics. These courses are created by faculty and undergo discussions and improvement before their final approval. Only a small number of courses are obligatory; most of them are electives. And, if these courses are to survive along the way, students need to see these courses as new, useful and attractive; which makes cooperation between faculty and departments possible (because academics work together at course design and course improvement) as well as competition (only the most promising and attractive courses survive). In this case, both cooperation and competition are needed in order to support the university's mission and performance.

At the UB, not even at faculty level can we speak of autonomy and freedom in decision making; therefore, teaching is not always easy. For example, creating and implementing a new course is a very long and complicated process. It may be a good course, new and attractive with a great value for students and an exquisite learning content. You can teach this course only within an existing specialization and only if the course is mentioned in the ARACIS guidelines. Besides, there is no prior process of peer review and content improvement. No one evaluates course novelty, usefulness and attractiveness; which in turn makes writing new courses a much less interesting activity as long as there are no mechanisms of support at management level (programs are already stuffed with courses); neither at department level (there are no teams to evaluate course content and offer feedback to the author (s)). Therefore, if there is no preoccupation and no mechanisms of support, creativity has little chance of manifesting itself so as to serve both students and university.

## Research culture and support

The Directors of Research at HU are responsible for fostering the university's intellectual community and research culture, encouraging research that addresses important global and multidisciplinary questions and supporting individual faculty in their research programs. For example, in response to the faculty culture report, the Directors of Research at Harvard Business School (HBS) engaged in a series of discussions of their aspirations for the HBS research culture and how to enhance that culture. They presented their aspirations and ideas to the faculty and held a series of 10 small group discussions during the fall 2013 to solicit feedback and additional ideas. During the spring term they held two focus group meetings with the faculty who organize research labs, engaged the Dean's Management Group and convened the School's Unit Heads for further discussions to help shape their ideas. In May 2014, the Senior Associate Dean for Research presented the outline of three experiments to all the faculty:

- Research coaches – providing additional support for faculty learning to publish in scholarly journals;
- Research labs – facilitating opportunities for faculty with shared interests to interact;
- Case writing support – including a case-study writing workshop for tenure track faculty and a working group focused on the craft of case-writing.

Additional activities to support research at HU in recent years have included:

- Increasing the visibility of inspirational research through an annual School-wide research symposium;
- Hosting the Course Development Research (CORE) seminar to provide a forum for faculty engaged in course development research to discuss early stage work with colleagues throughout the School;
- Sponsoring research conferences, many with a multidisciplinary focus, that academics and practitioners attend;
- Faculty Immersion Experience Programs (IXP) provide opportunities for faculty learning and, in the case of international IXPs, to reduce barriers to conduct international research;
- The Global Research Fellowship Program provides opportunities for faculty to pursue in-depth research and course development projects outside the US. The fellowships allow for a true immersion experience by providing funding for a one to nine month international stay;
- Faculty members are provided with an annual stipend as a supplement to their research budget that offers flexibility to cover research-related expenses that might not otherwise be covered by the research budget, such as technology purchases.

According to the UB's internal regulation, the research strategy at the university is drawn up normally by the Scientific Board. It is based on the integration of the yearly's programs of the university's research centers. The strategy has to be approved by the University's Senate (art. 7, UB Research Regulation).

Research at UB takes place in various units within the departments and faculties (art. 4, UB Research Regulation). Researchers are affiliated to both a research center and a faculty. According to the SER (2012), research is coordinated by a variety of structural arrangements, such as institutes (e.g. Institute of Classical Studies), laboratories, research centers, project units and consultancy centers. In some faculties, research centers create good conditions for research while in others, research centers do not seem to be functioning. This structure for research encompassing different entities may be too complicated to operate effectively and to properly manage. Therefore, the relationship between different research entities should be clarified to ensure reasonable responsibility.

Research management at UB is decentralized. The administrative and financial management of the research projects is carried out centrally at the university level by the Office of Research and Technology Transfer. According to a recent survey (2012), academics are concerned with project management procedures that are cumbersome and may sometimes jeopardize the success of research projects. The lines of communication and responsibilities are unclear; thus, a great deal of time is needed for academics to run a research project.

In some faculties, the doctoral and postdoctoral researchers are engaged in externally funded research projects, both nationally and internationally. Faculty members generally attend international conferences and organize various scholarly events. But, in some faculties, research activities are far from being impressive. Publishing in foreign language journals is always a challenge. For quite a few, publishing internationally is a new type of activity, the rules of which they need to learn, in addition to all their other responsibilities. Since the assessment of research has only recently started, academics feel an impetus to get involved in research projects and belong to research centers. But the limited resources at national level,

payment disruptions linked to the EU structural funds' schemes, restrictions to hire new staff as well as having very limited capital investments in infrastructure for the past few years have limited the research performance at the UB.

Given the limitations, the university should try to create more possibilities for research and support mechanisms, especially in faculties that have been less attractive so far.

Research opportunity is unevenly distributed across the university – in some disciplines there is more opportunity while in others opportunity is much less present. If the UB wants to offer research-based education, it needs to improve research in all fields, especially in the newer faculties. There should be an effort to create and increase research capacity in all faculties. Most faculties and faculty members need support mechanisms in this regard.

Although some examples of European-funded research projects can be found at the UB, it is important to make better use of available funding from outside the university and the Ministry of Education.

It is also vital to enhance the research development of young academic staff. Junior academics are generally overloaded with teaching responsibilities at the time when they should be given more room for research and publishing. Therefore, a redistribution of teaching loads across the different levels could be helpful. Perhaps more senior academics could increase their teaching loads to support upcoming talent. In several European countries, such as Germany and Denmark, but also in the US, junior academics have lower teaching loads than senior academics.

The quality of teaching and research depends, to a great extent, on the institutional support: money, buildings, infrastructure, networks, etc. If in the case of HU 58% of faculty are very satisfied and 23% are satisfied with opportunities to innovate in teaching (2013 Harvard Faculty Climate Survey Results), in the case of UB only 15% of faculty are very satisfied and 13% are satisfied with the same opportunities. 48% of Harvard professors are very satisfied and 33% are satisfied with the quality of technical and research staff while at the UB only 19% declare that they are very satisfied and 14% declare satisfaction regarding the quality of technical and research personnel. It is also interesting to notice that at Harvard's, the quality of support and administrative staff is perceived as very satisfactory by 48% and satisfactory by 29% of professors. In the case of UB, only 9% of professors are declare high levels of satisfaction and 4% are satisfied with the quality of support and administrative personnel (Coman, 2016).

## Conclusions

Higher education institutions and business organizations have organizational cultures that differ in terms of mission, external environment, means to achieve objectives, image of the organization, management processes, interpersonal relationships and leadership.

We started with the idea that in higher education, to learn from the best means not necessarily to replicate a model of success, but rather to get inspired by and discover strategies, tools, attitudes and values that may contribute to building an organizational culture open to creativity and innovation. We decided to focus only on those elements of organizational culture that may offer answers that help the university shape its identity: the mission (why does the university exist?); structure, governance and decision making (how does it reach its mission and goals?); teaching and research (what does it offer?).

We discussed the answers to these questions in the specific cases of Harvard University as the leader in research and teaching in the academic world and the University of Bucharest, ranked first in teaching and second in research among higher education institutions in Romania.

What are the lessons that academics and administrators of UB may learn from the best? First, we need to reaffirm our determination to serve students, to educate them using all the necessary tools to help them find their way in life as self-accomplished individuals, professionals and citizens. To (re)affirm the reason why we exist as a higher education institution (the answer to the question "why") is part of the organizational culture. The answer to *why* may inspire students and helps us all develop trust as a social glue that holds the organization together.

Second, we should design better structures of governance and more flexible systems of communication and decision making. With structures and systems based on values such as autonomy and freedom, we should express this freedom in everything that is related to teaching and research, including hiring personnel, creating and implementing new courses,

easier access to university research grants. This is the answer to the question “how”: transparency in decision making, access to information and flexible administrative and management structures. In the case of UB, a convincing answer to the question “how” would be an indicator of an organizational culture prepared to face change; open to innovation; supportive in reaching organizational mission and goals.

Last but not least, we should learn that research and teaching need adequate mechanisms of support. While it is about new programs and fields of teaching, new national or international grants, new teaching and learning systems and personnel, all need mechanisms of implementation and support. Because if you lack adequate support, you cannot wait for outstanding results to happen. You cannot build trust unless you prove that where there is initiative and innovation, there is also a mechanism to support it; where there is opportunity, there are also tools to help that opportunity turn into something useful for students and faculty.

Inspiration, openness, support – these are the organizational coordinates that we should work on with determination and enthusiasm in the years to come; hopefully, we will make it to the top.

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## The Role of Education for Identity Formation Among Albanians and Serbs of Kosovo: the Application of the *Difference-Blinded Approach* for Establishing Citizenship Regime in a Multi-Cultural Society

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### Abstract

As a result of striving accession to the EU, all states in southeast Europe have as precondition to solve inter ethnic conflicts and to balance the system in a way that makes the relations between dominant group and minorities one of the mutual respect, based upon the principle of non discrimination. In Western Balkans some of the most controversial issues in the past decade have revolved around the educational rights. The fragile society of Kosovo faces many challenges, and the system of education is just one of them. The ongoing dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and painful process of state building often overshadows important educational issues. The educational system of Kosovo is segregated, extremely divisive and highly politicized. It is widely accepted that education has strong impact on individual's identity formation. In this context ethnicity, nationality and citizenship constitute just a few of the possible identities within the individual's self-conception being the most relevant to the relationship between citizen and the state. In the analyses of the theoretical foundations of multiculturalism the role of education in a culturally diverse society is very important for identity formation based on the concept of the citizenship as identity. By constitution Kosovo is a multicultural society but the meanings and expressions of this are contested both within the dominant Albanian majority and Serbian minority. Conceiving comprehensive discussions if Albanians and Serbs of Kosovo in the future could potentially accept to identify themselves through the citizenship of the new state before their ethnic and national based identities (cross linked with Albania respectively Serbia), it is a broad topic and beyond the scope of this paper, but for the purpose of this study the concept of the citizenship as identity is considered only in a narrower context - that of the role of education in identity formation.

**Keywords:** education, identity, recognition, citizenship, multiculturalism.

### 1. Introduction

The road to an active and diversified civil society can be especially long and arduous where the legacies of communism are reinforced by the deliberate manipulation of nationalism. Kosovo illustrates well the important role that nationalism and myths play in shaping human behavior. The negative nationalism that characterized the Balkans during the 1990s promoted authoritarianism, which fostered an intolerant political culture. The Serbian myth known as Kosovo battle fought in 1389 marked the beginning of the collapse of ex-Yugoslavia. The history of myths was served to younger generations for decades through school curriculums and state media. Hatred and segregation was reflected in every segment of Kosovo public system of education, affecting the joint education system, which had been in place since the World War II.

Historically, school curriculums were designed from outside of Kosovo. History falsification and the impact of myths throughout school curriculums in Kosovo have had a serious impact on the education of new generations. Since the fall of communism in the 90s the Western Balkans had been undergoing fundamental and multiple transformations. 'These transformations are complex in their nature and difficult to explain by a single paradigm or model. Such a complex transformation, where democratization and transition take place in conjunction with nation-and state-building and European integration, usually comes at the expense of a truncated picture of the region' (Jano, 2008).

During the complex process of transformation the legacies of communism and nationalism in Kosovo had a crucial role in designing the educational system in Kosovo. This paper aims to explore the impact of education for the ethnic and national identity formation of both Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, to the extent that such alternative is considered threatening for the future of Kosovo and its EU Integration process. The study presents the legacies of nationalism and communism in

shaping the human and political behavior by discussing historical and current levels of segregation in Kosovo's system of education.

## **2.0 The history and development of the Kosovo's education system**

### **2.1. Education for ethnic Albanians during the Ottoman Empire and Serbia's rule**

Kosovo cannot be proud for the tradition on education during the 500 year occupation under Ottoman Empire and the period under Serbia's rule until the World War II. Living most of the time in the circumstances of discrimination, repression and wars it was difficult for the Albanian majority population in Kosovo to establish schools in their own language. The first document in written Albanian dates from the 16th century. The first written document of the modern Albanian language is of the year 1462. The book "Meshari" by Gjon Buzuku was published in 1555.

Under the Ottoman Empire rule no Albanian schools were allowed to be established independently. Institutionally only the religious schools were operational under the control of the empire through their local representatives. Educational battles of Albanians continued but it was difficult to set up a system of schools in which there would be minimum ottoman impact." Clandestine efforts aimed at promoting the Albanian sense of nationhood in religious schools were taking place alongside the institutional struggle for the Albanian schools. A demand for Albanian language schooling was voiced in the parliament by Albanian members of Xhemijet, the party representing Muslims in Sandjak, Kosovo and Macedonia. However they also developed an underground activity and helped to revive secret schools. Secret schools were entirely secular, while secular and religious teaching content was combined in the religious schools. Albanian nationalist from Kosovo staunchly opposed the education of Albanians in Serbian schools, for as Hasan Prishtina said; they teach something other than what we wish our lads to learn." (Kostovicova, 2005). Albanian culture and Albanian nationhood was mainly developed through Islamic institutions like mektebs, medreses and tekkes.

There was not either a proper and institutional organized system of education in Kosovo in between two world wars. Serbian influence in those rarely established schools in which Albanians could attend classes was prevailing. Some of the attempts to establish schools in Albanian did not survive and after the establishment of some schools under the system of Serb, Croat and Slovene Kingdom it was almost difficult to see Albanians from Kosovo having access in them. Although there were few schools established, they were all in Serbian and on the other hand denying to Albanians to establish their schools in their own language. This contributed to their illiteracy until the World War II was finished.

### **2.2 System of education for Albanians in Yugoslavia (1945-1974)**

After WWII the education system for the majority Albanian population did not substantially improve. Between 1946- 1968 today's Kosovo was officially a district called Kosovo and Metohija (Constitution of PFRY-1946). With the new constitution of 1963 the Peoples Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (PFRY) became the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and Kosovo gained the status of Autonomous Province while Albanians from the notion "national minority" were defined into "nationality". Regardless of these changes there was no essential improvement of the quality of life for Albanians in Kosovo. In the years to come, Kosovo-Albanians were marked by repression and discrimination in almost all aspects of public life. Following constitutional amendments initiated by the federation and coupled with the student demonstrations of 1968, the treatment of the Albanian majority population of Kosovo started to move in a positive direction. In this context mass education for Albanians in socialist Yugoslavia saw some progress. One of the main reasons was the fall of Aleksandar Rankovic, a high Serbian official of secret police who was well known for his repressive policies against Albanians. 'The fall of Rankovic came after a failure of his behind-the-scenes attempt to overthrow Tito and re-establish a Serb dominated centralized state similar to the one that prevailed during the period 1948- 63 1965.' (Lukic, 1996).

After Rankovic's fall, Serbian law began to devolve some control over educational issues to Kosovo; however, this still did not allow young Albanian intellectuals to independently develop their national culture. During this period education became one of the top priorities of Kosovo's Communist Party, noted by a qualitative advance in the years to come. 'The opening of the University of Pristina in 1970, with Serbian and Albanian languages enjoying equal standings, paved the way for mass education of the Albanian student' (Kostovicova, 2005). This situation was better when compared to the Rankovic era, but despite these improvements, the overall situation in Kosovo did not substantially improve. Being aware of that,

Yugoslav authorities tried to soften the standard of living in the province. Substantial investments in the province, mostly in mines, energy, and large automated industries, created few jobs and did little to reduce unemployment. Unemployment remained high.

### **2.2.1. Education system between 1974-1981**

The spread of Albanian education reached its peak with the new constitution of the SFRY in 1974. The new Constitution of 1974 upgraded Kosovo's legal status. Two constituent parts of Serbia (Kosovo and Vojvodina) were established as autonomous provinces but also with their right as federal units. The 1974 Constitution provided full equality to republics and autonomous provinces, allowing participation in the new collective presidency. This consisted of 9 members: the President of Yugoslavia, representatives from the six republics and those from the autonomous provinces. 'The 1974 constitution formally defines the autonomous provinces as constituent members of the federation. 65 Kosovo and Vojvodina are granted de facto the status of sovereign republics in almost all respects, differing from the other six republics insofar as they are not granted the right to secede from the federation.' (Mertus, 1999). The years 1974 – 1980, marked the 'late Titoism' period. This period allowed Albanians in Kosovo space to develop their cultural, political and national identity within the new education system. Despite this advance, there were consistent problems, as many federal mechanisms were in place to keep the education within the Yugoslav ideological contexts. Serbian authorities constantly fought against the idea of having an independent system of education for Kosovo-Albanians, accusing Albanians of developing the so-called irredentism and separatism movement in Kosovo schools. The Serbian government insisted that Kosovo returned to the pre 1974 situation. In order to do this, the Government had to cause obstructions at the federal level. 'With the constitutional devolution of 1974, republics and provinces 66 became masters of their educational policy and decided on the network and structure of the schools and curricula. However, general guidelines for the educational policy were subject to an agreement in the federal level.' (Kostovicova, 2005). In order to achieve its political aims, Serbian authorities insisted upon a return of its legal control over Kosovo schools and the university. This led to a consistent confrontation between the authorities and ethnic Albanians over the Kosovo education system. Many Albanian political prisoners came from Kosovo schools and the university. At that time, Kosovo had the highest number of the political prisoners at the federal level. 'From 1971 to 1981, public expression of political dissent was suppressed in all parts of Yugoslavia, but the greatest percentages of political prisoners were Kosovo Albanians.' (Mertus, 1999). After Tito's death and between 1981-1989, several officials planned on how to strengthen the power of the Yugoslav 67 federation. These attempts were developed in continuity from Belgrade, as Serb leaders saw their chance to take power from the other republics at the federal level. Yugoslavia became a fragile society full of animosities and mixed feelings, starting with those who predicted injustice coming back for them, to those who were encouraging ethno-nationalist leaders to go ahead with their plans.

### **2.2.2 Abrogation of Kosovo's autonomy (1989- 1999)**

Milosevic's policy to reconquest Kosovo had begun in 1988, with a powerful propaganda campaign launched against Albanian 'nationalists and separatists'. He prepared the situation on the ground by raising tensions on his visits to Kosovo by feeding animosity between the Serbian population and their Albanian neighbors. The promotion of Serbian hegemony started in Kosovo in 1988. Over a four -week period during the February and March of 1989, Milosevic crushed Kosovo's autonomy by initiating violent demonstrations that claimed the lives of over one hundred Albanians (Sell, 2003). Simultaneously, he began to prepare his tactics in political and legal contexts. In meetings with communist chiefs of the other Yugoslav republics Milosevic made it clear that he intended to revoke Kosovo's autonomy. In order to do that legally, he had first to amend Constitution of Republic of Serbia. According to 1974 Constitution, amendments related to the status of Kosovo and Vojvodina as autonomous provinces could not be passed in Serbia's assembly without prior vote of both Kosovo and Vojvodina assemblies.

Determined against Milosevic's initiative the majority of Albanian delegates of the Kosovo assembly refused to vote proposed amendments. Feeling under pressure and intimidated by the presence of the Serbian police who had surrounded the Kosovo Assembly building with special police units, and tanks, they were unable to stop the passage of this act. 'In a state of emergency, without the required quorum, without counting votes and by voting of persons that were found in the hall but who were not delegates, the Serb president of the Assembly of Kosova, proclaimed on March 23, 1989 the approval

of the constitutional amendments.' (Bieber, Daskalovski, 2003). It can be argued that any act passed under a threat, denying the real will of the people, can and should be void. Therefore the decision of the assembly of Serbia, which passed on March 28, 1989, was considered invalid by Albanian delegates. As a response, on 2nd of July 1990 the Albanian delegates, comprising of the majority of Kosovo's Assembly approved the declaration of independence of Kosova. 'Being denied from Serbian police to access the assembly building this act was passed at the gates outside the assembly building. This preceded the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which was approved on September 7, 1990.' (Bieber, Daskalovski 2003). Abrogation of Kosovo's autonomy and living under the Milosevic's repressive regime was unacceptable for Kosovo Albanians. Consequently, they started to organize the so-called 'civil resistance' against the Milosevic's regime.

### 2.2.3. Albanian 'parallel' system of education

One of the most repressive actions of Milosevic's regime was the dismissal of all Albanian education personnel. Albanians rejected the Serbian curriculum that had been adopted by the Serbian Educational Council. This was the pretext for the regime to use Serbian police forces to forbid Albanian access to their schools. Thousands of Albanian professors and students from primary to university level were dismissed, only Serbs were allowed to have access to the public schools. The 'Serbianization' of the Kosovo police force was a strong clue as to the future look of Kosovo's schools. This repressive situation pushed the Albanian community to look for other alternatives. As a form of their civil resistance to Serbia, Albanians created their own system of education out of the public facilities. 'Self-financed post autonomy graduates in Kosovo were the generations of the Kosovo Republic. They no longer studied the people's heroes who had fought for 'brotherhood and unity' of Yugoslav nations and nationalities' (Schwandner –Siewers and Jurgen Fischer, 2002).

Education was organized in private houses and garages, especially for high schools and University of Prishtina (UP). New curricula were enacted with an aim to promote the Albanian national identity. 'This came to be known as parallel education. It was the cause that galvanized the entire Albanian community in Kosovo into action, triggering its unprecedented homogenization. Albanian parallel education in Kosovo emerged as an embodiment of the Albanian civil and peaceful resistance, and an argument used to prove the existence of the Albanian independent state in Kosovo' (Kostovicova, 2005). Schools and the University were the most important institutions where the Serb and Albanian communities mixed to some degree, before 1990 in Kosovo.

After the Albanians were forced into a completely separate social life, walls of division appeared between the two communities, and Kosovo developed two extremely segregated systems of education, which have remained almost the same into the present. Albanians contributed to this system by giving their houses free of charge for Kosovo schools and paying taxes to Kosovo's Government in exile from 1991 to 1998 in order to maintain the parallel educational system. 'Attempts to convene an Albanian parliament in Kosovo or establish a police force were thwarted, whilst the Government of the self proclaimed Kosovo Republic had to seek safety in exile' (Waller, Drezov, Gökay, 2001). Parallel institutions became a point of national pride and motivation for further solidification among Albanians for their statehood. The launch of the parallel system was also a gesture by Albanians to show to the international community 'the independent Kosovo'. LDK leadership used this model of success as an important symbol and proof of Albanian statehood in Kosovo. 'One Albanian analyst suggested that Ibrahim Rugova should more accurately be called "President of the parallel schools of Kosovo" than 'The President of Republic of Kosovo', his official title. This very same education system, in private house, inadequate cellars and garages, helped sustain the metaphor of Kosovo as a prison' (Waller, Drezov, Gökay, 2001). Because of the development and continuity of the educational and health care system after 1991 and some other aspects of civil resistance, K-Albanians were able to maintain to some degree a parallel political sphere independent of Serbia. As outlined above civil society in Kosovo emerged and took its form within the context of non-violent civil resistance led from LDK and Mr.Rugova. 'The nonviolence movement became part of the modern Albanian identity that drew together both village patriarchs and urban intelligentsia in a common effort to avoid a tragedy' (Clark, 2000). Certain strategic goals were clear as to why Albanians named their movement as non-violent and peaceful: first, to avoid offering a pretext for Serbian police and military forces for brutal interventions (although there was a systematic repression of Albanian civilians during 1990s), second, the importance of involving international support both in political and humanitarian aspect, and third, to strengthen the limited social space by fulfilling basic social needs for Albanian population, such as medical care and education. Non-violent civil resistance represents the first phase of the development of the civil society in Kosovo (Clark, 2000). While in much of the communist bloc, peaceful transition from totalitarian and one-party rule to plural and democratic

regimes, buttressed by civil society contributions, was made possible, Kosovo's civil society experienced a different kind of development (Khdr, 2008).

### **3.0 History of partition from opposing perspectives and its effects on the state building and EU integration processes**

Parallel system of education for Albanians on one side and Serbia's state curriculums imposed for Kosovo Serbs on the other side during the 1990's have had a direct impact in establishing a completely segregated and divisive education system in Kosovo after the war of 1998-1999.

Today Kosovo has two parallel systems of education, the dominant education system organized by Kosovo institutions attended from the Albanian majority and some non-Serb minorities, and education institutions funded by Serbian Government attended from Serbs and some other minorities. Nowhere in Europe is there such segregation in schools as in Kosovo. Kosovo institutions and international community have failed to offer an integrated and homogenous school curriculum both for Kosovo Albanians and Serbs. On the other side, minority Serbs are constantly prevented from Belgrade for their minimum integration in Kosovo's education system. Consequently, the formation of ethnically based identity among younger generations remains a natural alternative and as a result both ethnic and national identities play important roles in guiding their political behavior.

History of education has played a particularly important role in communicating the national narrative to younger generations and fostering the development of those identities. Today, both sides teach their children about Kosovo's history from two completely opposing perspectives, each country's national narrative vilifies the other producing mutual hatred among younger generations from both sides.

This model of teaching the national history through two different systems of education within Kosovo's territory promotes and reinforces the national and ethnical identity among the new generations from both sides. Serbs neither want nor see a need to participate in designing school curriculums considering them to belong to self-declared state of Kosovo. Albanians governing with the majority of educational institutions in the country prefer to implement curriculum not always in the spirit of the Constitution of Kosovo which defines Kosovo as multiethnic state. This kind of rejection from both sides produces what is called the stateness problem by harming the state-building process. Simultaneously Kosovo's EU integration perspectives that should encourage and promote tolerance between different ethnic groups in a multicultural society are harmed - elements those guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo based on the concept of the citizenship as identity. Consequently, number of individuals who could potentially identify themselves with the new state of Kosovo based on the values of the citizenship as identity is less compared to the ethnocentric individuals who identify strongly with their ethnicity and maintain a belief that only their ethnic group is centrally important. Many of us have witnessed that ethnocentric arguments have justified many horrific events in the history of Balkans, including genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Therefore the failure of democratization in Kosovo among other reasons can be attributed to the system of education with full of contradictions where the strength of the national and ethnic identity prevails. As more ethnically divided schools are, the more difficult it is for democratization to succeed and even more difficult to link Albanians and Serbs with the new state of Kosovo.

Given the foregoing discussion, one can ask what kind of roles should education play in a multicultural society that has yet to achieve its ideals and if it is possible at all to recognize and develop a positive bicultural identity for minority Serbs in the future?

### **4. Conclusions**

Kosovo and Serbia delegations during the dialogue in Brussels have reached agreement on mutual recognition of diplomas in both countries. It is only an agreement of technical nature allowing those with a diploma from both sides to apply for a job and potentially work in these two respective countries in the future. In fact the ongoing dialogue between Serbia and

Kosovo and painful process of state building overshadows the core of the educational issues discussed in this paper. The educational system of Kosovo remains segregated and extremely politicized.

The issue here is not of doing reforms in legislation by designing and redesigning policies and strategies for various levels of the system of education. As Terrice Bassler describes, the context of education in South East Europe is diverse and full of contradictions. There are breakthroughs and occasional triumphs, such as peace agreement or an election that heralds a better time, a national education reform process launched or legislation passed, a new project or program approved, a textbook or training delivered. There are twist and turns in the Ministry of Education-or an entire Government, for that matter (Bassler, 2005). Kosovo makes no exception in doing similar experiments sponsored from the international community and local institutions on behalf of reforming education system in Kosovo.

In fact the problem doesn't rely in such reforms. The essence of the problem is that the education in continuity was conducted in extreme nationalist spirit impacting and strengthening ethnic and nationalist identity among younger generations, it therefore cannot be changed with the sort of reforms that are more of a technical, formal and of a quantitative nature. This problem as pointed out in this paper is rooted deeply after the World War II , during the Yugoslav times , continuing under the regime of Milosevic and the concept survived and was even incarnated under UNMIK administration and now in independent Kosovo. This is mostly because the international community wrongly invested in improving relations between the Albanian majority and the Serb minority in Kosovo. Although most of it looked organized while designing policy papers and legislation for education, in fact, the main action was missing. This action had to be followed by the international community. International community under the UNMIK administration was focused mostly on designing policy papers in cooperation with the local authorities but it never had the right approach to the problem. The core of the problem that many internationals in Kosovo never understood was how Albanians thought they were perceived from Serbs (and visa versa) because this had a significant influence on how both sides came to understand themselves who they are. The process of identity formation involves dialogic negotiation with others and this is what was lacking for many years after the war.

For instance UNMIK never used the educational institutions and schools in order to support youths' development toward a positive sense of ethnic identity by organizing several programs that can build up their sense of interaction among the ethnicities improving their understanding on other ethnicities. If students from both sides were allowed for the minimum interaction they would have better understanding of the ethnic identity, they would become more tolerate and respect on other ethnic groups. Instead, under UNMIK the separation/traditional type of education isolated from the mainstream society was allowed to be established among the Serbian community and the concept of the multiethnic Kosovo in fact it was only a farce promoted in the bill-boards all over Kosovo.

Identity is negotiated between the people who live in the same space and recognition from others as they develop their own identity is very significant. Modern democratic societies are characterized by the increased importance of recognition. As such, recognition has become increasingly significant for the development of self identity and the recognition of others has gained a new importance for our modern identity. As a result, in our modern society misrecognition or lack of recognition during the process of negotiation can mean oppression. Misrecognition means denial of one's worth as a human being and this is likely to result in lack of self-esteem (Taylor, 1994).

More concretely, today's misrecognition between Albanian and Serb youngsters is exclusively a product of the wrong approach of the international community applied while building and developing the education system in Kosovo after the war of 1998-1999. International community in Kosovo without some thorough analyses and in attempt to respect individuals equally, regardless of their cultural particularities have applied the so-called *difference-blinded* approach where collective differences have been treated as if they did not exist. With this approach, equal respect means that individuals are treated exactly the same way, universally meaning same rights as anyone else, regardless of race, religion, or gender. The principle of this recognition is very simple: an equal treatment regardless of cultural and social differences (Taylor, 1995). Kymlicka recognizes the significance of culture for developing our sense of self. He argues that cultural membership has a considerable significance for achieving the sense of belonging to a cultural structure and history (Kymlicka, 1989).

The institutional design of Kosovo as civic and multiethnic state with elements of individual liberalism where all of its individual citizens are equal before the law (Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Roma, etc) to some degree referred to the Christian Joppke's concept of citizenship as rights and as identity somehow was introduced in Kosovo's case ( Jopke, 2007). The problem though relies on the fact that universal legal rights of citizenship were offered only through the official policies, papers, strategies and finally in the constitution. In other words through the *difference-blinded* approach which may work

well in societies where there are no cultural differences but in cases like Kosovo it continued to produce misrecognition between younger generations from both sides. Misrecognition as a concept incarnated in the education system established after the WWII survives these days as in both curricula that of Kosovo (implemented by the majority of Albanians) and Serbia (implemented in Kosovo by local Serbian minority) younger generations continue to be educated in the spirit of nationalism by demonizing the other side. Mainly youngsters from both sides are taught that their race is superior compared to the other and that is why ethnocentrism is present in every aspect of public life. Consequently, Serbs continue to reject the state of Kosovo creating the stateness problem in the territories where they live, while the majority of Albanians contribute to the contested statehood of Kosovo by refusing its civic and multiethnic character.

As a result, tension between civic and multicultural concept of citizenship on one side, and ethno-national concept on the other side is high as a number of people question the legitimacy of the state of Kosovo as a new polity.

The situation wouldn't be different if Albanians and Serbs would be asked for instance to design the character of the new Kosovo's state symbols, as one option would be the Serbian nationalist royalist flag with two dangerous looking white eagles on black background and the other option would be the double black headed eagle on the red background. Still, excluding the minimum cultural particularities while offering to establish a citizenship regime undermines the consolidation of Kosovo's civic and multiethnic state itself. Today in 'civic and multiethnic' state of Kosovo, for instance ethnic Serbian schools (tolerated and supported from UNMIK) continue to enhance a social life segregated from Kosovo by developing strong political ties with Serbia. Segregated education influences the formation of national and ethnic identity among new generations, interlinked with Albania and Serbia. This kind of political climate is not in favor of the future Kosovo's EU perspective as long as out there we have thousands of young Albanians and Serbs waiting for their moment in history to show all possible hatred out of their ultranationalist kitchens that has fed them for years within the two segregated systems of education. Segregated system of education in Kosovo will continue to shape the personality of the youth by cultivating their national and ethnic identity and the sense of belonging to the nation before providing educational skills and knowledge for the potential labor markets of the future.

As both ethnic and national identities play important roles in guiding political behavior it is important for Serbs to struggle to maintain ethnic identity and culture but by trying models of coexistence with the dominant culture in Kosovo. The integration of bicultural type that speaks both languages and is accepted by the mainstream society, without losing the tie to their cultural community is the best model for Serbs of Kosovo to be considered. On the other side Kosovo's institution especially Ministry of Education must endeavor to start a public dialogue through which cultural particularities of the other side should be recognized publicly and within the context of school curriculums. Although this sounds way to utopist it is the only hope that one day in the future Serbs could be integrated into Kosovo's education system by simultaneously recognizing the cultural particularities of the dominant group. Otherwise such a situation is nothing more or less than what the constitution of Kosovo and criteria's for EU integration require. This remains the only solution in lack of clear strategy from the Kosovo Government to attract and integrate Kosovo Serbs through economy, an offer that wouldn't be rejected because social welfare is always a better option rather than the option of cheering ultranationalist songs with the empty stomach. As long as we have this level of corruption in Kosovo this is equally an utopist option and it is not imaginable to see such a vision to be implemented from Kosovo Government. Thus having such weak starting positions due to the high degree of corruption the government of Kosovo is one of the rare governments in Europe that negotiates the rights of its citizens ( in this case of Kosovo Serbs ) with another state ( in this case with Serbia ).

Education is one of the strongest means of bringing about a change in society. It is considered to be the foundation of society as it brings social prosperity and political stability. Good education helps contribute to the development of good human beings, which is why education is a major aspect of any developing society. In attempting to realize an ideal multicultural society intercultural understanding is very important. Although it is hard to be achieved it is not impossible if engaged dialogue can be promoted in classrooms by introducing various perspectives on a controversial issues to students from both communities. It remains to be seen if Kosovo institutions will succeed to change the role of education in the "post-national" era. On the other side, in a world of global markets and supranational political organizations only time will show how distinctive will national education systems of Kosovo and Serbia will remain against pressures for international convergence.

One thing is for sure that with current attitudes Kosovo can be defined as a state with institutionalized civic identity but hidden behind the uniform of nationalist and ethnic identities always threatening with death to the Kosovan citizenship and keeping Kosovo's statehood unfinished.



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## The ESP Technology-Supported Learning Environment

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### Abstract

*This paper discusses the implementation of computers and the Internet technology in the learning environment within the ESP context. Designing and implementing digital technology in the teaching and learning process is one of the most demanding tasks. The use of technologies in the ESP classroom enables students to be active and collaborative, which contributes to improving learning achievements and increasing learning outcomes. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of learning experiences, as well as to produce a highly social and authentic, supportive and productive learning environment that allows students the construction of relevant knowledge. The study examines students' perceptions towards the implementation of digital technologies in the classroom. The results of the research show that students have very positive attitudes towards computers and the Internet technologies and their integration in the ESP learning environment.*

**Keywords:** ESP, modern technology, learning environment, pilot study

### Introduction

Designing and implementing digital technology in the teaching and learning process is one of the most demanding tasks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So, the key challenge facing ESP teachers is to refocus their teaching strategies and adopt new approaches, and to effectively and efficiently incorporate technologies into the language learning process. To be prepared for the new role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the teacher needs to maximize the potential of digital learning by using it effectively, efficiently and creatively, and to provide models and opportunities for practical work. It is essential to promote information literacy, support collaborative working practices, in order to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of learning experiences, as well as to produce a highly social and authentic, supportive and productive learning environment that allows students the construction of relevant knowledge.

It has become clear that the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom needs students to face real-world problems that engage them in higher-order thinking skills – creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving (Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). With these skills students will become creators of knowledge, competent and productive communicators, successful collaborators, independent and inventive thinkers, problem solvers and career experts.

### ESP teaching and learning

To meet the challenges, schools and universities need to be transformed in ways that will enable students to be creative and innovative, to think critically and analytically, and to be able to solve real-world problems. Fostering global awareness, the emphasis is on the need to prepare students for their future careers (Živković, 2014) in order to become competitive and productive members of the 21<sup>st</sup> century highly fluid society and competitive market. Thus, students would be able to learn and work collaboratively in positive working environments of openness, trust, mutual respect and tolerance. In that way, students take full responsibility for their learning and knowledge construction in the context of contemporary life.

As for the research on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, it is of utmost importance to creating a computer-mediated learning environment that encourages success. Embedding technology support (videodisks, CD-ROMs, DVD) in the effective ESP learning environment increases the potential to support insights into an innovative teaching and learning approach based on communication, interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1962).

ESP is concentrated on communication skills as the key factor in the development of knowledge. In other words, ESP focuses on “the specific linguistic knowledge and communication skills in order to accomplish specific purposes” (Orr, 1998). More specifically, ESP puts focus on preparing students (future specialists) to communicate effectively in the future work environment they will enter. Therefore, teaching/learning ESP is specialty-oriented which means it refers to the specific needs of students (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) who learn a foreign language for use in their professional fields.

For effective ESP learning, construction of knowledge happens in a social context (such as a classroom, language laboratories), “where students join in manipulating materials and, thus, create a community of learners who built their knowledge together” (Dewey, 1966). Progressive education (Dewey’s terminology) highlights the social aspect of learning and interaction with peers. ESP concentrates on language in context with authentic tasks, which are related to students’ future professional needs. Authentic tasks demand student interaction and language learning in real life situations. They motivate students to develop competencies that will be necessary to achieve the learning goal.

In computer-supported collaborative learning, students are encouraged to communicate with their peers and be prepared for *real-world problem-solving situations*.

To summarize, from the above mentioned, it is our belief that there is no single methodology for ESP teaching and learning. Furthermore, constructivists combine methodologies in order to produce a successful and an effective model for developing productive proficiency and carry out the objectives of a course. ESP courses concentrate on empowering students to use English to communicate effectively with professionals, and preparing them for lifelong learning.

### **The use of modern technology**

ESP courses aim at helping students to become capable of using a language in future professional settings. This can be realized by means of a content-based curriculum, where students learn a language by concentrating on the specialized subject matter and using authentic materials.

The Internet is an excellent source for providing authentic materials in accordance with students’ needs (Živković, 2011, 2013). “Internet-generated materials can be flexibly arrayed to engage students with topics and cognitive tasks relevant to students’ professional futures” (Kimball, 1998). If used appropriately, this technology could add relevance and meaning to ESP learning because it has the potential to increase students’ motivation for learning.

So, computers, together with the Internet, are an example of digital mediating technology whose role in education should not be viewed as an add-on, but rather should be viewed as an instructional tool for providing a richer and more exciting learning environment (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

“This technology (such as the computer-Internet combination) allows learners to do multiple language tasks, simultaneously integrating all the basic language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. When used, it is an invaluable asset in the arsenal of language teaching and learning tools. Therefore, we must open the minds of the educators and motivate the learners by breaking down the walls of technical bias, unlocking the doors, and allowing the spider to cast her electronic World Wide Web of English around our students in and out of the classroom” (Wilson, 2004).

Accordingly, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in ESP learning is a current challenge (Živković, 2011) to rethink a number of educational issues, such as students’ autonomy, motivation, and creativity, as well as the enhancement of cognitive power. As Perkins (1991) observes, it is necessary to activate learners and to support the construction of meaningful new knowledge on the basis of the existing cognitive structures. Technologies are most successful when they are used to engage students in meaningful, relevant and authentic activities with open-ended software and the Internet (Jonassen, 1994, 2000). ‘Mindtools’ (Jonassen introduced this term) promote independent and meaningful learning, support interactive, collaborative, and student-centered classrooms, and engage students in creative and critical thinking while constructing new knowledge.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that constructivist pedagogical principles coupled with appropriate technology integration show the potential for major improvements in learning practices. Together they provide the opportunity to make and remake the concept of ESP learning, and have brought new possibilities for learning. In other words, they can allow ESP students to learn to their fullest potential.

### **A digital learning environment**

An emerging trend in ESP education is to create such a learning environment where students' knowledge construction can be facilitated. Such an environment is one in which students are challenged without being frustrated, and in which they are focused on intentional learning (Jonassen, 1994). The environment creates engaging and content-relevant experiences by utilizing modern technologies and resources to support unique learning goals and knowledge construction (Young, 2003).

Wilson (1995) defines a constructivist learning environment as "a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities". It is the environment that allows student-oriented activities to take place in order to develop problem-solving, critical-thinking and creative skills. In the learning environment "students join in manipulating materials and, thus, create a community of learners who built their knowledge together" (Dewey, 1966).

When we speak of modern ESP constructivist learning environments, it is worth mentioning that they are technology-based situations in which students are engaged in deep and meaningful learning as an important goal for the success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"The richness of the technology permits us to provide a richer and more exciting learning environment...our concern is the new understandings and new capabilities that are possible through the use of technology" (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). In the constructivist environment students are actively involved in perceiving, analysing and interpreting the world and reflecting on their interpretations.

The Internet is regarded as a pedagogical device to develop language teaching and the learning process (Lee, 2000). It can enable constructivist innovations in the classroom, thus contributing to the realization of meaningful, authentic, active, interactive and problem-based learning. Students search solutions to real world problems based on a technology framework, which leads to critical and analytical thinking.

### **Methodology**

This is a pilot study that has examined how students perceive the implementation of modern technologies in the ESP learning environment.

For the purpose of this study a questionnaire method on students' attitudes (opinions and reactions) towards the ESP technology-supported learning environment has been developed. The questionnaire has been divided into the following areas: motivation, creativity and innovation, autonomy, communication, increased understanding, acquired skills, teamwork and collaboration, the use of ICT and critical thinking engagement.

### **Data collection**

The investigation was performed at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture in Niš, based on the sample of 145 undergraduate students. Data collection was done in the spring semester, May, 2015. Data analysis was carried out through qualitative analysis technique. It has produced insightful results into students' perceptions of the ESP learning environment as technology oriented.

## Results

The fact is that students learn more effectively when they are actively engaged in classroom activities, through discussions, interaction with peers and teachers, question-driven inquiries, analyzing information and critically evaluate. Thus, equipping students with these skills is required for living and working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The results have shown that students have very positive attitudes towards computers and the Internet and their use in the learning environment. From the responses from the survey, open-ended questions and the interviews, students have positive perceptions during learning in technology-rich environment may be only a temporary effect.

In the light of the ideas we have discussed, we will now present how students perceive a technology model in the ESP course.

### Motivation

- Students are enthusiastic about learning in a digital classroom.
- They are motivated to successfully finish the course.
- They are highly interested in activities on those classes.
- They are encouraged by their teacher to activate and keep on a task.
- Students are allowed to choose the type of assignment they do.
- Thus, they are given a sense of control that motivate them to do more.
- They have a chance to come out with their own ideas.
- They take an active role in forming new understandings.

### Creativity and innovation

- Students are given the chance to promote originality and inventiveness.
- They are aware of the fact that those skills are necessary in their future careers. In fact, they enable them to meet with future challenges and market competition.
- They are allowed to explore different perspectives.
- They are stimulated to find innovative solutions for existing problems.
- They can use different idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming).
- They can demonstrate different ways of looking at problems.
- They are stimulated with new ideas for the development in organizational contexts.
- They are aware of the fact that they need to be open and responsive to new perspectives.

### Autonomy

- Students are given autonomy in the classroom. In other words, they are active in their own learning process.
- Students are given opportunities to choose the way the material will be demonstrated.
- They are totally responsible for all decisions concerned with their learning.
- They are able to participate and take control of their own learning.
- Autonomy-supportive practices allow students to explore ideas and use their unique ways of problem solving. Thus, they are independent problem solvers and debate ideas freely.

### Communication skills

- Students find the importance of developing successful communication.
- ESP classes prepare them to communicate effectively.
- Communication makes their learning easier. It increases opportunities for expanded learning.
- Being able to *communicate* effectively is the challenge of the current *global job market*.
- Communicating and thus connecting with colleagues (and later with business partners) is an essential skill in career development.
- They are encouraged to communicate through classroom discussions.
- Their understanding on the subject matter has been increased.
- They enhance their professional knowledge.
- Their understanding towards using computers and the Internet in the ESP class is improved.
- It is a new experience to use a computer and the Internet in the classroom.
- The knowledge acquired in the ESP course is strongly connected with their speciality.
- They are capable of applying their knowledge in more effective manner.

### Teamwork and collaborative learning

- It is a challenge to learn language in a collaborative learning setting.
- They work together to accomplish shared goals.
- Students have the opportunity to practice sharing their experiences with their colleagues.
- They learn to function in a team environment.
- Within cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members.
- Students work together to maximize their own and each others' learning
- They work together to search for solution, and thus, to accomplish shared goals.
- They can solve problems together with their colleagues.
- In teamwork they are able to organize their work effectively.
- They can share their ideas and discuss in the class.
- In computer-supported collaborative learning, students are encouraged to communicate with their peers and be prepared for *real-world problem-solving situations*.

### The use of ICT

- Modern technology is the best way to acquire and create new knowledge.
- Modern technology activates constructivist innovations.
- Technology contributes to the realization of active learning.
- The Internet is an excellent source for providing authentic materials in accordance with students' needs.
- Internet-generated materials can be flexibly arrayed to engage students with topics and cognitive tasks relevant to students' professional futures.

- Learning technology is used to foster autonomous and collaborative learning.
- It encourages students to take responsibility and control over their learning process.
- They are able to develop some applications.
- They are capable to develop presentation skills.
- Technology enhances the cognitive power of students.

#### Critical thinking engagement

- Students are encouraged to actively engage in critical thinking.
- Classroom discussions can be enhanced with the use of questions which promotes thinking.
- They acquired ability to think rationally and openmindedly about how to solve a problem.
- They can actively and skillfully conceptualize and analyze information to reach a conclusion.
- They can now analyze and evaluate information.
- The development of critical thinking skills is important for students to be able to solve the complex problems facing our society in the future.
- encouraged students' ability to think critically which allows them "to recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social context in which they are embedded". to function effectively in a rapidly changing world.

#### **Discussion**

This pilot study has reported on the effect of the importance of implementing modern technologies in the ESP instructional environment. It presents a challenge to both students and the teacher. The challenge for the teacher is to provide a relevant framework for students upon which they construct knowledge and become active participants in the learning process. On the other hand, students in the constructivist environment have more positive attitude towards learning as they share their experiences with their peers and the teacher, as well as they experience increasing discussions in the classroom. Students are encouraged to search for solutions to real-world problems, and thus, they are engaged in transformative learning, leading to critical and analytical thinking which is essential for success in the *21st century*. Piaget (1968) emphasizes the active role of the individual in the learning process. Establishing constructivist dialogue in the ESP digital classroom, students are inspired to become active, creative and motivated in their activities. In accordance with this, Bruner's (1986) concept of "learning by doing" involves students' active participation within the classroom context. "Learning becomes a continuous, life-long process which results from acting in situations" (Brown et al., 1989).

The increasing influence of technological advances in education demands the use of meaningful authentic activities, to give the learning situation a purpose and meaning and, thus, to make the activity an example of situated cognition (Reeves et al., 2002).

Thus, the utilization of advanced technology as an instructional tool should be seriously considered, depending on course goals and learning objectives which provide guidelines for the assessment of students' progress. What has become particularly evident is that technologies help build an extensive knowledge base, which will "engage the learners more and result in more meaningful and transferable knowledge... Learners function as designers using the technology as tools for analyzing the world, accessing information, interpreting and organizing their personal knowledge, and representing what they know to others" (Jonassen, 1994).

ESP courses allow students to interact with learning materials, and to explore and construct vocabulary and meanings. The ultimate goal of today's ESP students is to acquire the ability to successfully communicate with others (professionals) in a meaningful and appropriate way. As stated earlier, ESP courses prepare students to use a language to communicate effectively in real-life situations and cooperate with colleagues in professional fields.

## Conclusion

This paper has discussed the implementation of computers and the Internet in the ESP digital learning environment that is "learner-centered, knowledge-centered, community centered and assessment-centered" (Bransford et al., 2000).

The ESP learning environment together with information and communication technologies promote students' communicative skills, and foster their autonomy and responsibility. Moreover, the increasing influence of technological advances (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003) in education demands the use of meaningful authentic activities, to give the learning situation a purpose and meaning.

With shifting values and a plentitude of information provided by modern technologies, "learning to think critically and to analyze and synthesize information in order to solve technical, social, economic, political and scientific problems are crucial for successful and fulfilling participation" (Dunlap & Grabinger, 1996).

The survey aimed to evaluate student motivation, originality and creative skills, teamwork and collaboration, communication skills, critical thinking skills, as well as overall attitudes towards learning with digital technologies and developing projects.

Moreover, the research study has presented a clear conception of what students perceive to be the quality of learning in the classroom. This study creates the opportunity for student voice "to express their opinions and make decisions regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their learning experiences" (Rogers, 2005).

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