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CONTENTS

Teachers' Indıvıdual Cultural Values and the Relatıonshıp Between Psychologıcal Resılıence and Perceptıons of Alıenatıon

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

Schools are social structures and educational organizations are open and social systems. Determining the perception of cultural values, psychological resilience levels and alienation perceptions of administrators and teachers working in schools can provide information to practitioners and those concerned and offer clues for taking necessary measures. Determining the relationship and interaction level between these three qualities can contribute to the generation of realistic solutions. In this context, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between school administrators' and teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and psychological resilience and their perceptions of alienation. Relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the study. The study was conducted with school principals, assistant principals and teachers working in Istanbul in the 2021–2022 academic year. Data were collected from 411 teachers randomly selected by cluster-stratified sampling. "Individual Cultural Values Scale" translated into Turkish by Saylık (2019), "Psychological Resilience Scale" developed by Arslan (2015) and the "Alienation Scale" translated into Turkish by Güğerçin and Aksay (2017) were used as data collection tools. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that although the perceptions of psychological resilience of administrators and teachers were at a very high level, they also experienced a high level of alienation. Perceptions of individual cultural values are at a medium level in the power distance sub-dimension, at a medium level in the masculinity, femininity and collectivism sub-dimensions, and at a high level in other sub-dimensions. While there is a low level relationship between all sub-dimensions of individual cultural values perceptions of administrators and teachers and psychological resilience perceptions in general and their sub-dimensions, there is no significant relationship between alienation perceptions and cultural values except for the sub-dimension of long term reach.

Keywords: Culture, Individual Cultural Values, Psychological Resilience, Alienation

Culture, which constitutes the identity of a society and makes it different from other societies, is a concept that has been widely studied and handled from different perspectives. Especially within the framework of the understanding that

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has emerged as a result of globalization, it has become a subject that is increasingly discussed both nationally and internationally (Banks, 2010; Galley, 2001; Güvenç, 1994). When the relevant literature is examined, it is possible to come across many different definitions of culture (Geertz, 1995; Gray, 2004; Oğuz, 2011; Williams, 1977). According to Naylor (1996), culture is a complex phenomenon that conveys the way a nation solves its problems, the way it relates to each other and to others, and the way it thinks. Tomlinson (2013, p. 35–36) defines culture as an order of life to which people try to attribute meaning through symbolic means. This definition emphasizes how individuals make their lives meaningful through collective communication through culture. One of the most comprehensive studies on the concept of culture belongs to Hofstede. Hofstede (2011) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes a group or community of people from others". As a result of his research, Hofstede (1980) identified five dimensions of culture as individualism/ pluralism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance and longevity based on the main problems faced by societies. According to Hofstede's model, power distance explains how the differences in the use of power and inequalities in the distribution of power in social relations are perceived by individuals, while in terms of management, it describes authority, leadership and decision-making procedures (Turan, Durceylan & Şişman, 2005). Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the acceptance of unknown situations as a threat by members of a community (Sofyalıoğlu & Aktaş, 2001). In societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance, people tend to increase job security, written and formal rules in order to make life safer for themselves (Sargut, 2001). In societies with low uncertainty avoidance, innovations, changes and contradictions are not viewed with suspicion. In other words, individuals and societies with high uncertainty avoidance motives will reject deviations in their thoughts and attitudes by following the official rules, as they are closely concerned with the need to be safe (Marcus & Gould, 2000). On the other hand, communities belonging to low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more willing to take risks and

may be less concerned about contradictory situations and problems (Dorfman & Howell, 1988). **Individualism-pluralism** refers to the degree to which people living in a country want to behave as individuals or as members of a group (Hofstede, 2011). In societies where individualism is effective, the values of personal success, freedom and competition are emphasized; whereas in societies where pluralism is effective, group integration, loyalty and cooperation are very strong and the importance of solidarity among people is emphasized (Hofstede, 1984). Individualism means that individuals are only interested in their individual and immediate environment. Pluralism, on the other hand, is a form of society where loyalty to the group, intra-group closeness and communication are very strong. Another dimension is **masculinity-femininity**. Hofstede created a "masculinity index" as a result of his studies in line with the business objectives of multinational companies in 40 different countries. While stating that masculinity and femininity dimensions differ in both countries and individuals, he also states that a person can have masculine and feminine characteristics, as well as the culture of a country can have masculine or feminine characteristics (Leung & Moore, 2003). In studies on the importance of the purpose of work, social goals such as interpersonal communication, helping each other and physical conditions are more important for women, while personal goals such as career and money are more important for men (Hofstede, 2001). In societies where masculine characteristics are dominant, men are seen to be ambitious, competitive and assertive, while women are expected to be kind, harmonious, tolerant and charitable (Wilson, 2004). Hofstede's fifth dimension, **longevity**, focuses on how people perceive time (Mosakowski & Earley 2000). In other words, longevity refers to how societies evaluate the past, present and tomorrow, and how events and situations are sequenced and influenced in this process (Earley, 1997; Mosakowski & Earley 2000; Spears et al., 2000). When the time-dependent approaches of organizations are taken as a criterion, longevity refers to the evaluation of social organizations according to whether they have long or short-term goals or plans. Organizations with a long-range approach exhibit characteristic attitudes such as making plans for the future and acting

utilitarian. Short-term oriented societies, on the other hand, are indexed to the past or the present rather than the future. In short-term oriented cultures, customs and social responsibilities are considered important (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Especially in the twenty-first century, people, who are constantly faced with stressful situations, need to struggle with difficulties and stress in order to maintain their well-being in their lives (Karaırmak & Siviş-Çetinkaya, 2011). One of the important elements of combating these difficulties and stress is psychological resilience. Psychological resilience has gained importance in both theoretical and practical fields after its inclusion in the scientific field in the second half of the twentieth century (Luthar, 2015). Although there are different definitions of the concept of psychological resilience, the definitions have some similar characteristics. Fraser et al. (1999) draw attention to the common points in the definitions made so far in their literature review. Accordingly, psychological resilience is defined as the interaction between certain personal characteristics of the individual and the factors in the environment. Protective factors that mitigate the risk factors caused by stressful life events and the negative effects of risk are defined as a developmental process (Fonagy et al., 1994). According to Garmezy (1993), a pioneering researcher in studies on psychological resilience, psychological resilience is hidden in the power of recovery and is defined as the ability to return to the abilities and behavioral patterns that already existed in the individual before the stressful event. Furthermore, Rutter (1999) defined psychological resilience as a dynamic concept that emerges as a result of the interaction between risk and protective factors. Masten and Coatsworth (1998) defined the concept of psychological resilience as the competence that leads to adaptation and development in the face of a significant risk situation. In the meta-theory proposed by Richardson (2002), he tried to explain the concept of resilience in three dimensions. In the first dimension, risk protective factors called psychological resilience traits or values were defined and listed. In the second dimension, called the process of psychological resilience, the development of the characteristics defined and listed in the first dimension as a result of

coping with the negative events experienced is described. In the third dimension, it is emphasized that after the traumatic experience that will help the individual to reveal and realize his/her own latent powers, the individual experiences progress or development and takes a step towards self-realization with this experience. In a similar study, in a meta-analysis study conducted by Herrman et al. (2011) in order to compartmentalize protective and risk factors in general, the sources of psychological resilience were determined as individual, biological, environmental factors and the interaction of these factors. In this study, it was found that social support provided by family and social environment was related to psychological resilience as environmental factors, while individual factors such as locus of control, self-esteem, self-efficacy, cognitive appraisal and optimism could contribute to psychological resilience.

It is undoubtedly a challenging process for people whose existing order has begun to differentiate, to give up their habitual lives and to integrate into a new life. As a result of the changes in human life, people's connections with nature, their environment or the society they belong to deteriorate and unhappiness becomes more prominent (Ofluoğlu & Büyükyılmaz, 2008). In the process of change, people may feel alienated from their new living arrangements. Alienation, in its most general form, refers to the estrangement of individuals from each other or from a certain environment or process (Marshall, 1999). In other words, it is a feeling of alienation or separation from others, a lack of warm relations with others. Seeman (1959), who explained alienation from a sociological and psychological perspective, discussed the concept of alienation in five dimensions.

1) Powerlessness: This concept is the inability of the individual to determine his/her own hopes and the thought that he/she cannot do anything to get results (Özçınar, 2011). In the case of powerlessness, people may have a negative feeling by thinking that they cannot control the developing events. Therefore, people who think that they cannot establish sovereignty over the work they perform with the feeling of powerlessness are faced with the thought of not being able to control the future. **2) Meaninglessness:** It is a situation where the individual cannot

be clear about which facts and values to trust (Tanrıverdi & Kılıç, 2016). In other words, meaninglessness is the lack of trust in the facts taught to the individual and the thought that these facts cannot lead him/her to a definite result (Tolan, 1980). Meaninglessness in organizations is seen when the goals conflict with personal roles and an obstacle to integration arises. People only have information about the work they will perform personally, do not think about the work of their colleagues, and do not know how much the work they perform will benefit the organization they are affiliated with (Tanrıverdi & Kılıç, 2016). **3) Anomie (Lack of norms):** The fact that individuals do not have norms to guide them in their lives causes them to feel aimless. In addition, it is important that their norms and the norms of the organization they work for are similar. For this reason, rulelessness means that working individuals perform attitudes that are not accepted by their organizations only in order to achieve their own goals. This situation may lead the employee to self-interest (Kasap, 2021). Alienation experienced in the dimension of rulelessness means that working individuals face feelings such as disorder, chaos and pessimism as a result of the loss of loyalty to the rules (Eroğluer, 2020). It is explained as the absence of values in people, the loss of their goals and visions, and the exclusion of the community to which they belong if they cannot find the values and elements to guide them.

As a result, individuals may attempt all unethical methods to achieve their goals by ignoring the rules in the society they live in. **4) Isolation:** It manifests itself in the form of working individuals voluntarily distancing themselves from the environment they live in and not feeling a sense of belonging to a community. In the sense of isolation, firstly, the employee thinks that the group excludes him/her and therefore rejects the group to which he/she belongs. After this stage, even if the working individual establishes ties with other colleagues, they try to keep it to a minimum (Kasap, 2021). **5) Alienation:** The alienated individual tends to prefer to be preoccupied with external factors such as money and job security instead of dealing with the internal factors of his/her profession. A person who has given up on everything will neither be satisfied with

his/her job nor with the social roles he/she plays (Özler & Dirican, 2014). This may lead to a feeling of emptiness in their lives. It is stated that the individual who does not love what he/she does will not be able to establish a connection between what he/she wants to do and his/her profession and will not be able to taste the happiness that will arise from success (Mottaz, 1987). It is known that individuals' perceptions of cultural values, perceptions of psychological resilience and perceptions of alienation are effective on some of their behaviors (Akpolat & Oğuz, 2015; Ceylan, Erhan & Akbulut, 2017; Çapan & Arıcıoğlu, 2014; Ellis, 2012; Kahveci & Demirtaş, 2014; Saylık & Han, 2021; Waldman, Sully de Luque, Washburn, House, Adetoun, Barrasa & Wilderom, 2006; Wang, Lu & Wang, 2019). Knowing teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values can help to predict their perceptions of psychological resilience and alienation, and knowing their perceptions of psychological resilience can help to predict their perceptions of alienation. On the other hand, knowing the psychological resilience and alienation perception levels of teachers can give clues in taking the necessary measures in terms of improving their individual well-being and becoming more productive professionally. On the other hand, in the literature review, there is no study that examines individual cultural value perceptions, psychological resilience and alienation perceptions together. For these reasons, the problem statement of this study was determined as "*Is there a significant predictive relationship between teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and psychological resilience and their perceptions of alienation?*".

Objectıve

The purpose of this study is to determine the predictive relationship between teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and psychological resilience and their perceptions of alienation. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:
1- What is the level of teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values, perceptions of psychological resilience and perceptions of alienation?
2- Do teachers' individual cultural value

perceptions, psychological resilience perceptions and alienation perceptions differ according to their gender?

3- To what extent are there predictive relationships between teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values, psychological resilience and alienation?

Method

Research Model

Since this study aims to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and psychological health and their feelings of alienation by collecting and analyzing quantitative data, this research is a quantitative research in the relational survey model.

Study Group

The study group consisted of 411 pre-school, primary school, middle school and high school teachers working in Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, Silivri, Kadıköy, Üsküdar, Bakırköy, Fatih, Eyüpsultan, Tuzla districts of İstanbul Province, who were selected by simple random sampling according to the accessibility criterion.

Data Collection

Data; personal information form, Individual Cultural Values Scale: Saylık, A. (2019). *Adaptation of Hofstede's Culture Dimensions Scale into Turkish; Validity and Reliability Study*, Psychological Resilience Scale: Banks, G. (2015). Psychometric Properties of the Adult Psychological Resilience Scale (APRS): Validity and Reliability Study, *Turkish Adaptation of Dean's Alienation Scale: Validity and Reliability Analysis*. Permission was obtained from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education and the scales were delivered to the designated schools by the researchers and the scales were requested to be filled in by making the necessary explanations.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed with the statistical analysis package program. Frequency and percentage analysis for demographic data, descriptive analysis for dependent variables and t-test for differences, Pearson correlation analysis and stepwise linear regression analysis were performed.

Table 1.
Normality analysis results for the data

		Skewness	Kurtosis
Individual Cultural Values Scale	Power Distance	.464	.517
	Uncertainty Avoidance	-.676	.567
	Individualism-Collectivism	-.156	-.341
	Longevity	-.665	-.015
	Masculinity-Femininity	.482	-.474
Alienation Scale	Social Repulsion	.474	.619
	Powerlessness	-.198	-.101
	Anomie (Lack of norms)	-.031	-.181
	Alienation Total	**.155**	**.469**
Psychological Resilience Scale	Relational Resources	-.663	.988
	Individual Resources	-.631	.293
	Cultural and Contextual Resources	-.947	.729
	Familial Resources	-.821	-.167
	Psychological Resilience Total	**-.546**	**-.040**

When Table 1 is examined, it is understood that the data of the Individual Cultural Values Scale, Alienation Scale and Psychological Resilience Scale are normally distributed in total and sub-dimensions (Skewness and Kurtosis values < +1.00 and -1.00) and are suitable for parametric analysis.

Results

The results of the descriptive analysis of teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values, psychological resilience and alienation are given in Table 2.

Table 2.

Descriptive analysis results of teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values, alienation and psychological resilience

	Individual Cultural Values					Alienation				Psychological Resilience			
	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Collectivism	Longevity	Masculinity	FD Social Repulsion	FD Powerlessness	FD Anomie (Lack of norms)	Alienation Total	PS Relational Source	PS Individual Source	PS Cult Contextual	PS Familial Source
M	2.26	4.02	3.33	4.27	2.44	2.95	3.48	3.37	3.21	4.24	4.40	4.05	4.35
N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Ss.	.693	.623	.724	.563	1.022	.475	.664	.739	.437	.528	.457	.782	.578

When Table 2 is examined, according to the results of the descriptive analysis of the teachers' perceptions of Individual Cultural Values, Alienation and Psychological Resilience, the averages of the individual cultural value sub-dimensions of the teachers are high. The highest mean among the sub-dimensions (M = 4.27) belongs to the "Longevity" sub-dimension. The lowest mean (M = 2.26) belongs to "Power Distance" sub-dimension. The average of teachers' perceptions of alienation is at a medium level both in general (M = 3.21) and in terms of sub-dimensions. The highest mean among the sub-dimensions

(M = 3.48) is in the "Powerlessness" dimension. The lowest mean (M = 2.95) belongs to the "Social Repulsion" sub-dimension. On the other hand, the highest mean (M = 4.40) in the sub-dimensions of Psychological Resilience is in the "Individual Resources" sub-dimension. The lowest mean (M = 4.05) is in the "Cultural and Contextual Resources" sub-dimension. The results of t-test analysis of teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values, psychological resilience perceptions and alienation perceptions in terms of gender variables are given in Table 3.

Table 3.

Independent Groups t-test Analysis Results Related to Individual Cultural Values, Alienation and Resilience in Terms of Gender Variables

Variables (df=421)		Gender	M	t	p
Individual Cultural Values	Power Distance	Female	2.21	-1.83	.067
		Male	2.34		
	Uncertainty Avoidance	Female	4.06	1.83	.067
		Male	3.93		
	Collectivism	Female	3.36	.867	.387
		Male	3.29		
	Longevity	Female	4.29	.726	.468
		Male	4.25		
	Masculinity	Female	2.45	-.275	.784
		Male	2.48		
Alienation	Social Repulsion	Female	2.99	1.677	.094
		Male	2.91		
	Powerlessness	Female	3.53	1.300	.194
		Male	3.44		
	Anomie (Lack of norms)	Female	3.41	1.097	.273
		Male	3.32		
	Total	Female	3.26	1.878	.061
		Male	3.17		
Psychological Resilience	Relational Resources	Female	4.29	2.356	.019*
		Male	4.17		
	Individual Resources	Female	4.45	2.555	.011*
		Male	4.34		
	Cultural and Contextual Resources	Female	4.09	1.113	.266
		Male	4.00		
	Familial Resources	Female	4.43	3.204	.001*
		Male	4.24		
	Psychological Resilience Total	Female	4.31	2.873	.004*
		Male	4.19		

P < .05

When Table 3 is examined, teachers' perceptions of Individual Cultural Value do not show a significant difference in general and sub-dimensions in terms of gender variables. At the same time, there is no significant difference (t = 1.878; p<.05) between women (M = 3.26) and men (M = 3.17) in the general and sub-dimensions of teachers' perceptions of alienation. There was a significant difference between women (M = 4.31) and men (M = 4.19) in favor of women in terms of gender variable in the general perceptions of teachers in psychological resilience (t = 2.873; p<.05). As a result of the analysis of the sub-dimensions, there is a significant difference in all sub-dimensions except the Cultural and Contextual Resources dimension. Significant differences in favor of women were found between women (M = 4.29) and men (M = 4.17) in Relational Resources sub-dimension, between women (M = 4.45) and men (M = 4.34) in Individual Resources sub-dimension, and between women (M = 4.43) and men (M = 4.24) in Familial Resources dimension. The results of the analysis show that gender difference is not a significant factor except for the Psychological Resilience dimension. Pearson Correlation analysis results regarding teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and alienation in terms of gender variables are given in Table 4.

Table 4.

Pearson Correlation analysis results for the relationship between Individual Cultural Values and Alienation Perceptions

Variables		Social Repulsion	Powerlessness	Anomie (Lack of norms)	Alienation Total
Power Distance	r	.164**	.013	.020	.094
	p	.001	.799	.693	.057
Uncertainty Avoidance	r	.003	.103*	.124*	.101*
	p	.951	.037	.012	.041
Collectivism	r	.216**	.131**	.116*	.214**
	p	.000	.008	.019	.000
Longevity	r	.024	.070	.011	.049
	p	.621	.155	.825	.326
Masculinity	r	.228**	.092	.118*	.203**
	p	.000	.063	.017	.000

*p < .05; **p < .01

When Table 4 is examined, the relationship between teachers' perceptions of alienation (M = 3.21, SD = .437) was determined by Pearson correlation analysis. Among these variables, a low (r = .203, p < .01) positive and significant relationship was found between masculinity-femininity and total alienation. It was also determined that there was a low level relationship between the sub-dimensions of the Individual Cultural Values scale and the sub-dimensions of Alienation Perceptions. The lowest correlation among the sub-dimensions (r = 131, p < .01) is between "Collectivism" and "Powerlessness". The highest correlation (r = 228, p < .01) is between "Masculinity" sub-dimension and "Social Repulsion" sub-dimension. Pearson Correlation analysis results regarding teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and psychological resilience in terms of gender variables are given in Table 5.

Table 5.

Pearson Correlation analysis results for the relationship between Individual Cultural Values and Psychological Resilience Perceptions

Variables		Relational Resources	Individual Resources	Cultural Contextual	Familial Resources
Power Distance	r	-.091	-.122*	.092	-.106*
	p	.065	.013	.062	.031
Uncertainty Avoidance	r	.248**	.294**	.162**	.238**
	p	.000	.000	.001	.000
Collectivism	r	.021	.089	.147**	-.009
	p	.674	.071	.003	.851
Longevity	r	.281**	.410**	.278**	.274**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000
Masculinity	r	-.002	-.010	.336**	-.069
	p	.963	.836	.000	.164

*p < .05; **p < .01

According to the data in Table 5, there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of teachers' perceptions of Individual Cultural Values and Psychological Resilience Perceptions. It is also understood that there is a low level negative relationship between power distance and Individual Resources sub-dimension. The lowest relationship among the sub-dimensions ($r = 147$, $p < .01$) is between "Collectivism" and "Cultural and Contextual Resources". The highest correlation ($r = 410$, $p < .01$) was found between the "Long Termism" sub-dimension and the "Individual Resources" sub-dimension. The correlations between the other sub-dimensions are at a moderate level. The results of Pearson Correlation analysis for the relationship between teachers' perceptions of alienation and their perceptions of psychological resilience are given in Table 6.

Table 6.

Pearson Correlation analysis results for the relationship between perceptions of alienation and perceptions of psychological resilience

Variables		Social Repulsion	Powerlessness	Anomie (Lack of norms)	Alienation Total
Relational Resources	r	-.075	-.120*	-.028	-.103*
	p	.129	.015	.578	.037
Individual Resources	r	-.078	.059	.105*	.033
	p	.114	.236	.034	.508
Cultural and Contextual Resources	r	.144**	-.037	-.125*	.001
	p	.004	.457	.011	.991
Familial Resources	r	-.049	.008	-.042	-.038
	p	.318	.869	.394	.440

*p<.05;**p<.01

Table 6, a low level positive and significant relationship was found only between "Cultural and Contextual Resources" ($r = .144$, $p < .01$) and "Social Repulsion" sub-dimensions of the Psychological Resilience Perceptions scale. No significant relationship was found between the other sub-dimensions.

Table 7.

Regression Analysis on the Prediction of Relational Resources, one of the sub-dimensions of Alienation, by Individual Cultural Value Perceptions

	Model	F	p	Unstd. Coefficient		Std. Coeffic	R	R^2	t	p	VIF
				B	Std. Err	ß					
1	Constant	35.07	.00	3.12	.192		.281	.07	16.20	.00	
	Longevity			.263	.044	.281			5.96	.00	1.00
2	Constant	22.90	.00	2.83	.211		.318	.10	13.4	.00	
	Longevity			.203	.048	.216			4.21	.00	1.19
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.137	.043	.207			3.15	.00	1.13
3	Constant	19.94	.00	3.18	.235		.352	.12	13.5	.00	
	Longevity			.207	.047	.221			4.37	.00	1.14
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.149	.043	.175			3.45	.00	1.25
	Powerlessness			-.122	.037	-.153			-3.29	.00	1.04
4	Constant	15.56	.00	3.34	.247		.365	.13	13.50	.00	
	Longevity			.203	.047	.217			4.29	.00	1.16
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.154	.043	.182			3.58	.00	1.24
	Powerlessness			-.121	.037	-.153			-3.82	.00	1.00
	Power Distance			-.072	.035	-.093			-2.00	.04	1.00

Dependent Variable: Relational Resources, Durbin Watson = 1.745

When the data in Table 7 are examined, it is understood that teachers' perceptions of longevity predict their perceptions of individual cultural values' perceptions of alienation in the relational resources sub-dimension at a very low level (R^2 = .079), Longevity and uncertainty avoidance sub-dimensions together predict at a low level (R^2 = .101), Longevity, uncertainty avoidance and emotional powerlessness together predict at a low level (R^2 = .124), Longevity, uncertainty avoidance, emotional powerlessness and power distance together predict at a low level (R^2 = .133). It is seen that the predictive power of individual cultural value perceptions together partially increases.

Table 8.

Regression Analysis Regarding the Prediction of Individual Resources Subdimension of Alienation by Teachers' Individual Cultural Value Perceptions Regression Analysis

	Model	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	R	R^2	t	p	VIF
				B	Std. Err	ß					
1	Constant	82.71	.00	2.986	.158		.410	.168	16.286	.000	
	Longevity			.333	.037	.410			5.963	.00	1.000
2	Constant	47.34	.00	2.744	.174		.434	.188	13.418	.00	
	Longevity			.282	.039	.348			4.219	.00	1.192
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.114	.036	.155			3.156	.00	1.192
3	Constant	34.67	.00	2.924	.184		.451	.204	13.562	.00	
	Longevity			.278	.039	.342			4.372	.00	1.194
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.120	.035	.164			3.453	.00	1.196
	Power Distance			-.082	.029	-.124			-3.290	.00	1.005

Dependent Variable: Individual Resources, Durbin Watson = 1.965

When the data in Table 8 are examined, it is understood that teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values predict the perception of individual resources at a low level ($R^2 = .168$) in the longevity sub-dimension, together with the sub-dimensions of longevity and uncertainty avoidance, it predicts at a low level ($R^2 = .188$), and when longevity, uncertainty avoidance and power distance are taken together, it predicts at a significant level ($R^2 = .204$).

Table 9.

Regression Analysis on the prediction of the cultural-contextual resources sub-dimension of alienation by teachers' individual cultural value perceptions

	Model	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	R	R^2	t	p	VIF
				B	Std. Er	ß					
1	Constant	51.89	.00	3.426	.095		.336	.11	36.21	.00	
	Masculinity			.257	.036	.336			7.20	.00	1.00
2	Constant	41.72	.00	2.051	.275		.412	.17	7.45	.00	
	Masculinity			.235	.035	.306			6.74	.00	1.01
	Longevity			.334	.063	.241			5.30	.00	1.01
3	Constant	33.30	.00	2.611	.310		.444	.19	8.42	.00	
	Masculinity			.250	.034	.326			7.23	.00	1.02
	Longevity			.334	.062	.240			5.37	.00	1.01
	Anomie (Lack of norms)			-.176	.047	-.166			-3.71	.00	1.01
4	Constant	27.20	.00	2.299	.328		.460	.21	7.00	.00	
	Masculinity			.263	.035	.344			7.60	.00	1.05
	Longevity			.257	.068	.185			3.79	.00	1.22
	Anomie (Lack of norms)			-.195	.048	-.184			-4.10	.00	1.03
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.167	.062	.133			2.71	.00	1.23
5	Constant	23.08	.00	1.886	.372		.471	.22	5.07	.00	
	Masculinity			.246	.035	.321			7.00	.00	1.09
	Longevity			.257	.067	.185			3.81	.00	1.22
	Anomie (Lack of norms)			-.215	.048	-.204			-4.48	.00	1.07
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.168	.061	.134			2.73	.00	1.23
	Social Repulsion			.176	.075	.107			2.33	.02	1.09

Dependent Variable: Cultural and Contextual Resources, Durbin Watson = 1.684

According to the analysis results in Table 9, it was determined that masculinity sub-dimension of teachers' individual cultural value perceptions predicted alienation in the cultural-contextual resources dimension at a low level ($R^2 = .113$), and Masculinity and Longevity sub-dimensions together predicted alienation at a low level ($R^2 = .170$). Masculinity, Longevity and Irregularity together predicted alienation at a low level ($R^2 = .197$), and Masculinity, Longevity, Irregularity and Uncertainty Avoidance together predicted it at a significant level ($R^2 = .211$). At the same time, it is seen that Masculinity, Longevity, Irregularity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Social Repulsion sub-dimensions together affect cultural and contextual resources at a low level ($R^2 = .222$).

Table 10.

Regression Analysis on the Prediction of Alienation by Teachers' Perceptions of Individual Cultural Values in the dimension of Familial

	Model	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	R	R^2	t	p	VIF
				B	Std. Err	ß					
1	Constant	33.12	.00	3.159	.210		.274	.075	15.012	.00	
	Longevity			.281	.049	.274			5.755	.00	1.000
2	Constant	21.32	.00	2.856	.232		.308	.095	12.319	.00	
	Longevity			.218	.053	.212			4.127	.00	1.192
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.142	.048	.153			2.982	.00	1.192
3	Constant	16.21	.00	3.059	.246		.327	.107	12.421	.00	
	Longevity			.212	.053	.207			4.042	.00	1.194
	Uncertainty Avoidance			.149	.048	.161			3.142	.00	1.196
	Power Distance			-.092	.039	-.110			-2.349	.02	1.005

Dependent Variable: Familial Resources, Durbin Watson = 2.006

When the data in Table 10 are analyzed, it was determined that the Longevity sub-dimension of teachers' Individual Cultural Value perceptions predicted the Familial Resources sub-dimension at a very low level (R^2 = .075), and the Longevity sub-dimension and Uncertainty Avoidance sub-dimension together predicted the Familial Resources sub-dimension at a very low level (R^2 = .095). It was determined that when the sub-dimensions of Long Termism, Uncertainty Avoidance and Power Distance were taken together, it predicted familial resources at a very low (R^2 = .107) and significant level.

Dıscussıon and Conclusıons

The fact that teachers working in educational institutions are role models for their students, in ensuring the sustainability of education, in adapting to the change and transformation brought by age, in addition to their professional duties and responsibilities, their concern for their students to be successful in every field makes it important to investigate the psychological resilience of teachers. In this study, the relationships between teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values, their perceptions of psychological resilience and their perceptions of alienation were determined, and it was determined that teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and perceptions of alienation had a predictive effect on the "Relational resources" and "Cultural-Contextual resources" sub-dimensions of psychological resilience, and their perceptions of individual cultural values had a predictive effect on "Individual resources" and "Familial resources".

When the analysis results of the study were examined, it was determined that the mean of the "Longevity" sub-dimension, the mean of the "Uncertainty avoidance" sub-dimension and the mean of the sub-dimensions of the "Psychological Resilience" perceptions of the teachers' Individual Cultural Value perceptions were very high, while the mean of the "Alienation" perceptions was at a medium level both in general and in sub-dimensions. In the study conducted by Hofstede et al. (2010), although the tendency of the Turkish society was stated as short-term, it can be considered as a remarkable development that in line with the findings obtained in this study, it was determined that the perception level of "longtermism" of teachers in Turkey as of 2022 is very high. This situation shows that Individual Cultural Values have been changing over the years in Turkish society in general and among teachers in particular. The fact that Batır and Gürbüz (2016) reported that the perception of future orientation value is increasing in the Turkish society strengthens the results of this study. In addition, the results obtained for determining individual cultural value perceptions support the results of studies reported in other studies (Saylık & Han, 2021; Saylık, 2017). Accordingly, it can be interpreted that

teachers have a more positive view of social change and transformation, have a more functionalist perspective and tend to make plans for the future. There are also moderate (Saylık & Han, 2021; Yıldırım, 2016) and high level (Terzi, 2004; Gürbüz & Bingöl, 2007; Saylık, 2017) results regarding the perception of uncertainty avoidance. The level determined in the study conducted by Hofstede et al. (2010) coincides with the results of this study.

In this study, the perception of power distance was found to be at a low level. In the literature, there are also studies that determined the perception of power distance at medium level (Terzi, 2004) and high level (Gürbüz & Bingöl, 2007). On the other hand, in some recent studies, it is also stated that the perception of power distance is at a very low level (Can & Gündüz, 2021). This can be interpreted as teachers being less tolerant of unequal distribution of power and administrators tending to distribute power more evenly. In another study, Akyol (2009) emphasized that in societies with low power distance, titles and statuses are less important, power distribution and equal opportunity are balanced, and the distance between subordinates and superiors is less.

The low mean obtained in the masculinity dimension and the fact that Turkish society has a feminine value perception are in line with other studies (Hofstede et al., 2010; Gürbüz & Bingöl, 2007). The fact that the pluralism value perception was found to be at a medium level close to high level is in line with other studies that teachers have a pluralistic value perception (Gürbüz & Bingöl, 2007; Acaray & Şevik, 2016). In line with the analysis, the fact that their perceptions of collectivism are still at a moderate level may be due to the internal communication problems experienced by the teachers, excessive class load, problems related to school management and the educational climate problems of the school.

It was determined that teachers' perceptions of alienation were at a moderate level. In contrast to this result, Kayaalp and Özdemir (2020) reported that the general average of the sub-dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, rulelessness and self-alienation in their study on teachers' alienation from school was at a very low level, and similarly, Kovancı

(2020) and Can and Gündüz (2021) reported a very low level. Similar to the results of the research, there are different studies (Celep, 2008; Elma, 2003; Erjem, 2005; Şirin, 2009; Yılmaz & Sarpkaya, 2009; Kovancı & Ergen, 2019; Kahveci, 2015; Kabaklı-Çimen, 2018; Eryılmaz & Burgaz, 2011). According to the results of this study, teachers' perceptions of job alienation are low.

The averages of all sub-dimensions of psychological resilience are high. It was determined that psychological resilience was at a very high level in the relational resources, individual resources and familial resources sub-dimensions, and at a high level in the cultural and contextual sub-dimension. The results of this study overlap with the studies (Köse, 2022; Elsel, 2019; Karacabey & Bozkuş, 2019) that indicate a high level of psychological resilience. In studies on teachers, studies have also been conducted in the context of psychological resilience and leadership behaviors (Cerit et al., 2018), occupational burnout, job satisfaction (Gönen, 2020), cognitive flexibility and self-efficacy (Ateş & Sağar, 2022), turnover intentions (Kadıoğlu Ateş, 2018) and general psychological resilience (Akfırat & Özsoy, 2021; Gün et al., 2022; Topçu & Demircioğlu, 2020).

No significant difference was found in teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values and alienation according to their gender. According to the results of this analysis, male and female teachers think that they participate in decisions equally and that there is no power distance between them and administrators. At the same time, the fact that there is no difference in the general and sub-dimensions of alienation perceptions means that male and female teachers act together within the institution and trust each other. This result can be seen as a result of the communication and interaction of current school administrators with teachers. This is also one of the indicators of a democratic environment in schools.

Teachers' perceptions of psychological resilience differed according to gender in favor of women except for the Cultural and Contextual Resources sub-dimension. It is also possible to come across studies supporting this result (Köse, 2022). In addition, there are studies in the literature reporting that women have higher levels of psychological resilience than men (Hunter

& Chandler, 1999; Oktan et al., 2014; Bozgeyikli & Şat, 2014). On the other hand, there are also studies finding that there is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of psychological resilience according to gender (Sezgin, 2012; Ulukan, 2020; Güzel, 2022).

When the correlation analysis of all variables within the scope of the research was analyzed, a low level positive and significant relationship was found between the sub-dimensions of teachers' perceptions of "Individual Cultural Value" and the sub-dimensions of their perceptions of "Alienation". A moderate positive and significant relationship was found between "Longevity" sub-dimension of "Individual Cultural Value" perceptions and "Individual Resources" sub-dimension of "Psychological Resilience" perceptions. There is a low level relationship in other sub-dimensions. Among the sub-dimensions of teachers' perceptions of "Alienation" and "Psychological Resilience" perceptions, only a low level significant relationship was found between "Cultural and Contextual Resources" and "Social Repulsion". No relationship was found between the other sub-dimensions.

Various studies have been conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of alienation (Kurtulmuş & Karabıyık, 2016; Ayık & Ataş-Akdemir, 2016; Kasapoğlu, 2015). According to Emir's (2012) research findings, teachers' alienation levels were generally found to be low. In the literature, there are different independent studies on issues such as teachers' perceptions of individual cultural values (Kozikoğlu, 2020; Acaray & Şevik, 2016), perceptions of alienation (Ayık et al., 2020; Polatcan, 2020) and psychological resilience (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Mansfield et al., 2016; Sezgin, 2012; Gu & Day, 2007). However, there is no research on the relationship between individual cultural values and teachers' perceptions of alienation and psychological resilience. Therefore, it is considered that this study will fill this gap in the literature and contribute to the field.

In the study, teachers' perceptions of psychological resilience from relational sources were predicted positively and at a low level with the sub-dimension of longevity, uncertainty avoidance, power distance from individual cultural values and powerlessness from alienation perceptions.

There is no direct research on the prediction of psychological resilience in the dimension of relational resources. However, there are studies that organizational climate predicts resilience (Yurdabakan, 2017; Bugay et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2009), as well as studies on the prediction of forgiveness (Dilmaç & Şimşir, 2017; Çapan & Arıcıoğlu, 2014) and emotional intelligence and interpersonal emotion regulation (Yüksel et al., 2021). On the other hand, there is no study on the prediction of the sub-dimensions of psychological resilience separately.

Teachers' individual-based psychological resilience is predicted positively by their perceptions of individual cultural values together with their perceptions of longevity, uncertainty avoidance and power distance at a low level. There is no predictive effect of teachers' perceptions of alienation on their individual-based psychological resilience. Teachers' cultural contextual psychological resilience was predicted positively at a low level together with their perceptions of longevity, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity and alienation perceptions of rulelessness and social alienation from individual cultural values perceptions. Teachers' familial psychological resilience is positively predicted at a low level by longevity, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance from the perceptions of individual cultural values. There is no predictive effect of teachers' perceptions of alienation on their familial resilience.

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Assessment of the Quality of Life of Families of Children With Autism

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

Being a parent of a child who exhibits atypical developmental patterns and encounters numerous difficulties necessitates parents to assume the roles of advocates and coordinators for their child's services, thereby limiting the scope for personal fulfillment. This research endeavors to ascertain whether disparities exist in the quality of life between parents of typically developing children and parents of children with autism. Additionally, it aims to explore parental satisfaction with parenthood and the experience of parental stress. The study encompassed a cohort of 90 families, comprising 45 families with typically developing children and 45 families with children diagnosed with autism. To facilitate data collection, a comprehensive questionnaire was devised, capturing fundamental information. Furthermore, two scales, namely the Parental Satisfaction Scale and the Parental Stress Scale, were employed to assess parental perspectives. The results, obtained through nonparametric group comparison techniques, substantiate a significantly heightened level of parental stress among parents of children with autism. Moreover, noteworthy discrepancies were observed across essential domains of parental satisfaction. An unprecedented finding arising from this investigation, not documented in extant literature, pertains to the prevalent inclination of parents whose firstborn and solitary child has autism to conceive another child, motivated by apprehensions of autism recurrence and concerns surrounding their capacity to devote sufficient attention to a child with autism.

Keywords: parents, family, autism, development, stress

Parenthood

Parenthood, a multifaceted phenomenon, encompasses an intricate tapestry of tasks, roles, rules, communication, and interhuman dynamics that adults embark upon when engaging with their offspring. It is within this complex framework that parenthood unfolds as a dynamic and reciprocal social process. Bearing witness to a gamut of emotions, parenthood can engender profound feelings of exultation, pride, self-actualization, and the affirmation of one's identity and integrity. Simultaneously, it is not uncommon for the parenting journey to be punctuated by weariness, exertion, and stress, sometimes even leading to the relinquishment of personal avenues of self-fulfillment (Cudina-Obradovic & Obradovic, 2003; Klarin, 2006). Parenthood transcends a mere compendium of child-centric activities; rather, it assumes a significant facet of an adult's personal identity, interwoven within the context of their relationship with their child (Rudic et al., 2013). As such, it exerts a

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profound influence on the development and transformation of individuals in the parental role. The presence of a child alone serves as a catalyst, eliciting an amalgamation of intense positive and negative affective states, reshaping the cognitive landscape, emotional contours, and behavioral patterns of parents, while simultaneously influencing their own self-perception and the societal perceptions surrounding them (Sabatell & Waldron, 1995). The subjective encounter with parenthood delves into the inner recesses of parental psyche, encompassing attitudes, emotions, and the very essence of their perception of parenthood, thereby shaping motivational orientations, the sense of parental competence, satisfaction derived from assuming the parental role, educational values, and overarching aspirations (Kohn et al., 1986).

Autism

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significant impairments in reciprocal social interactions, patterns of communication, as well as restricted, stereotypical, and repetitive behaviors, interests, and activities (Glumbic, 2009).

Pervasive developmental disorders encompass a range of early-onset disorders that affect multiple domains of psychomotor development and are marked by abnormalities in social interactions, communication, limited repertoire of interests and activities varying in degree of severity, and often accompanied by diminished intellectual functioning. These disorders profoundly alter three fundamental areas of human development: speech, communication, and social interaction (Stepanovic, 2018). Due to the morbidity, disease outcomes, impact on families, and societal economic burden, autism represents one of the most challenging developmental disorders for society (Resic et al., 2007). The differential diagnosis of autism commonly involves other pervasive developmental disorders, conditions with clinical presentations resembling autism, and disorders with associated autism. The key to distinguishing autism from other pervasive developmental disorders lies in adhering to the diagnostic criteria outlined in the prevailing classification systems (Milacic, 2008a).Currently, two prominent diagnostic systems are in use: the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) and the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision (ICD-10) (Glumbic, 2009).

Clinical Picture

The clinical presentation of autism varies among children and depends on the manifestation of symptoms, age, and intellectual capacities, which can also significantly vary within the same child as they grow (Bujas-Petkovic & Skrinjar, 2010). Parents most commonly notice developmental problems around the age of two when previously the child's development appeared typical. This manifestation of impairment is referred to as secondary autism. In cases where parents observe developmental issues from birth, it is referred to as primary autism (Mitic, 2011, Stepanovic, 2018). Autistic infants exhibit reduced attention to social stimulation, diminished smiling and eye contact, and have a weaker response to their own name. Older children often display a lack of eye contact and significant deficits in nonverbal communication (Brown et al., 2012). Individuals with autism are often described as being "in their own world" and unwilling to communicate, but this is not due to a desire to avoid communication but rather an inability to effectively communicate. Communication abnormalities in autism manifest in various ways, ranging from complete absence of speech, speech delay, difficulties initiating or maintaining conversations, presence of echolalia (repeating words spoken by others), to repetitive or idiosyncratic language (Stepanovic, 2019). Difficulties in comprehending oral information are also frequently observed (Rey, 2013). Approximately 40% of individuals with autism experience sensory disturbances. While parents are usually the first to notice symptoms, they do not always immediately seek professional help (Milacic, 2004). Some professionals are hesitant to provide an early diagnosis to avoid stigmatizing the child or making diagnostic errors, and there are cases in which parents refuse to accept the diagnosis and seek opinions from

multiple experts (Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008a). When there is suspicion of autism spectrum disorder, the child should be referred to a multidisciplinary team for evaluation. All team members should have relevant experience, and at least one member should be trained in administering standardized tests for diagnosing autism spectrum disorder. It is also recommended to observe the child in at least two different environments, structured and unstructured (Rey, 2013).

Family and Parenting

The family represents a dynamic entity, a system in which changes within one subsystem lead to changes in other subsystems (parental subsystem, child subsystem, marital subsystem). As a system, the family has unified boundaries within which all interactions among its members take place. Viewing the family in this manner clarifies that any problem experienced by an individual family member will manifest within the family as a whole (Goldner-Vukov, 1994). The term "healthy, functional family" refers to one that can grow despite the challenges it encounters. In healthy families, there is also flexibility in assigning roles, allowing members to express individual differences. In contrast to functionality, we differentiate the concept of dysfunctionality. Family dysfunctionality can occur at the structural level as well as at the level of emotional processes (Milojkovic et al, 1997). Each family member, including parents and siblings, has a need for personal time and space. Parents also have a need for partner time. Facilitating time for everyone's needs sometimes presents a challenge in finding a balance between closeness and distance, as well as a balance between roles - being an individual, separate entity, and a family member (Breeton & Tong, 2005). Regardless of different value systems and ways of life, there are three fundamental tasks of parenthood: protecting the child, successfully raising them, and establishing a good relationship with their adult child (Stepanovic, 2019). The ultimate goal of every parent is to enable their child to have a higher quality of life in adulthood, thus ensuring a more peaceful and carefree old age for themselves. Parents are not expected to care for their adult children (Bujas-Petkovic & Skrinjar, 2010). However, the birth of a child with developmental disorders or their subsequent identification, especially if they are of a chronic nature with uncertain outcomes, leads to numerous psychological reactions in parents and poses a threat to the entire family life (Mitic, 2011).

Experience of Parenthood

The experience of parenthood refers to the subjective parental assessment of their own success in fulfilling the socially set parenthood norms. The term parental satisfaction is used to describe satisfaction with the parental role, or satisfaction with children. (Mouton & Tuma, 1988). The subjective feeling of parenthood includes three dimensions: satisfaction with parenthood, stress and demands of the parental role, and a sense of parental competence. Therefore, satisfaction with parenting refers to satisfaction with the parent-child relationship, satisfaction with oneself as a parent, satisfaction with the child's behavior, and satisfaction with the spouse in the parental role. Parental sense of competence includes parental assessment of performance (self-efficacy) in the role of parent and assessment of satisfaction with fulfilling the parental role (Sanders & Woolley, 2005). Parents' marital satisfaction also changes under the influence of the experience of parenthood. Married couples differ significantly in the degree of parental satisfaction and sense of competence (Belsky & Rovine, 1990). For the emergence of a positive experience of parenthood in both parents, the division of duties and jobs after the birth of a child is extremely important (Cowan & Cowan, 1992).

The Parent of Children With Disabilities

The demands placed on families and their members regarding children with developmental disabilities are complex and can significantly impact and jeopardize both individuals and the family as a whole. Raising children, particularly those with developmental disabilities, introduces new challenges to families that they have not previously encountered. Accepting a child with developmental disabilities represents a novel experience, and how it is perceived depends on various factors (Krstic, 2013). These parents not only face

the challenges associated with their child's disability but also encounter daily difficulties related to their child's condition, such as finding appropriate care or dealing with complex behaviors (Krstic, 2013; Mitic, 2011). To embrace their role as parents of children with developmental disabilities, parents are often tasked with completely redefining their internal caregiving model regarding themselves, their child, and their relationship, aligning it with expectations and the idealized image of a child (Zeanah et al., 1985; Zeanah et al., 1900). In order to adapt their caregiving model to the needs of caring for a real child with developmental disabilities, parents must cognitively understand the implications of the diagnosis and emotionally express and accept all feelings associated with the knowledge of the diagnosis and its implications (Barnett et al., 2003). This process is defined in the literature as resolution. Resolution is linked to a parent's ability to accept their child's diagnosis and its implications, be realistic about the child's health condition, recognize the child's strengths and limitations, and respond adequately to the child's needs. A parent who has not achieved resolution focuses on the moment of discovery, is emotionally overwhelmed, which hinders their progression over time and leads to unrealistic expectations of the child. Resolution involves integrating caregiving models into a new model that is adapted to the reality of the current situation (Marvin, 1996). The birth of a child with autism alone represents a stressor that places unique burdens on the family and parents over an extended period (Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008b).

Parental stress

Source of stress, or stressor, can be an internal or external stimulus, an isolated event, or a series of events that an individual perceives as threatening to their life, material goods, and self-esteem, which, given such perception, can disrupt the individual's daily life (Lazarus & Folkman, 2004). Parental stress represents the perception of inadequate financial, emotional, physical, and social resources that would enable coping with the consequences of key life situations or the inability, incapacity, adjustment, and functioning with upcoming life crises. Parental stress is a distressing feeling that is related to the demands of the parental role and is qualitatively different from stress in other areas of life (Profaca & Arambasic, 2004). Parental stress is a rejecting psychological reaction to the demands of parenting; it is a complex process that links the demands of parenting, behavior, and the psychological state of parents, the quality of parent-child relationships, and the child's social adjustment. Parental stress is experienced as a negative feeling towards oneself and the child/children attributed to the demands of parenting (Deater-Deckard, 1998). Significantly elevated levels of stress that can jeopardize health occur under certain circumstances that hinder or prevent the attainment of necessary adaptation in this role (Rudic et al., 2013). Parental stress can be situational (unexpected and of limited duration) and chronic stress (stress with the most severe consequences for the individual) (Rose, 1987). If a parent cannot successfully cope with the demands of parenting, chronic stress in the parental role arises (Deater-Deckard, 1998). Family stress depends on numerous factors: the size of the family, family, and child characteristics, emotional climate in the family, social context, concerns for the child and their future (Damjanovic et al., 2014). Families raising a child with developmental disabilities, in addition to regular parental demands and tasks, face a series of additional tasks resulting from the child's condition. Parents experience psychological stress and disappointment to a great extent because the child has not fulfilled their hopes and expectations, which are directed towards having a healthy offspring (Barnett et al., 2003). Stress related to raising a child with developmental disabilities can be seen as a combination of increased caregiving needs for the child and parents' emotional reactions to the child's impairment (McCubbin et al., 1983). The birth of a child with any developmental difficulties represents a stressful event accompanied by various emotional reactions from parents. The experience of stress for parents of children with disabilities varies in intensity and has a negative impact on the entire family (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). Regardless of when they learned about the child's diagnosis, they talk about it as a period of great crisis when expectations regarding the child change, family routines are disrupted, feelings of guilt arise, or the

cause of the child's condition is sought, which alters their perception of themselves as caregivers (Heiman, 2002). Family resilience is the response that occurs when the family is allowed to make unusual efforts to observe, experience, and define a new situation, as well as to take specific actions to return to the usual routines of everyday life (Dyk & Schwaneveldt, 1987). There may be two different ways of coping with stress for parents of children with disabilities: coping through resistance - collective family efforts to minimize and reduce the impact of stressors, and adaptive coping - joint efforts to reorganize and consolidate the family and restore the order it had before the stressor disrupted the family unit (Margalit & Kleitman, 2006).

Quality of Life and the Importance of Social Support

Quality of life is a concept that overlaps with concepts of health status, disability, and impairment. Although achieving a high quality of life is a postulate of modern medicine, there is no general consensus on the actual meaning of this concept (Mustur et al., 2009). In a document assessing quality of life in 1995, the World Health Organization provided a definition in which quality of life is defined as the individual's perception of their life situation within the context of cultural and value systems to which they belong, and in relation to their own goals, expectations, and standards (Gojceta et al., 2008). Nowadays, there are numerous reliable and valid questionnaires for assessing quality of life related to health, both general and specific to particular conditions (Kvrgic et al., 2001). Most quality of life studies utilize two basic measurement methodologies: objective-quantitative indicators (health, education, income, marital status) that relate to the fulfillment of social and cultural norms regarding material goods, social status, and physical well-being, and subjective indicators - what individuals experience (success, satisfaction, etc.), or their satisfaction with their circumstances. This means that a person can have a high quality of life even if they are dissatisfied with an area of life they do not consider important, or vice versa (Tatovic et al., 2011). Autism often represents a significant burden for families and requires family members

to significantly modify their daily activities to adapt to the new reality. Factors such as functional independence, severe maladaptive behaviors, and the severity of autism are closely related to parental distress and inversely related to quality of life (Kheir et al., 2012). Social support is one of the most significant factors contributing to quality of life. Many authors point out that social support is a broad concept that is difficult to define and that it actually encompasses various forms of supportive behavior from different people in the social environment. Social support acts directly and improves quality of life, alleviating the burden of stress and thereby increasing the person's quality of life. Research has shown that parents, after receiving a diagnosis, usually try around seven different treatments or therapies (Stepanovic, 2023). Due to the practice of multiple treatments simultaneously or in very short time intervals, it is often not possible to determine which treatment is truly beneficial and effective for the child (Rawson, 2012). Similarly, research indicates that early intervention, between the first and sixth year of a child's life, increases the likelihood of achieving maximum potential and acquiring skills, thus increasing the functioning level of children on the autism spectrum. These studies have raised important questions about the accessibility of early intervention and services, but one must also be aware of the pressure on the family to cope and provide these interventions for the child (Rawson, 2012). Autism has been described as a magnet for end-of-the-20th-century fraud. When parents perceive their situation as hopeless, they may be open to any treatment regardless of its effectiveness or substantial evidence for or against such treatment. Insufficient information and irresponsible encouragement from professionals to try every therapy contribute to this situation (Rawson, 2012). Research has shown that individuals who have material, social, and psychological support from people in their lives, such as parents, partners, friends, and extended family, have better physical and mental health than those who lack such support (Rawson, 2012).

Research Methodology and Instruments

Research Objectives

The main aim of this study was to examine the quality of life of parents of children with autism, including parental satisfaction, the significance and challenges of their parental role, and whether they differ from parents in the typical population.

Research Hypotheses

The primary hypothesis, from which the study was derived, posits that there are differences in parental satisfaction across key domains (parental role satisfaction, parental role challenges, and parental role significance) between parents of children with disabilities and parents in the typical population. Additionally, six specific hypotheses were formulated:

1. Parents of children with autism will express a lower level of parental satisfaction compared to parents in the typical population.
2. The overall level of parental stress among parents of children with developmental disorders will be higher compared to parents in the typical population.
3. The level of parental stress will be higher among parents who are married within the specific group (parents of children with autism) compared to divorced couples.
4. A higher level of stress is present among mothers of children with autism who have a higher educational level compared to mothers with a moderate educational level.
5. A higher level of stress is present among employed mothers of children with autism compared to unemployed mothers of children with autism.
6. A higher level of stress is present among mothers of children with autism who have experienced their children's disabilities for a longer period or whose children's disabilities manifested at a younger age.

Research Sample

The research involved 90 families. The first group consisted of 45 families - the specific group, families of children with autism, and the second group consisted of 45 families - the control group, families of typically developing children. The age of the children whose parents participated in the research ranged from first to fourth grade of elementary school, that is, from 7 to 10 years old. Children from the specific group attended either a special school for children with developmental disabilities or a regular school. Prior to the research, approval was obtained from the school directors where the research was conducted, and parents were informed about the basic objectives of the research, as well as the information that the data would be used solely for research purposes; parents provided written consent.

Research Instruments

The basic data were obtained using a General Questionnaire created for the purposes of this research, which consisted of 33 questions (gender, child's age, and an additional section for parents of children with developmental disabilities regarding the specific disabilities and when they first noticed their occurrence). Two scales were employed in the study: 1. Parental Stress Scale (Berry & Jones, 1995), for measuring the level of experienced stress (18 questions), and 2. Parental Satisfaction Scale, which assesses parental satisfaction.

Results

Within the group of parents of children with autism, 84.4% were parents of male children, while 15.6% were parents of female children with autism. The children ranged in age from 7 to 10 years old. Parents first noticed symptoms between 6 months and 4 years, with an average duration of approximately 6 years. The number of children in families varied between the examined groups. Families of typically developing children had two to three children, while families of children with autism mostly had one child. The majority of participants were predominantly from urban areas. Marital statuses varied among subgroups, with the majority of parents in the typically developing population being married (97.8%), while about half of the parents in the group of parents of children with autism were married (51.1%), and the

other half were divorced (46.7%). The level of education among parents of typically developing children was predominantly high, with a high employment rate - 100% for fathers and 91.1% for mothers. In contrast, among parents of children with autism, the majority had a medium level of education, with a lower employment rate - 86.7% for fathers and 71.1% for mothers. Socio-economic status assessments varied between the two parent groups. Parents of typically developing children assessed their family situation as satisfactory, with material needs covered, while in the group of parents of children with autism, a small percentage of parents considered their material situation as satisfactory (33.3% all needs, 60.0% most needs, and 6.7% not satisfactory). The level of parental satisfaction showed statistically significant differences in the basic domains of parental satisfaction between the two groups of participants, both overall and in all three domains of parental satisfaction - satisfaction with the parental role, difficulties, and the importance of the parental role. The overall score on the scale indicated a significantly lower level of parental satisfaction and satisfaction with the parental role, but also a higher level of parental burden and lower significance of the parental role for parents of children with developmental disabilities. Parental stress was significantly higher among parents of children with developmental disabilities, and a significant negative correlation was found between the importance of the parental role and parental stress. Parents of children with autism perceived the parental role as more significant, and the results reported lower levels of parental stress. The research results show that the level of maternal parental stress among mothers of children with autism who are in a marital relationship is slightly higher compared to mothers who are divorced. Additionally, the level of parental stress is higher among mothers of children with autism who have a higher education compared to mothers with a medium level of education, as well as among employed mothers who experience significantly higher stress. Parental stress and the duration of the child's symptoms are correlated, and the research indicates that parental stress is highest among parents whose child's symptoms were noticed at an early age.

Discussion

Parenting involves numerous tasks and difficulties. Parents of children with developmental disorders face even greater challenges, requiring special forms of care and protection throughout their upbringing and support in all stages of life. The research idea itself stemmed from the intention to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the quality of life between families of children with autism and families of typical children. The aim of the research was to contribute to understanding the quality of life of families of children with autism, as well as parental stress - a potential predictor of lower parental satisfaction and enjoyment in the parenting role. By considering this aspect, the focus shifts from the negative consequences of the child's condition on the family to an approach that relies on the strengths and resources of the family. Knowledge of factors related to positive outcomes is important for intervention programs to facilitate the adaptation of a larger number of families. In situations where a child is diagnosed with a physical or developmental impairment, parents are often overwhelmed with emotions and experiences related to diagnosis and communication, which can have a significant and long-term impact on parental psychological well-being. The sample of this study was not random and consisted of parents of children with autism attending schools for primary and secondary education for children with developmental disorders, as well as parents of typical children involved in support programs. The question arises as to how parents whose children are not included in formal support systems would respond to these questionnaires. Sociodemographic characteristics such as marital status, education, employment, type of child's disorder, first signs of deviation were obtained through a general questionnaire and provided a sample of diverse nature. The majority of parents were in a marital union, while the number of divorced parents in the experimental group was higher than in the control group. Mothers were more likely to complete the questionnaire, which can be explained by the fact that a large percentage of mothers are not employed, they are solely dedicated to their child and follow all school-related information. An interesting finding

is that most families in the control group have at least two children, even three, while in the experimental group, there is a high percentage of families with only one child. Families with a child with autism as their first and only child are afraid of experiencing the same difficulties and anticipate having less time and opportunities to dedicate to the child with autism, who constantly requires attention. This is the reason we obtained such results in our sample. The literature does not provide much research on this topic, making it an interesting and significant subject for future research. Gender differences were also observed in the children, with a higher number of boys in the experimental group, which is consistent with other studies (Huber, 2016; Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008b; Rajic & Mihic, 2015). Differences were also noted in parental employment, with the majority of parents in the control group being employed, while in the experimental group, only one parent was employed (Dimitrijevic, 2014). The results of the study on parental satisfaction indicate the inability to achieve desired accomplishments associated with the parental role, and as a result, parents often struggle with their child's diagnosis, which increases the burden of the parental role (Coleman & Karraker, 2002; Delale, 2011; Mihic et al., 2016; Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008b). In terms of parental satisfaction, parental role satisfaction, parenting difficulties, and the importance of the parental role, statistically significant differences were found in the total score, indicating that parents of children without developmental disorders do not feel the burden of parenting, are more satisfied with the parental role, and attach greater importance to it compared to parents of children with autism, which is confirmed by other studies (Baker et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Markie-Dadds & Sanders, 2006; Mihic et al., 2016; Pisterman et al., 1992). However, the study by Delale (2011) reached different conclusions, with high ratings of parental role satisfaction reported by mothers of children with developmental disorders in this research. Based on the obtained results, we can conclude that parents of children with autism face numerous obstacles and difficulties in raising and nurturing their children, and that they experience a greater burden of parental roles, leading to higher levels of dissatisfaction. Other studies

have confirmed that parenting stress is a significant predictor of reduced parenting quality, poorer parent-child relationships, and overall functioning (Hoffman et al., 2009; Lopez et al., 2008; Wiley & Renk, 2007). Total stress is a measure of the stress level experienced by a parent. The results only indicate the amount of parental stress arising from the parent-child relationship and the stress resulting from the child's behavior, not the stress from other life roles or events. The average score on the Parenting Satisfaction Scale for parents of children with developmental disorders, as shown in this study, is 68 out of a total of 90, indicating that parents of children with developmental disorders experience a high level of stress. Analyzing individual items from the Parenting Stress Scale reveals that parents of children with developmental disorders are less happy in their parental role and that caring for the child requires more time and energy than they have. It is more challenging for them to balance their responsibilities since having a child, and they have a less optimistic view of the future, although they enjoy spending more time with their child, which is consistent with other research (Fulgosi et al., 1998; Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008b; Mihic et al., 2016; Rajic & Mihic, 2015).

Several studies highlight that parents of children with autism experience frustrations, increased stress, depression, anxiety, financial difficulties, marital problems, as well as reduced self-confidence and competence in performing tasks (Murphy & Tierney, 2014). In line with this, parents confirm that the birth of a child with developmental disorders changes the family's social life. There is less contact with extended family, friends, and neighbors, and parents have less time for their spouses. These families are primarily focused on families facing similar problems (Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008a). Comparative studies show higher levels of stress, depression, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion among parents of children with autism compared to parents of children with Down syndrome or some other form of intellectual disability (Sofronoff & Farbotco, 2002). Mothers of children with autism report difficulties in taking their child to public places compared to mothers of children with Down syndrome, as well as greater demands of these children, but fewer

activities in which they can engage (Johnson et al., 2011). The results of this study showed that the percentage of parents from the typical population who were in a marital relationship (97.8%) was significantly higher compared to families of children with autism (51.1% married, 46.7% divorced). The comparison of groups also revealed that married mothers reported slightly higher levels of parenting stress compared to divorced mothers. However, the presence of disagreement between parents of children with autism can have a greater impact on successful family relationships than on their marital status, separation, or divorce. The official status of the relationship between parents is not significant for functioning, regardless of their marital status as a couple (Baeza-Velasko et al., 2013; Benson & Kersh, 2001). Saini et al. (2015) found that mothers of children with autism emphasized the importance of spending time without a partner and children as a major factor influencing marital harmony, while mothers of typically developing children did not identify this component as significant for maintaining marital success (Saini et al., 2015). Regarding the level of professional qualifications, the results obtained showed a higher level of parental stress among mothers with higher professional qualifications compared to mothers with a moderate level of education, which may suggest that satisfaction with the parental role in families of children with autism is associated with parents' expectations regarding their child. Positive parenting experiences and parenting competencies were only observed in those parents who were well-prepared and had realistic expectations of their future parenting role (Delmore-Ko et al., 2000). When it comes to employment status, employed mothers of children with autism report significantly higher levels of parental stress compared to unemployed mothers of children with autism. These results indicate that employed mothers of children with autism do not have enough time to devote to their child and everything that is needed during the day because they spend much more time at work, and it is assumed that they have to work due to their socio-economic situation. Most mothers are the primary caregivers of autistic children. All the time is spent taking care of their children without any time for other types of activities. Daily routines,

professional lives, and academic plans are affected. Most mothers have stopped working or studying, completely changing their lives (Maciel de Aguiar & Pereira Ponde, 2018). Correlation analyses have shown that the duration of disturbances affects the level of parental stress, and parents who noticed disturbances in their children at an earlier age have higher levels of parental stress compared to parents of children in whom disturbances were noticed later, which is consistent with other studies on the same topic. Older children create more stress for parents for several reasons: parents' perception of the permanence of the handicap, lack of support services for older children, mismatch between the needs of the child and the parent, concern for the child's future (Milacic-Vidojevic, 2008a). The results indicate the need for the development of intervention programs that would reduce parental stress and increase parental satisfaction. Changing the experience of parenthood can alter parents' behavior towards the child and improve the quality of the parent-child relationship, thus creating favorable conditions for the child's development. Difficulties faced by children with developmental disabilities in their daily lives impose the need for continuous work with parents, along with support for the development of parenting skills while respecting the specific functioning of children with developmental disabilities. The best results are achieved when this support is provided in a timely manner, within the framework of early intervention in children. Social support focused on the needs of parents strengthens their perception of competence in parenting, which directly or indirectly influences the child's development and reduces problematic behavior (Almand, 2004; Borstein, 2006; Keen et al., 2010). Parents of typically developing children assess the family's situation as satisfactory, ensuring that all material needs are met. However, in a group of parents of children with autism, as many as 60% consider the financial situation to be less satisfactory and inadequate to meet all the family's needs. Research studies confirm these findings (Pipp-Siegel et al., 2002). A study conducted to examine depression and quality of life in mothers of children with pervasive developmental disorders revealed that low family income and lack of community

support, compared to other aspects of quality of life, highlight the lack of financial resources that could provide assistance in caring for the child during certain times of the day. This would help mothers focus on work or relax during their free time. These mothers experienced significant limitations in enjoying life and achieving satisfaction (Favero-Nunes & Santos, 2010). Cazin et al. (2014) conducted a study in Ogulin to determine the attitudes of healthcare professionals towards parents of children with developmental disabilities. The results have shown that healthcare workers have significantly better access to mothers of children with developmental disabilities, primarily due to the prejudice that mothers of children with developmental disabilities are sensitive to the doctor-child-parent relationship. A literature review has established that about two-thirds of parents speak of periodic feelings of sadness, disappointment, stress, and concern when they attempt to cope with the knowledge of their child's developmental disorders. As the child grows, they increasingly differ from their peers, and parents must face the realities of their child's abilities. Therefore, it is important for professionals to assess the strengths of parents, their weaknesses, the availability of family and social support, in order to provide adequate support for the children (Fortier & Wanlass, 1984; Wikler et al., 1981). However, some research has shown that in cases of stable marriage, high socioeconomic status of the family, and community care for individuals with disabilities, there can be positive outcomes for the whole family. Research conducted in Croatia with the aim of examining the quality of life of parents of children on the autism spectrum, what influences it, and what measures could improve it, involved 346 parents, including 177 parents of children on the autism spectrum and a control group of 169 parents of typically developing children. The results showed that parents of children on the autism spectrum have a lower level of quality of life compared to parents of children in the general population. Both groups showed the least satisfaction with the aspect of future security. However, 38% of parents of children on the autism spectrum reported a quality of life in line with or above the average of the general population in Croatia, indicating that they have developed resilience in the existing situation (Benjak, 2011). The results of our research indicate the need for the development of intervention programs that would reduce parental stress and increase parental satisfaction in parents of children with autism. Changing the experience of parenthood can alter parents' behavior towards their child and improve the quality of the parent-child relationship, thereby creating favorable conditions for the child's development (Almand, 2004; Bornstein, 2006; Keen et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Changes that affect family life after the birth of a child with autism can be observed in everyday family activities and various aspects of family life. Daily family dynamics change and patterns of family life adapt to the functioning of the child with autism (Axelsson et al., 2013). Families of children with autism grow and develop in this context. The greatest burden and responsibility fall on parents who serve as advocates and coordinators of their child's services. Research has recently begun to focus on this topic and increasingly emphasizes support for these families due to the reduced quality of life and increased stress resulting from the lack of all the needs necessary for raising a child with autism (Milicevic, 2015). This study confirmed all six hypotheses. It was confirmed that parents of children with autism have a lower quality of life, experience higher stress in raising their child, and have a lower sense of satisfaction with their parental role compared to parents of typically developing children. During the research, parents of children with autism indicated the need for improvement in support systems, consultations, and assistance, particularly highlighting the importance of early intervention. The goals of early intervention are to support parents in raising children with developmental disorders, stimulate the child's development in specific areas, and prevent difficulties and problems in the future. As the child's functioning improves, the role of parents becomes less demanding, and the quality of life improves. Through the education of parents and family members, progress, facilitation, and satisfaction can be observed in a short period, thereby improving the quality of life for families of children with autism.

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Preliminary Criteria For Ict in Assisting Students With Psychological Problems

Scientific review paper

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Abstract

A rising quantity of research designates that adolescents' and students' psychological problems pose a risk to them and society. Research indicates that students frequently utilize Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services to get informed about mental health, and to resolve their psychological problems. A critical and reflective analysis of the scientific literature, and a critical examination and reflective synthesis, theories, and practice on the use of ICTs and digital media for the treatment of psychological problems have been employed in this study. The study identifies gaps in research theory and practice regarding the use of ICTs and digital services for the prevention and treatment of mental health issues among adolescents and the student population. The article proposes ten preliminary criteria for ICT use in the treatment of psychological problems as a direction for further research.

There is a lack of research that explores the appropriate ICT and digital media in assisting students with their psychological problems, namely, social anxiety (Kalebic, 2006; Klein, 2001), depression (e.g., Christensen et al., 2002; Juretic, 2008), psychosis (Sandsten, et al., 2018), sexual violence (e.g., Miller et al., 2018), as well as a lack of a proper pedagogical influence in childhood to prevent psychological disorders (Hibbard et al., 2012). ICT and digital media are used for treatments of traumatic memories, resulting from social pathological behavior, e.g., sexual abuse. ICT finds its application in the psychosocial treatment of psychological developmental difficulties such as psychosis (e.g., Pajevic et al., 2020).

Researchers specify (e.g., Kauer et al., 2014; Paterson et al., 2019) that students often make use of e-psychology, and other digital services to resolve their psychological problems, however, there are no systematic examinations of suitable ICT tools for a specific disorder. Effective use of ICTs is a crucial need among young people for diagnosis, assessment, therapy, or counseling services (e.g., Kenwright et al., 2004; Drigas et al., 2011). Evidence exists about the benefits of using social media (Bekalu et al., 2019), CBT (D'Anci et al., 2019), and e-psychology for treating depression and anxiety. Also, research highlights telepsychiatry for the treatment

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of psychotic symptoms (Mucic, 2007). However, the effective application of these therapeutical modes for different mental conditions and appropriate criteria have not been systematically examined.

Thus, a general lack of awareness of appropriate ICT tools may influence students' loss of trust, and reluctance to join digital media and to approach ICT online professional services. Moreover, a stigma widely prevalent in the world sends a message to a young person that society is helpless to rectify it adequately which endangers the recovery process. Students have not been trained to find ICT solutions, with the assistance of supervised professionals who assure anonymity, and allowance for freedom of expression with no feeling of shame and embarrassment.

Based on the above discussion, the main purpose of the article is to explore diverse ICT digital services and to draw preliminary criteria to assist students with their psychological problems. This has led to specific research objectives, namely:
(1) to critically analyse current theory and practice on the use of ICT in concurring students' psychological problems, namely, depression, sexual violence, psychotic symptoms, and anxiety
(2) to derive preliminary criteria that will motivate educators to take collaborative steps to respond to stigma and constant treat to psychological well-being at HE institutions. The emerging question set in this paper is:
RQ: What are the preliminary criteria for ICT and digital services use in supporting students' psychological well-being in higher educational contexts?

This article presents a review literature-based analysis of the multiple ICT and digital treatments discussed in the following sections.

Research Methods

This research article is founded on critical analysis and reflective synthesis of contemporary literature on the benefits of effective ICT digital services as well as their weaknesses for the rectification of students' psychological problems. Critical self-reflection and the creative inspiration of researchers and their judgments resulted in the derivation of a comprehensive analysis of different forms of digital services concerning

the benefits of ICT digital services as well as their weaknesses as novel research outputs. Critical reflection reproduces researchers' illuminations and evaluations of their perspectives concerning the opinions of other researchers (Hickson, 2016; Bordens & Abbott, 2008; Cresswell, 2009; Harwell, 2011). Thus, this traditional literature review has been supplemented by critical reflection (Snyder, 2019; Allan, et al., 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Henry, 2009).

The Framework For Ict Use in Assisting Students With Psychological Problems

The Period of Adolescence Is a Critical Stage for Mental Health

The period of adolescence is a time in which a young man is "sought", listened to, searched for the right direction, and his whole journey can have both a positive and a negative outcome (Kohlberg, 1984). All changes that occur in adolescents, whether it is physical and sexual maturation, are related to schooling, or social contacts which is a great source of stress for them. Because of all of the above, it is very important to notice certain changes in their behavior and emotional state in time, and also try to help them early in the best possible way (Berger, 2019; Kessler, 2015).

However, the most curricula at HE aims to transfer subject knowledge, to equip students with professional skills using pedagogical methods, information sharing, and exchange, with little exploration of students' psychological well-being and training for awareness of mental health (Adorno, 1998; Tyng et al., 2017).

What Is a Potential Cause of a Variety of Mental Problems Among Students and Adolescents in General?

Social anxiety is a potential cause of a multiplicity of mental problems among students Social anxiety is a state or feeling/experience of vague trepidation, worry, anxiety, and tension that can be of varying intensity and duration (Klein, 2001; Gilbody et al., 2015). Researcher, Kalebic (2006) states that school-related stress most often includes conflicts with friends, peers, teachers, and parents, school pressure, fear of poor grades, fear of failure, and the like

(Spirit et al., 1991 according to Kalebic, 2006; Klein, 2001).

Considering age, younger students state that the most common source of stress for them is insufficient and unfair grades, and conflict with colleagues, teachers, and parents, while for older students the most common source of stress is getting an insufficient grade (Deng et al., 2022; Kalebic, 2006) and psychological distress in the form of somatic symptoms (Liu et al., 2020). In addition, adolescents who exhibit test anxiety during the exam have greater activation and excitement of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995 according to Juretic 2008). Mental problems arise, e.g., psychosis (Merry et al., 2012), sexual violence (Miller et al., 2018), and psychotic symptoms (Maier, 1999).

The Role of Pedagogy in Detecting and Preventing Psychological Problems Among Adolescents

Psychological problems often have a reason behind them, and they are discovered too late because of the lack of pedagogues or psychologists. Currently, in HEIs, there is just one expert for all those psychological problems that students and adolescents generally encounter. It is important to draw attention to the lack of personnel, but also the available time for training of professional associates – pedagogues, since they are not competent to provide adequate assistance to students who today are increasingly coping with various psychological difficulties. So, this is also an indicator of how much HE must be involved and aware at all levels of cooperation for assisting students with psychological problems.

Justifications for Ict Use in Psychoeducation and Awareness Training in Higher Education

Researchers e.g., Radetic-Paic and Ruzic-Baf (2012) agree that ICT and digital media present effective means of treating psychological problems stating that, "young people are...the most vulnerable ...when it comes to the potential effect of computer use...while "their vulnerability stems from the fact that they go through a process of socialization and at their earliest age are subject to various influences that are relatively difficult to dose and control".

Progressive development of ICT began during and after the Second World War, as well as the development and research in the field of psychological tests and psychometry (Smiljcic et al., 2017; Berger, 2019).

The use of technology often does not stimulate imagination, reading, or deeper reflection and also affects the acquisition of information, decision-making, memory, and attention in young people (Anderson & Rainie, 2018). There is no doubt that technology (Riek, 2016) affects the thinking and attention of young people since attention is the basic prerequisite for the thinking process.

To take advantage of all the benefits of technology, we must first acquire certain knowledge to use the full potential of the information society through them (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division, etc. 2019). But is it enough to have access to technology? The Association of Colleges and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2000) points out that "information literacy is associated with information technology skills, but has broader implications for the individual, the education system and society.

A student or adolescent should be trained to use technology to obtain the necessary ICT skills and to discern what information he needs and how to use it (Spiranec, 2003). Using ICT is becoming a crucial component in the field of psychological treatment whose domain includes psychoeducational work, counseling practice to an in-depth psychotherapeutic approach (Smiljcic et al., 2017; Berger, 2019).

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (Cbt) and Behavioral Activation in Treating Depressive Symptoms

Depression can be labeled as feelings of sadness, guilt, worry, a pessimistic view of the future, discouragement, and helplessness (Chen et al., 2018). Cognitive-behavioral therapy is a psychotherapeutic treatment based on psychological theories of learning and modeling thoughts and emotions using a direct approach and techniques with a wide range of psychosocial difficulties. CBT influences the way how a person structures perception, and experience of the world and accordingly manifests certain behavior

(Mrgan & Jokic-Bregic, 2022).

The use of CBT includes psychoeducational work, counseling practice to an in-depth psychotherapeutic approach. The majority of digital treatments are forms of cognitive behavioral therapy (e.g., Andersson, 2014; Gilbody et al., 2015). The interventions make more use of behavioral than cognitive procedures because there is a prominent educational component and some interventions are educational programs rather than treatments and deliver the intervention in "lessons", not "sessions" (Carlbring et al., 2007). CBT online lessons are indicated in the successful treatment of depression and anxiety disorders. When face-to-face lessons are prevented due to long waiting lists, work requirements, or distance that requires time in transport digital CBT can be a solution (Olthuis et al., 2015).

Behavioral activation is an approach to mental health that involves behaviors to influence emotional state (Ly et al., 2014). It is often a part of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), but it can also be a standalone treatment. Most research into behavioral activation has focused on its positive effect on depression (e.g., Gepp & Villines, 2021). This is because young people with depression often lose interest in activities they used to enjoy or no longer find pleasure in their hobbies.

A novel treatment applies an Internet-based psychoeducational program for depressive symptoms using human and automated support based on the cognitive-behavioral paradigm, which has proven effective in treating depressive symptoms with psychopharmacological therapy. The advantages of this treatment that stand out are the easy accessibility provided to many users, affordability, and a therapeutic opportunity without going to a therapist (Mira et al., 2017).

Internet Platforms, Psychoeducational Programs, and Multiple Treatments Modes for Depressive Symptoms

In terms of digital treatment of depressive symptoms, *a psychoeducational program* based on the Internet platform (Shah et al., 2022) that includes automatic ICT support with the possibility of the presence of therapeutic sustenance proved to be intermediate to very effective, depressive

symptomatology (Mira et al., 2017). In terms of ICT support, activities such as self-monitoring were available, which reported to users about their relationship between mood and activity within the program and informed them about the treatment, and the steps they made including encouragement to continue treatment (Fonseca & Osma, 2021).

Researchers e.g., Chen et al. (2018), Firth et al. (2018) Kang et al. (2015) highlight other forms of innovative treatment for depressive symptoms. Examples include *robotics,* and *positive cognitive bias modification* as a potential therapy for depression such as direct-to-user digital treatments e.g., MindSpot, Australian online clinics the MoodGYM, which are *free online interventions* for depression (e.g., Christensen et al., 2002).

Social Media Channels for Treating Psychological Problems: Remote Psychoanalytic Therapies

There is an increasing need for psychological therapy through digital media such as social channels. Psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy as therapeutic modalities are used in the treatment of a wide range of psychological problems such as more serious psychological disorders and personality disorders (Divac-Jovanovic & Svrakic, (2017).

Matacic (2018) in his article 'Cybertherapy: on the possibility and impossibility of remote psychoanalytic therapies', sees the disadvantages of psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic treatment in the fact that social channels such as Skype, Viber, and Zoom represent a guarantee of privacy, with a dominant concentration on analyzing facial expression at the expense of many bodily reactions (movements, smells of emotional resonance), and this presents the inability to understand the finer nuances of the process of projective identification (Klein, 2001).

The issue of professional and specialized treatment of mental difficulties through the social digital channel is becoming more and more the subject of research, e.g., the possibilities of such treatment where both advantages and disadvantages are observed (Matacic, 2018; Borovecki-Jakovljev, 2016).

The novelty in this psychoanalytic

process through social media channels is introduced by the author Scharff (2010, according to Braun, 2017) who believes that the psychoanalytic process is a matter of working with a mind that can be understood beyond the physical presence of the therapist. On the one hand, the social media space allows potential clients to gain insights about the biographical data of psychanalysts and may have access to their presence on social networks, which violates the principle of neutrality and abstinence of psychoanalysts (Eric, Dimitrijevic et al., 2018; Matacic 2018). The psychoanalytic community, as the forerunner of all forms of psychotherapy, has high standards of selection of both psychoanalysts and the clients themselves who undergo this type of treatment.

At the 49th Congress in Boston, the International Psychoanalytic Associations boldly raised questions about the changes that new technologies bring to the work of psychotherapists and psychoanalysts (Braun, 2017). The author points out that online social media treatment can be quite unsafe and exhausting when it comes to a deeper level of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy are not the only fields of application of counseling or psychotherapeutic treatment, and other directions, schools, and disciplines in the field of learning psychology, education, and counseling, psychotherapeutic and clinical work indicate the possibilities of digital forms of application (Burns, 2006).

The Application of E-Mental Health (E-Mh) in the Treatment of Psychological Problems

Research shows (e.g., Paterson et al., 2019; Kauer et al., 2014) that students and young people often use e-psychology and other digital services such as online counseling to solve their psychological problems. The effective use of e-psychology in synergy with ICT is key for students and young people for diagnostics, assessment, therapy, or advisory services (e.g., Berger, 2019; Drigas et al., 2011). E-psychology is particularly suitable for depressive syndrome (Andersson & Cuijpers, 2008; Baumeister et al., 2014; Christensen, 2002). The entire content of the support program is enabled through *a synchronous* vision that includes real-time support (Smyth & Shocklock,

1998) and *asynchronous* that has prepared and accessible material on the Internet without direct contact with the helper.

The new signifier in e-mental health (e-MH) implies the use of ICT in recognizing and detecting symptoms of mental disorders, improving mental health prevention and early interventions, preventing recurrence, etc. An example is the e-MH which includes mainly a treatment program and monitoring as an adjunct to clinical work. The e-MH can be used in the form of educational applications (Escobar, L., & Escobar, M., 2019;).

Psychosocial Support on Digital Platforms and Computer Games in Treating Sexual Violence

Significant contributions of psychosocial supportive interventions based on the digital plateau can be applied in working with children and adolescents who have survived some forms of sexual violence, which represent a special category of the vulnerable population. Sexual violence can be labeled as sexual behavior manifested without the consent and permission of another person, or without the possibility of voluntary consent in minors, which can be in different forms and intensity (Smiljcic et al., 2017; Shawn & Waquar, 2022; Ungar, 2013).

Special advantages of psychosocial support via the web are the possibility of quick access to the necessary assistance that can be multidisciplinary: namely, psychologists, social workers, lawyers, necessary legal assistance professionals, doctors, and caregivers. Furthermore, advantages include anonymity, a lesser sense of shame and embarrassment, independence and autonomy, freedom of expression, and the absence of a geographical or time barrier (Bah et al., 2021).

Telepsychiatry in the Treatment of Psychological Problems

Psychotic disorders are denoted by the ICD-10 International Classification of Mental and Behavioral Disorders (Pajevic et al., 2020) which implies a disrupted reality test, the presence of delusional ideas that can be of different topics concerning diagnosis, the occurrence of hallucinatory delusions, and inadequate and mismatched behavior along with several other symptoms (Maric et al., 2012).

When it comes to psychoeducation and psychological support for adolescents with psychosis, psychosocial interventions involving work to improve the quality of life, have proven to be necessary with medication therapy (Kucukalic et al., 2006). Virtual reality has been explored in the treatment of persecutory delusions (Collett et al., 2016). By introducing ICT technology to youths with psychosis/schizophrenia, it would be possible to receive the necessary psychological support and psychoeducational interventions without exposure to existing stigmas and prejudices in society.

The use of ICT to provide psychoeducational interventions does not have clear effects compared to standard medical care in a study conducted by Välimäki et al. (2013). The authors, however, do not give up on the possibility of further research in this field.

The author Mucic (2007) particularly distinguished himself in the field of spreading awareness and education about the benefits and assistances of telepsychiatry, which he began practicing in the 1990s in Denmark when he encountered dilemmas and challenges of working with refugees from the former Yugoslavia who were affected by the war. Mucic (2007) emphasizes the advantage of telepsychiatry, which sharply separates from online treatments, primarily because telepsychiatry in its setting offers security and privacy practices, and points to further improvement in the field of data protection where collaboration with the IT sector is necessary.

Mucic (2018) like researchers Matacic (2018) and Braun (2017) emphasizes the importance of the possibility of treatment in the mother tongue, the decentralization of this practice outside large cities, but also the work of a concrete expert that can include students with different geographical places.

Supervised digital treatment may dramatically reduce the amount of clinician time needed without sacrificing effectiveness (Christopher et al., 2017; Wild et al., 2016) and telepsychiatry is a form of. There is a consistent finding that supervised digital interventions are more effective than unsupported ones although, depending on the context and the specific intervention, the difference is not necessarily great (Baumeister et al., 2014). It is generally thought that the explanation lies in better

treatment adherence in the presence of support (Mohr et al., 2011). Telepsychiatry is considered an indirect supervised digital treatment that reduces the prevalence of stigma particularly present in psychosis.

Preliminary Criteria for Ict and Digital Services in Conquering Students' Mental Problems

The study aimed to derive criteria based on the examination of advantages and disadvantages of ICT treatments of students' mental problems that could assist in detecting, preventing, and rectifying students' mental health issues in HE. There are hardly any fundamental insights and actions regarding students' mental health issues in HE, and this may be caused by a lack of awareness, resources such as pedagogues and psychologists, and proper training of students in terms of mental health.

Researchers have recognized the current fragmented approach for understanding basic issues of mental health that usually appear during adolescent age and the use of appropriate ICT tools to assist with the underlying psychological problems. Researchers also discovered a widely spread stigma that prevents adolescents and students from taking early action as societies see mental health as a taboo theme that postpones early treatment. Furthermore, there is a missing awareness practice concerning interpretations of mental health issues, as well as a deficiency in the availability of an appropriate theoretical framework, and training programs, which may influence inadequate applications of ICT remedial measures.

Moreover, there are no detailed investigations into how ICT tools may detect early signs of hidden psychological turmoil how to determine the students' vulnerability to mental health problems, and also how to clarify the role of the diversities of human factors in the educational context. In this context derived criteria serve to guide students, educators, and policy/curriculum makers.

Consequently, the study derived criteria that were founded on theoretical perspectives (e.g., Radetic-Paic & Ruzic-Baf, 2012) and research on mental health in adolescents age (e.g., Pajevic et al., 2020). Research findings (Gilbody et al., 2015;

Kessler, 2015; Wild et al., 2016) provide a solid conceptual background for creating the criteria.

The results of this study were ten criteria

for the effective use of ICT and other digital services in treating psychological problems in HE (see Table 1).

There is an urgent need to guide the use

Table 1

Preliminary criteria for ICT use in HE in conquering students' psychological problems

Preliminary criteria	Preliminary criteria description
C1: Psychoeducation, awareness, and training	Psychoeducation, training for awareness, prevention, and early detection of mental health issues should be initiated in HE.
C2: Self-initiative and motivation for searching online help	The choice of appropriate digital services, and motivation to search for online help to minimize stigma, and reduce costs and time, should be supported in HEIs.
C3: The role of social media and computer games in social violence	Understanding the role of social media and computer games in mental health and the prevention of traumatic events such as sexual violence should be re-examined in higher education.
C4: The use of e-psychology for depression and anxiety	The effective use of e-psychology in synergy with ICT for assessment, therapy, or advisory services, should be an essential part of academic practice to invest in students' preparedness in recognizing and detecting symptoms of mental disorders such as depression and anxiety.
C5: Pedagogy of mental health	The pedagogy of mental health issues should be promoted among students in HE, to empower their critical insight into the use of ICT tools for psychological well-being.
C6: Telepsychiatry in treating psychosis disorders	Telepsychiatry as an indirect supervised digital treatment should be sponsored in, HE to save students' time, costs, and privacy provided implementation of data protection, ethical issues, and very professional standards.
C7: Psychological service of anonimity in sexual violance	Psychosocial assistance via web services that provide anonymity, a minor sense of shame and embarrassment, the feeling of independence and autonomy, allowance for freedom of expression, and the absence of a geographical or time barrier should be supported in HE.
C8: e-MH and real-time support for treating general psychological problems	Asynchronous support models in the form of e-mental health (e-MH) denote the use of ICT educational applications with telemedicine services and a synchronous approach that includes real-time support for a variety of psychological problems should be encouraged in HE.
C9: Online psychoanalysis and CBT methods	Psychoanalysis and CBT theories and their online applications should be addressed in depth in HE to improve students' knowledge and coping with depressive symptoms.
C10: ICT and social stress disorder	Promoting an understanding of social anxiety disorders that are critical in adolescence should be a priority in HEIs.

of ICTs regarding students' mental health which may serve to promote awareness and prevention measures in HE environments, and also for a curriculum change in HE regarding awareness of mental health issues in adolescents age so that students and educators are better informed, acquire knowledge about the first signs of psychological distress, ICT tools, and how to bypass social blocks namely, stigma as an unresolved societal problem. For this

purpose, derived criteria serve to guide students, educators, and policy/curriculum makers (see Table 1).

Discussion

This article argues that a lack of appropriate criteria for the use of ICT and digital media in treating students' psychological problems may prolong this social burden particularly when more

complex mental problems are involved. In this article, multiple ICT and digital media (e.g., e-psychology, digital (social) media, telepsychiatry, CBT, and psychoanalysis) (Gilbody et al., 2015; Matacic, 2018; Klein, 2001) were introduced as a theoretical basis and tools in assisting students with depression, anxiety, sexual violence, and psychotic symptoms. Although the ICT tools analysed in this study, are depicted as a separate technology, they interact in synergy, internet platforms allow the simultaneous use of multiple digital media that may influence and guide students' psychological well-being.

The research question seeks to determine the following: *What are the preliminary criteria for digital services use in supporting students' psychological well-being in higher educational contexts?*

The documentary analysis indicates the importance of pedagogical knowledge (C5), ICT literacy, awareness and training (C1), and awareness of social anxiety (C10) (e.g., Fernandez-Batanero et al., 2021). Thus, awareness, adequate ICT training, digital programs, knowledge of telepsychiatry, understanding of the appropriate use of computer games and real-time support, knowing the advantages of psychoanalytic psychotherapy using online tools, and critical knowledge acquisition concerning adolescents' social anxiety risk of falling victim to mental health reflect criteria C1 to C10.

Criterion C1 emphasizes training for awareness and psychoeducation and supporting students' effort and motivation to search for self-help (C3). Criterion C5 highlights the pedagogy of mental health that may serve as a critical aid to students, academics, and decision-makers in HEIs. Criteria C3 highlights social media and computer games for sexual violence, and C4 includes applications of e-psychology applicable to depression and social anxiety.

Telepsychiatry (C6) offers new visions for psychosis, while criterion (C10) promotes an understanding of social anxiety disorders. Criterion (C8) emphasizes the use of e-MH with synchronous and asynchronous treatments for a variety of psychological problems (Escobar, L., & Escobar, M., 2019; Paterson et al., 2019). All digital services should respect privacy, anonymity, freedom of expression, and independence (C7). The basis for most treatments is digital CBT and psychoanalysis (C9).

Derived criteria are not encompassed in the HE curriculum which weakens students' attentiveness to self-monitoring and proactive actions despite the widely existing stigma in HE and society. Furthermore, HEIs should be equipped with adequate ICT resources and opportunities for students to understand crucial issues of mental health (Valmaggia et al., 2016) and play a vital role in training, supporting, and coordinating actions for the early detection and prevention of mental health issues in coordination with psychological services and community.

Conclusion

The article explored theoretical and practical research viewpoints on the use of ICT tools in treating common mental problems namely depression, anxiety, sexual violence, and psychosis, that served as a basis for the derived ten crucial criteria of ICT use in, HE. An in-depth analysis and critical reflection of the literature, and current practices at HE reveals the following tentative conclusions:

- Multiple ICT tools and social media assist students with their psychological problems.
- HEIs should undertake preventive measures in collaboration with health services and develop programs to inform students about early signs of mental health issues in adolescents age and train students on how to choose appropriate ICT tools and digital media.

Action is necessary at higher education institutions (HEIs) in terms of curriculum change to initiate various ICT training programs for mental health prevention and rehabilitation purposes. Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the youth are the most defenseless concerning mental health due to a lack of knowledge, inadequate awareness, and training at HEIs. In summary, the following suggestions are offered:

This study produced preliminary criteria for ICT use and a comprehensive description of the use of ICT tools, and their justifications for HE that offered a deeper insight into mental health issues among adolescents. Derived criteria of current ICT tools should be applied in different real-world contexts as a building block for further examination of mental health issues in HE

environments.

Limitations, and Future Research Directions

The design of preliminary criteria for the use of ICT tools and digital media in assisting youths with mental health issues is based on a solid theoretical and conceptual framework, to clarify the complex social problem of mental health, which may be regarded as the originality and the value of this research. Additionally, this paper aims to inspire researchers to undertake further research on this topic, specifically the in-depth analysis of early signs of mental health problems.

The limitations can result from a lack of practical analysis of multiple ICT tools and techniques, their advantages, and weaknesses in treating a wide spectrum of mental health issues that usually occur in adolescents' age.

The conclusions of this study should be cautiously applied in HEIs because preliminary criteria need practical investigations and vibrant assessment procedures, to identify early signs of mental health issues that motivate students to take adequate steps with the assistance of ICT and the supervision of professionals.

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Does Ability to do Proactive Stepping Reflect Ability to do Reactive Stepping?

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

Stepping is the strategy used in standing to prevent fall. Reactive stepping is made when perturbed to fall. Reactive stepping is less assessed in clinical setting, instead, proactive stepping is assessed to measure the risk of fall. Reactive stepping is commonly tested in research settings. This study was done to find relationship between proactive stepping and reactive stepping in healthy adults. We found that proactive stepping ability did not reflect reactive stepping ability. The study suggests that outcomes of proactive stepping measures must be used with caution to understand individual's ability to do reactive stepping and prevent falling.

Postural control is the act of maintaining a position, and achieving or restoring a state of balance, in the event of loss of balance or during an activity (Sibley et al., 2013a). Falls occur due to a loss of balance from which an individual is unable to recover their posture.

Anticipatory postural adjustments (APA) are the first level of action by the central nervous system (CNS) to maintain postural control during an activity, or in preparation for a movement. When the APA are insufficient to maintain balance or posture during the movement, or when there is an unanticipated disturbance to posture, the CNS uses Reactive postural adjustments (RPA). These RPA occur when the line of gravity moves out of the base of support (Kanekar & Aruin, 2014).

Different assessment methods are required to assess APA and RPA. Mancini and Horak (2010) explored the relevance of the most commonly used clinical balance assessment tools to differentiate balance deficits. They concluded that commonly used functional clinical balance assessment tools, such as the Activities of Balance Confidence test, Tinetti balance and Gait test, Berg balance scale, and the timed "up and go test" were not developed to distinguish different types of balance deficits. These measures generally reflect APA and not RPA.

Stepping or creating a new base of support is the RPA strategy used in standing when perturbed to fall. The Tether release method and moving platforms are the common methods used in the research to test the RPA (Barrett et al., 2012; McIlroy &

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Maki, 1996). The method to provoke RPA in both methods are different. In the moving platform the base on which the subject is made to stand is moved to produce a RPA, which is similar to real life scenario. In tether release method the subject is made to lean forward/backward against a weight tethered to the waist of the subject. RPA is expected to be produced when the tethered weight is released suddenly. Usage of both these methods in regular clinical practice is limited due to the construction of the devices. Generally, stepping is assessed as voluntary stepping using methods like Choice Step Reaction Test. CSRT measures the ability to respond and step quickly. The test reflects the individual's APA component of stepping. A strong association has been found between performance in the CSRT and neuropsychological, sensorimotor, and balance measures (Lord & Fitzpatrick, 2001). CSRT-M is a modified form of original CSRT, which is easy to construct and use in clinical environment (Delbaere et al., 2016). We were interested to know whether assessing APA using measures like CSRT-M will reflect individual's ability to do RPA. Understanding this relationship between anticipatory and reactive elements of postural reactions will support the use of measures like CSRT-M in clinical practice to assess anticipatory component and reassure about the reactive stepping ability. Moreover, this will also help us to understand whether training stepping voluntarily is likely to improve reactive stepping ability to prevent fall.

In this study, we tested the relationship between APA in CSRT-M and RPA stepping in moving platform.

Materials and Methods

This study was approved by the institution's ethics committee (REF; CSP/19/NOV/81/367)
Healthy adults were screened for range of motion, muscle power, normal kinesthetics and exteroceptive sensation in the lower limb before inclusion in the study. Individual with any deficits or history of injury to the lower limbs that can affect the performance of CSRT-M and
stepping on the moving platform were excluded.
The process of testing was explained and demonstrated prior to obtaining signed consent for participation. Subjects were tested first with CSRT-M followed by forward stepping on the moving platform.

The CSRT-M was constructed using a thin flexible non-slip mat (80cm x 120cm) marked with two rectangular standing panels (28.5cm x 13.5cm) and four rectangular stepping panels (28.5cm x 13.5 cm), one in each front of each standing panel and one on each side (see Fig 1). The construction and measurement process in CSRT-M are based on a published literature (Delbaere et al., 2016). In the CSRT-M, verbal commands are used to instruct the step (i.e. place the whole foot) onto specific rectangle panels in a set sequence of 20 steps as quickly as possible. Subjects were asked to follow the instructions and place their foot in the relevant boxes. The left foot was placed in the left side boxes and the right foot in the right boxes. The stepping must be done as quickly as possible and the foot should be returned to the central boxes quickly.

The instructions for stepping were based on the standard commands given for the test. Trials were repeated if a participant stepped with the wrong foot or missed the rectangle by more than half of the foot. Out of a total 20 steps, the time taken for the last 12 steps was measured, with the first 8 steps used as a practice trial. Subjects were instructed to stand on the mat with their foot in the central boxes.

The instruction were: 1. side right, 2. side left, 3. front right, 4. front left, 5. side left, 6. front right, 7. side right, 8. side left, 9. front right, 10. front left, 11. side right, 12. front right, 13. side right, 14. Front left, 15. front left, 16. side left, 17. front right, 18. side right, 19. front left, 20. side left.

Figure 1.
CSRT-M mat

The moving platform was constructed with two wooden panels, such that one can slide over the other. The sliding mechanism was constructed with a channel on one of the boards to direct the sliding in one direction. The size of each wooden panel was 62 cm x 62 cm. (Fig 2, Fig 3). At the start of the testing the upper panel was moved forward over the lower panel. The channel permitted the upper panel to slide 50 cm forward. The subject was made to stand on the moving platform facing the therapist at the end of top panel. The therapist moved the platform towards the subject with his foot, quick enough to produce a forward step by the subject.

The subject was then asked to step out of the moving platform, and platform was reset. The subject was asked to stand on the platform again, and the procedure was repeated again. Three trials were done for each subject. The stepping was recorded for analysis, with the camera placed four and half feet away from the center (of length) of the moving platform, and the position of the camera checked for viewing angle to capture the full stepping. The camera recorded from when the subject moved on the platform till the subject completed the last trial. During the procedure another therapist or assistant was standing by the side to support the subject if they lost balance.

Figure 2.
Moving Platform – top view

Figure 3.
Moving Platform – side view

Data Analysis

The time taken to step in moving platform was measured with an open source software – Tracker© (version 5.3.1). The average of three trials and minimum duration of all the three trials were taken for analysis. The time taken for the last 12 steps in the CSRT-M was taken for analysis. The relationship between the step time on the moving platform and the step time in the CSRT-M was tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results

The correlation coefficient between CSRT-M and average step duration, and CSRT-M and minimum step duration were calculated. The correlation revealed a non-significant relation between the CSRT-M and reactive stepping on the moving platform.

Table 1.
Demographic profile

Male (n)	15
Female (n)	8
Age (mean years & SD)	45.2 (3.2)

Table 2.
Correlation between CSRT-M score and step duration in moving platform

CSRT-M	Average step time	Minimum step time	Pearson's r		p-value	
N = 23	N = 23	N = 23				
(mean seconds &SD)	(mean milliseconds & SD) -a	(mean milliseconds & SD) -b	a	b	a	b
37.3 (3.91)	.916 (.246)	.654 (.234)	.07	.15	.7	.4

p < .05. a and b columns correspond to
average and minimum step time correlation with CSRT-M.

Discussion

We found that the time for volitional or proactive stepping measured by CSTR-M does not correlate with the reactive step timing measured with moving platform. This reveals CSTR-M cannot reflect ability to do a reactive step, equally, the ability to do anticipatory stepping may not reflect individual's ability to do a reactive stepping.

The ability to do volitional stepping and reactive stepping appear to be different abilities of an individual. In volitional stepping, the individual has sufficient time to prepare and perform the task. In CSTR-M, although the stepping is done following commands from the therapist, there is no impending threat to fall, hence, the response is still under the control of the individual. In the case of stepping on a moving platform, the subject is given a threat to his control of standing to provoke stepping. In this occasion, the timing of response is crucial to prevent a fall.

Carty et al. (2015) conducted a 12-month prospective study with 200 subjects to assess whether the ability to recover from a forward loss of balance with a single step and concluded that reactive stepping behavior was an independent predictor of fall (Carty et al., 2015). The author recommended that exercise interventions designed to improve reactive stepping behavior may protect against future falls. To plan an appropriate therapy and assess the improvement, APA and RPA must be assessed with appropriate outcome measures and instruments in the clinical setting (Mancini & Horak, 2010; Pollock et al., 2000).

Borrelli et al. (2019), reported that perturbation provoked stepping reactions are less frequently used in clinical assessment of traumatic brain injury. Whilst manual perturbations are more commonly used, use of mechanical devices are more easily measurable and reproducible (Borrelli et al., 2019). Sibley et al. (2013b) studied the methods used to assess reactive postural control in the clinical setting by physiotherapists in Ontario, Canada, and reported that despite the availability of valid standardized measures, respondents relied primarily on non-standardized approaches and observational assessment.

Even though it is established that reactive stepping must be assessed to know the individual's ability to prevent fall, such assessments are done less frequently in clinical settings. Lack of time and environmental constraints were the common barriers limiting the relevant postural control assessment (Sibley et al., 2013a; Sibley et al., 2013b). Use of simple tools like a moving platform to assess step reaction is a feasible method in a clinical setup, as it requires minimal space. However, to measure time, the performance has to be video recorded or there must be addition of further technology to measure the time. The CSRT-M, which does not require major infrastructure requirement to assess stepping, is able to assess only volitional stepping, and could not reflect the reactive stepping based on our finding. Assessing reactive stepping in clinical practice is critical as it reflects individual's ability to prevent a fall. Tools like moving platform could be used wherever possible to assess reactive stepping.

Conclusion

An array of measures are available to measure APA compared to RPA. However, RPA is important to prevent falls. Hence, to assess ability of an individual to make effective compensation against a perturbation sufficient enough to un-balance towards a fall, the ability to perform protective stepping or RPA has to be assessed with appropriate instrumentation.

Author Contribution

SR: Designed the study, analysed the results, drafted the manuscript; KN: collected the data, identified references; SM: Analysed the results, edited the manuscript.

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Declaration of Interest

No potential competing interest to be discussed for this study.

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New Paradigm of Education: A Review on Analyzing the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Learning Through Animation Movies in English Language Classrooms

Professional paper

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Abstract

Vocabulary is often overlooked by educators, yet it is one of the most important aspects of language learning. It is essential for all four language abilities, as it is linked to writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Without comprehensive vocabulary knowledge, students may not be successful in acquiring English as a language. One potential way for English language students to improve their vocabulary is to use multimedia sources like animated movies. Animated movies can provide significant benefits to students by using visual aids that enhance comprehension and facilitate improved learning outcomes. This paper aims to understand the effectiveness of vocabulary learning and teaching through animated movies. This article investigates the efficacy and role of animated films in the acquisition of vocabulary. The articles reviewed for this paper focus on the development, analysis, and examination of animated movies for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the paper examines the research design, method, and theory that support the use of animated films in research. The review paper implies that animation films enhance vocabulary more effectively than traditional classroom settings.

***Keywords:** Animation movies, audio-visual learning, vocabulary learning, English language learning, English language classrooms*

Recent innovations in multimedia technology have helped to enhance the credibility of instructional materials by incorporating multiple modalities to support language learning. Multimedia provides both visual and audio treats for both the instructor and the learners. However, language classrooms are stretching their boundaries and entering the world of innovation. With multimedia, there will be easy access to materials, feasibility, and time management. According to Chapelle (2009), designers of computer-aided language learning assignments (CALL) must make linguistic items in the CALL input prominent to enhance input processing. These elements can be highlighted by enabling students to use their computers and access assistance options as needed. Multimedia annotations facilitate these interactions as they can highlight the text and offer multiple access points for language learners to verify the meaning of target words. With the help of multimedia technology, instructors and practitioners can caption audio content; captions can be posted online, such as on YouTube, or distributed through DVD

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software. Video captioning helps students visualize words being spoken, as this type of caption offers multi-sensory information that enables students to enjoy video action as well as written text while listening to the sound. Filmmakers use animation as a technique to give inanimate objects life (Smaldino et al., 2005). According to Walker (1999), video is an instructional technology that integrates images and sounds and is intended to teach languages in the classroom. According to Muniandy and Veloo (2011), animation is a particular language characteristic. Animated video is multimedia content that consists of both spoken and non-spoken presentations that present images as well as narratives of text on the screen. Media is a means of communication between speakers and consumers or recipients of information. This suggests that media can be used to assist instructors in providing students with information (Muir et al., 2016). The majority of educators use media to convey information to students. Therefore, pedagogical messages are conveyed through the media. Therefore, English language instructors who have access to vocabulary resources may utilize this medium. Lessons can become more creative and stimulating with the use of film media; with the correct selection of English films as learning media, students can develop the ability to observe all objects in the process, thereby increasing student interest and learning (Romadhon & Qurohman, 2018). Furthermore, films can be employed to teach both pronunciation and vocabulary (Romadhan & Qurohman, 2018).

Vocabulary is the first part of English that learners need to understand as they learn the language. It's one of the four elements that connect speaking, hearing, reading, and writing. To effectively communicate in English, students need to have enough phrases and be able to use them correctly. According to Rivers (1983: 125), "adequate education is the key to progress." Vocabulary is critical to the success of usage because, without it, you can't effectively communicate the language. With a large vocabulary, it's difficult to use the acquired language's components and roles for understandable communication.

The utilization of media such as films can have a positive impact on a student's vocabulary and understanding of the material. Media can help to captivate the learners and encourage them to remain engaged in the lesson. The film is a means by which both the language instructor and the student can communicate more effectively, thus preventing the learner from becoming bored with the lesson. Films are essential in motivating students to learn to speak and in providing a context for the learning process. Thus, animated films can be used to convey concepts, allowing students to interpret the plot of the films directly.

The Importance of Vocabulary Learning

English is widely regarded as a global language that requires proficiency to effectively communicate and stay informed of current advancements. The acquisition of language is significantly dependent on vocabulary since it serves as a fundamental cornerstone in the process of language learning (Hidayat, 2021). A vocabulary is a collection of words and phrases that Webster's Dictionary frequently interprets or defines. It might refer to a language, an organization, a person, a job, or a topic. Nonverbal symbols such as signs, gestures, stances, and way alphabet signals can also be described using this term. It can also be used to catalogue or collect phrases, symbols, trends, or norms, as well as to interpret an experience or express a concept or feeling (Onwuegbuzie & Abrams, 2021). Acquiring vocabulary, which is the fundamental component of language learning, is a time-consuming process. During this phase, students become acquainted with the words they encounter. Vocabulary acquisition is determined by the frequency with which it is used and the number of appearances in various forms and settings (Schmidt, 2001). The acquisition of English language skills holds significant importance in today's world, characterized by globalization since it enables students to effectively utilize technological tools. The level of proficiency in vocabulary can have an impact on an individual's communication skills. Individuals with a strong vocabulary have greater facility in arranging words into coherent sentences compared to those with limited proficiency in vocabulary.

Effectiveness of Animation Movies in Language Learning

The term "media" refers to the collective portrayal of individuals, things, resources, or events that help in the learner's acquisition of information, abilities, and perspectives. This range includes books, tapes, recorders, cassettes, videos, cameras, film, slides, photographs, pictures, graphics, television, and computers. Gagne (1970) defines media as a valuable educational tool, whereas animation movies are defined as components of a learning resource that possess the capacity to inspire and engage students in their language learning. Learning languages with animated movies is becoming more and more popular in English classes. Educational animation movies include a range of material objects utilized to convey subject-matter content. According to Heinich et al. (1982), animation is when a director gives motion to an inanimate object. Animation movies include audio-visual media, which is a great example of an audio-visual medium. They're a series of moving pictures and sounds that come together to create a sound that helps students learn and understand the concept. Animation movies are a type of dynamic representation that shows changing processes. Animation movies are important in education, particularly in improving the quality of learning. Here are a few examples of excessive interest or animation in education:

- Animation visually and dynamically expresses complex ideas.
- Animation captures students' interest and motivates them to learn.
- Animation is more effective than other forms of media in conveying a message.
- Digital animation can help with virtual learning.
- Animation is a more interesting genre for language learning.
- Animation engages attention, stimulates motivation, and promotes student thought.
- The visual and dynamic overload that animation technology provides might make it easier to implement or demonstrate concepts.

The fundamental benefit of employing animation films is that they assist students in understanding complex concepts. Oddone (2011) describes animated films

for language instruction as follows: a) they present real-world examples; b) they can be completely utilized under the guidance of the teacher; c) videos give individuals and places access to things, places, people, and events. Because it is fascinating for kids to comprehend "real things," authentic content is frequently incredibly motivating. Thus, animation movies can be used as a tool in the classroom for language learning. The pros and cons depend on how the teacher uses video as the medium in the classroom. Animation movies can be used to select appropriate videos, suitable subtitles, and audio that can provide some benefits or advantages to language learning.

Role of Animation Movies in Vocabulary Learning

English is a worldwide language that must be acquired to properly communicate and compete in the modern world. Students will struggle to communicate their ideas and comprehend subjects in English if they lack adequate vocabulary skills. According to Sayekti (2015), "vocabulary is a language's dictionary." The level of a person's vocabulary mastery can affect how they communicate; those with high vocabulary mastery will find it simpler to construct sentences than those with low vocabulary mastery. It means that to study English and make it simpler for you to demonstrate your language abilities, you need to have a large vocabulary. Vocabulary is the lowest unit of speech that people can process while talking and use to interact with one another, claim Astiyandha and Muchlisoh (2019). In simple terms, it's a collection of words for a language that speakers of that language may use. And because it's one of the keys to learning the four languages, it's very important in the learning of languages. Vocabulary learning is a significant part of language learning; as vocabulary improves, it helps with better performance in speaking and writing. Animation movies can beneficially help improve vocabulary. Animation movies are great for teaching because they show real-life English in real-life situations, so you get to hear different voices, different slang, shorter speeches, more stress, different accents, and different dialects. There are lots of benefits to watching animated movies, but

the biggest one is that you get to hear real spoken conversations with both language and paralinguistic elements like sounds and images. Without the text, which can be distracting, you have to listen to what the characters are saying (Abel, 2003).

According to Stoller (1988), watching films and videos is a fantastic technique for children to acquire English. Movies make the language simpler to comprehend; therefore, teachers can use them to teach all the necessary abilities. In his discussion on the roles of teachers, Stoller advises them to make effective use of films as teaching aids while they are still working as teachers. Animation movies are a fantastic technique to inspire students, especially when it comes to enhancing their vocabulary learning. Berk (2009, p. 3) lists out twenty learning outcomes for using animation films in the classroom, including the following: 1) grabbing their attention; 2) getting them focused; 3) getting them excited about the lesson; 4) building anticipation; and 5) energizing or relaxing them for the learning activity. 6) using students' creativity to enhance attitudes towards learning and subjects, and establishing connections with both students and teachers. 9) improving content memory. 10) improving comprehension. 11) encouraging creativity 12) encouraging the flow of ideas 13) encouraging more in-depth study 14) enabling the exercise of free speech 15) establishing a platform for collaboration; 16) encouraging and motivating students; 17) making learning enjoyable; 18) establishing the proper tenor or atmosphere; 19) easing tension and anxiety; 20) producing unforgettable visuals. Nevertheless, using an animation movie in the classroom can be an approach to providing flexibility and diversity while also helping students improve their vocabulary skills.

Method

To understand the development of vocabulary learning, it is necessary to conduct a literature review on animation movies. This review not only examines the related research but also confirms the uniqueness of the work in this field. The primary objective of the current literature review is vocabulary acquisition, its methods, and the research development instruments used in animation movies. Romadhon et al. (2022) proposed a study to assess the efficacy of using animated films to enhance English language skills, particularly vocabulary. Visual recognition, word meaning, and orthography are scored as vocabulary component points before treatment consisting of watching English animated movies. The participants in the investigation answered thirty pre-test questions. After viewing the film, they were given a post-test with the same types of questions as the pre-test. This study employed the one-group pre-test and post-test design methods. The t-test result showed that the animated film-based learning method was effective.

Siregar et al. (2021) present a study examining how animated media can aid in the vocabulary development of young children. In addition, they discussed the uses and advantages of animated media. This study primarily derives its arguments from document analysis. In document analysis, the instruction of English documents, articles, literature, and scholarly articles from online publications is included. The results demonstrated that students can readily recognize the given words when they are taught with animated videos that display both written and visual words. Munawir et al. (2022) conducted a study to determine whether animated films increase the vocabulary of MTs As'adiyah Putri Sengkang second-year students. The researcher employed a pre-experimental strategy and a pre-test and post-test design with a single group. The analysis of the data revealed major variations between the pre-test and post-test. The value of significance was 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The post-test average score was greater than the pre-test average score. The average grade on the final examination was 52.90. Based on the findings of the research and the evaluation, the author concludes that using animation videos as an instructional tool increases the learners' vocabulary.

The research conducted by Ridha et al. (2022a) demonstrates the efficacy of animated videos in the vocabulary acquisition of NTI students. The study employed an experimental design that involved 40 students who were selected at random. After administering a pre-test to all students, they were divided into two groups for treatment: one with an animated video and the other

without. Following the lesson, a posttest was given. Both bivariate and univariate analyses were performed. The post-test score for students who learned without animated video was 91, while the post-test score for students who learned with animated video was 98. The results of the bivariate analysis are as follows: Teaching with animated video improves comprehension, and assimilation improves English language acquisition. Animation movies made studying more engaging, improved vocabulary acquisition, and increased class interaction.

Permata (2022) investigates how incidental vocabulary is learned through the use of animated films, how learners learn incidental vocabulary with the help of animated films, and what factors influence students' success in acquiring incidental vocabulary through film viewing. Participating in the study were four eighth-grade students and one English teacher, using a qualitative case study methodology. The findings of this specific study indicate that certain students possess multiple vocabulary lists in their memories. This suggests that the students can learn both familiar and unfamiliar words. In addition, the accidental discovery of new vocabulary while watching animated films plays a major role in the acquisition of incidental vocabulary.

Lin and Tseng (2012), in their article, explain both still images and moving video in multimedia annotations. The goal of this study is to see if videos help English language learners learn difficult words more efficiently. The study design is a three-group, quasi-experimental, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test design. Ten keywords were chosen and inserted into a reading text. Each student's assignment was annotated in one of three ways: text-only, text and image, or text and video. In this investigation, three complete classes (a total of 88 students) were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups. All students completed a pretest (2 weeks before the study), an immediate posttest (2 weeks after reading the text), and a delayed posttest (2 weeks after completing the study). The study results showed a significant positive improvement with video group vocabulary learning.

Karakas and Saricoban (2012) experimented with 42 ELT (First Year English Learner) students enrolled in the university's English Language Teaching programme at Mehmet AKIF Ersoy (Burdur) who participated in the study. The 42 pupils were separated between two classes. One group uses subtitles, while the other group does not. Eighteen target words were given on a 5-point scale that was initially used to capture data from both participants. It was determined to administer both the pre-test and post-test group structures. The results of this study did prove that groups with subtitles outperformed groups without subtitles.

In Ridha et al. (2022b) research focused on improving students' vocabulary, At NPTI, the researcher examined the impact of animated videos on students' vocabulary acquisition. In the study designed to assess the primary hypothesis, forty students participated. Significant gains in vocabulary comprehension and learning outcomes are observed among students who are instructed through animated videos. The data was analyzed statistically using the paired sample t-test. A large proportion of students agreed with the findings of the study. Video with animation helps with integration. It makes studying more fun. It helps with vocabulary development. It improves English learning productivity. In addition, viewing animated videos improves students' comprehension and integrates terminology.

In this study, Lee (2015) used a corpus-driven analysis to determine the lexical needs of 70 animation films and to quantify how many families of words could be learned accidentally through watching animation films. For example, learners with a 2,000-word vocabulary could potentially learn 611-word families, assuming 95% text coverage is sufficient for understanding vocabulary from animation films. In addition, if comprehension requires 98% text, learners with a 5,000-word vocabulary that consists of 6,000-word groups could learn 213-word groups [6.75%]. It was suggested that watching animation films for long periods could often lead to significant vocabulary acquisition. Aziz and Sulicha (2016) explore animated films to be used as an educational tool to teach a class of 5th-grade students at a primary school specializing in the study of vocabulary in the Indonesian language (Banda Aceh). The purpose of the research is also to determine how students feel about using animation as an instructional tool. The results of the study indicate that learners who were taught vocabulary with the assistance of

animation performed better than those who were not.

Results and Conclusion

Based on the discussion, the article concludes that it is necessary to include multimedia materials such as text, audio, video, graphics, and animation in language classrooms. Multimedia plays an inevitable role in the process of learning and teaching the English language. Among the various multimedia combinations, the effectiveness of animation movies in teaching vocabulary is discussed in the article. Generally, movies are considered to divert students from their studies. Many inspiring social animation movies are readily available to engage and motivate people in a fun and effective way to learn English. Animation movies can be easily downloaded and videotaped. To use this facility inside the classrooms, an internet bandwidth connection must be arranged by the institutions. YouTube is the primary source for watching animated movies. Many other websites and applications are available for both paid and free downloads. From the review of the study, it is concluded that narrative movies motivated the learners to learn vocabulary. The activities used by the researcher were used effectively to teach vocabulary. Teachers must guide the students to use online platforms and watch animated movies to develop the English language. A well-planned design, action execution, and profitable results are needed when using animation movies in English-language classrooms. vocabulary. The activities used by the researcher were used effectively to teach vocabulary. Teachers must guide the students to use online platforms and watch animated movies to develop the English language. A well-planned design, action execution, and profitable results are what is needed when using animation movies in English language classrooms.

Recommendations

To encourage students to learn English vocabulary, they should watch animated films in the language class. In addition, apart from animation movies, English web series, CGI short films, and cartoon series can be incorporated into the classroom environment, which helps

students focus on learning new vocabulary. Language instructors should build their courses by including educationally relevant videos, films, and film clips. Language instructors must choose language appropriate for students' ages and preferences. Films with a well-thought-out teaching strategy that is carefully crafted to achieve specific objectives and goals.

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Speech Sound Disorders of Children With Mental Delays

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the speech sounds processes of children diagnosed with mental delays. Additionally, we explored all the sounds of the Albanian language, in level of articulation. We recruited 50 children, including 25 boys and 25 girls, with a mean age of 7.68 years. The results support the hypothesis that children diagnosed with mental delays are prone to speech sounds difficulties. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of possible risks in communication level is needed in order to address the needs of children with mental delays. Finally, this study is one of the first that investigated the phenomena of speech sounds difficulties in children with mental delays in Kosovar context.

Keywords: speech sounds difficulties, children with mental delays

How Speech Sound Disorders Can Be Conceptualized and Defined?

Speech sound disorders are known as the process of speaking which involves oral muscle movement, articulator movement (lips, mouth, teeth, jaw, soft palate, hard palate) in order to pronounce sounds (Bedore & Pena, 2008). Any dysfunction of oral muscle movement or articulator movement might result in communication or speech issues for a person diagnosed with speech difficulties.

Speech sound disorders are considered to be an important element of word formation and production. It involves acoustic signals produced by oral movements, hence any error in articulation is linked with articulatory apparatus (Fey, 1992). Consequently, articulation targets how the speech sounds are made, voice production, and fluency of speech. Thus, any children diagnosed with speech difficulties can follow articulation or phonological therapy with any licensed speech and language therapist (Lousada et al., 2012; Toki & Pange, 2010).

Speech sounds disorders are manifested when a child can't pronounce a sound or a group of sounds correctly (APA, 2013). Such difficulties represent the most common difficulties among children diagnosed with any speech disorder. They are more prevalent for preschool-age children, and usually are resolved by age 6 (Sices et al., 2007). Often such difficulties can be genetic, or caused by unknown factors (Toki & Pange, 2010). Genetic factors are determined by neurodevelopmental characteristics causing potential difficulties such as intellectual delays, hearing loss, autism, Down and Fragile X syndromes

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(Guerra & Cacabelos, 2019), corresponding with significant impairments in speech and language development (van der Meer et al., 2012).

Speech Sound Processes in Children With Developmental Delays

One of the main issues of children dealing with mental delays in general terms of speech and language production is phonological decoding of grapheme-phoneme connection. Hence this can also impact their decrease of social skills, writing skills, expressive and receptive language (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013). Speech sounds disorders become more evident when pronouncing different sounds while talking or having a conversation with others for multiple reasons such as; hearing loss, cleft palate, oral problems related to tooth decays, or tongue-tie known as ankyloglossia (Ramou & Guerti, 2014). The author, Memisevic & Hadzic (2013) found that children with mental delays are more prone to speech sound difficulties. More specifically, the majority of children diagnosed with mild and moderate mental delays had speech sound difficulties. The highest prevalence was found in children with Down Syndrome, followed by children with organic brain damage, genetic causes, and unknown etiologies.

Such difficulties have shown to be related with lower communication skills, which in turn impact people's educational and employment prospects, thus it provides less chance for social integrity (Bryen et al., 2007). Therefore, it became essential to advocate for improving communication skills of children with mental delays. Sutherland et al., (2014) also noted that this sample might deal with unfulfilled communication needs. Hence identifying possible risks that might contribute to communication problems attributed to speech sound difficulties remains an important mechanism in addressing the needs of children with mental delays. More specifically, the present study aims to identify the level of speech sounds difficulties of children with mental delays, and also identify how different group sounds are pronounced, in Kosovar context, and explore gender differences in this regard, we hypothesize that children with mental delays are prone to articulation difficulties

and that there is a gender difference in this aspect (*nondirectional effect*). Since there is no study that confirms that a specific gender is more prone to articulation processes in Kosovar context, we assume that such difficulties exist and are prevalent, but would like to explore the level of gender in this aspect.

Methods

Participants

Fifty participants were recruited, 25 of whom were females. The mean age of the sample was 7.68, SD = 1.73. We included children diagnosed with developmental delays such as lower level of reported intelligence (IQ). Participants from both urban and rural areas were involved. The mean age of participants was M = 7.68, SD = 1.73.

Instrument

We used the Articulation Test (Kacka & Poposka, 2022) more information can be found at Dukovska (2022) articulation test review, for measuring the articulation capabilities of the participants. The first section included demographic information such as age, gender, class, location, parents' job, number of family members. For the second section, we asked the participants to pronounce vowels, followed by consonants. The vowels and consonants are measured in three positions: Initial, Medial, and Final. In the Albanian language, the consonants are divided into labial (*p, b, m, v, f*), dental (*t, th, d, dh, ll*), pre-palatal (*k, g, h, c, sh, xh, zh*), palatal (*q, gj, j, nj*), and alveolar (*c, x, n, s, z, l, r, rr*).

Procedure

We only tested participants whose parents filled out consent form in advance. We informed them that their participation is completely voluntary, and they can leave without penalty if requested. The testing was done by professionals in the speech and language field, and it took around 25 minutes to complete. All of the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21. We performed t-test analysis to compare gender differences

on articulation level and correlation analysis to explore the relationship between sounds group in initial, medial, and final position.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics have shown that dental and pre-patal sounds were the most problematic ones in pronunciation. The "Th" sound, both at the initial and medial levels, is particularly challenging for pronunciation. Only 28% of participants pronounced it correctly, while a significant 72% struggled with pronunciation. The Dh, Ll, and K, sounds, found at the initial level, have similar difficulties, with only 28% of participants pronouncing them correctly. The majority, 72%, mispronounced these sounds. This indicates a common challenge in articulating these particular sounds and suggests that they may share some phonetic features that make them problematic. Lastly, at the medial level, G and SH sounds are challenging for 28% of participants, while 72% struggle with them. However, it's interesting to note that SH has a slightly better correct pronunciation rate compared to G at the medial level.This difference might indicate that SH is somewhat less challenging in this specific context. All of the descriptive statistics, with their respective positions, which were more problematic to pronounce are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Correct and incorrect pronunciation of dental and pre-palatal sounds

	Th (initial level)	Dh (medial level)	Ll (initial level)	K (medial level)	G (medial level)	SH (initial level)
Correct pronunciation	28%	34%	28%	28%	28%	38%
Incorrect pronunciation	72%	66%	72%	72%	72%	62%

Gender Differences on Articulation Level

The t-test analysis has shown that there is a significant difference between girls and boys in the articulation process only for palatial sounds. In all three levels, the p-values are p < .001, with higher pronunciation scores for girls. This suggests that there are substantial gender-related variations in the pronunciation of these sounds.

Table 2.
Gender differences on speech sound disorders

	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Dental Initial			.78	.38		
Boys	4	1.04			-.517	.60
Girls	4.16	1.14				
Dental Medial			.78	.38		
Boys	4	1.04			-.517	.60
Girls	4.16	1.14				
Dental Final			.78	.38		
Boys	4	1.04			-.517	.60
Girls	4.16	1.14				
Pre-palatal Initial			.70	.40		
Boys	5.64	.95			-.137	.89
Girls	5.68	1.10				
Pre-palatal Medial			.70	.40		
Boys	5.64	.95			-.137	.89
Girls	5.68	1.10				
Pre-palatal Final			.70	.40		
Boys	5.64	.95			-.137	.89
Girls	5.68	1.10				

Table 2.
Gender differences on speech sound disorders - continum

Palatal Initial			27.90	**.001**		
Boys	3.84	.37			-2.138	.03
Girls	4	0				
Palatal Medial			27.90	**.001**		
Boys	3.84	.37			-2.138	.03
Girls	4	0				
Palatal Final			27.90	**.001**		
Boys	3.84	.37			-2.138	.03
Girls	4	0				
Alveolar Initial			.23	.63		
Boys	7.04	.97			-.284	.77
Girls	7.12	1.01				
Alveolar Medial			.23	.63		
Boys	7.04	.97			-.284	.77
Girls	7.12	1.01				
Alveolar Final			.23	.63		
Boys	7.04	.97			-.284	.77
Girls	7.12	1.01				

Additional Results

We also explored the relationship between sounds groups in three levels (initial, medial, final). The results showed that there is a strong positive correlation within each sound category. This is expected, as a sound category will always have a perfect correlation with itself.

Additionally, there are negative correlations between dental, pre-palatal, and alveolar sounds. This indicates that as the pronunciation of one group (e.g., Dental) improves, the pronunciation of the other group (e.g., Pre-palatal) tends to decrease, and vice versa. Other effects are non-significant. More information is found in the table below.

Table 3.

Correlation analysis table

	Dental Initial	Dental Medial	Dental Final	Pre-palatal Initial	Pre-palatal Medial	Pre-palatal Final	Palatal Initial	Palatal Medial	Palatal Final	Alveolar Initial	Alveolar Medial	Alveolar Final
Dental Initial	1	1.00**	1.00**	-.472**	-.472**	-.472**	.091	.091	.091	-.349**	-.349**	-.349**
		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.26	.26	.26	.006	.006	.006
Dental Medial	1.00**	1	1.00**	-.472**	-.472**	-.472**	.091	.091	.091	-.349**	-.349**	-.349**
	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.26	.26	.26	.006	.006	.006
Dental Final	1.00**	1.00**	1	-.472**	-.472**	-.472**	.091	.091	.091	-.349**	-.349**	-.349**
	.001	.001		.001	.001	.001	.26	.26	.26	.006	.006	.006
Pre-palatal Initial	-.472**	-.472**	-.472**	1	1.00**	1.00**	-.099	-.099	-.099	-.195	-.195	-.195
	.001	.001	.001		.001	.001	.24	.24	.24	.08	.08	.08
Pre-palatal Medial	-.472**	-.472**	-.472**	1.00**	1	1.00**	-.099	-.099	-.099	-.195	-.195	-.195
	.001	.001	.001	.001		.001	.24	.24	.24	.08	.08	.08
Pre-palatal Final	-.472**	-.472**	-.472**	1.00**	1.00**	1	-.099	-.099	-.099	-.195	-.195	-.195
	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001		.24	.24	.24	.08	.08	.08
Palatal Initial	.091	.091	.091	-.099	-.099	-.099	1	1.00**	1.00**	.02	.02	.02
	.26	.26	.26	.24	.24	.24		.001	.001	.43	.43	.43
Palatal Medial	.091	.091	.091	-.099	-.099	-.099	1.00**	1	1.00**	.02	.02	.02
	.26	.26	.26	.24	.24	.24	.001		.001	.43	.43	.43
Palatal Final	.091	.091	.091	-.099	-.099	-.099	1.00**	1.00**	1	.02	.02	.02
	.26	.26	.26	.24	.24	.24	.001	.001		.43	.43	.43
Alveolar Initial	-.349**	-.349**	-.349**	-.195	-.195	-.195	.02	.02	.02	1	1.00**	1.00**
	.006	.006	.006	.08	.08	.08	.43	.43	.43		.001	.001
Alveolar Medial	-.349**	-.349**	-.349**	-.195	-.195	-.195	.02	.02	.02	1.00**	1	1.00**
	.006	.006	.006	.08	.08	.08	.43	.43	.43	.001		.001
Alveolar Final	-.349**	-.349**	-.349**	-.195	-.195	-.195	.02	.02	.02	1.00**	1.00**	1
	.006	.006	.006	.08	.08	.08	.43	.43	.43	.001	.001	

Discussion

After analyzing our data, we discovered that gender discrepancies exist in terms of speech sound proficiency. Specifically, our findings suggest that girls were experiencing more challenges with speech sounds, in contrast to boys. Girls were more prone to pronounce palatial sounds on three levels (initial, medial, final).

A similar finding was also noted at Ramou and Gerti (2014) study, conducted in Arabia. Even though the authors did not include children with mental delays, they found that girls were more prone to speech sound difficulties than boys.

Lastly, we calculated the difficulty of the sounds to articulate and found that the most difficult ones were (Th, Dh, Ll, K, G, Sh). These findings are consistent with Georgoulas et al., (2006) results. They conducted their study with typically developing children to identify which sound or phonemes are most likely to be mispronounced during articulation. Contrarily, to our sample targets, it is interesting to observe similar differences, in regard to speech sounds difficulties in both children with mental delays, and children with typical development.

The evidence also suggests that early intervention is crucial for improving speech and language development of children with mental delays. A study by Caselli et al., (1998) noted that children with mental delays, who benefited from early intervention showed significant language improvements in comparison with those who didn't. Interestingly, children who started therapeutical sessions before the age of three showed better language and communication skills than those who started later (Stoel-Gammon, 2001). This also emphasizes that the earlier the speech and language therapeutic intervention, the higher the chances for positive outcomes in language development. Speaking from a contextual viewpoint, professionals in Kosovo are still working on advocating the role of early intervention, hence it is crucial to emphasize the role of speech therapists and their importance of overcoming communication difficulties toward different samples.

Taken together, our results also provide practical implications for speech therapy interventions for children with speech sounds difficulties. Our data suggest that certain sounds are harder to produce, hence it also requires additional therapeutic support to achieve accurate articulation. Therefore, by targeting these specific sounds in speech therapy, professionals may be able to help children with mental difficulties to improve their speech sounds skills.

Additionally, the findings emphasize the importance of early intervention and ongoing therapy for children with similar difficulties, and mental delays, since it can help them achieve better communication skills, and improve their speech abilities.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

One of the main limitations of this study is not providing empiric information about why girls were more prone to palatial sounds pronunciation difficulties on three levels (initial, medial, final). Future research can be focused in this direction, and provide insights about pronunciation dynamics on palatial level, so more empirical information can be derived. Additionally, future research can also include different samples (e.g., children with disabilities, or children with typical development) and confirm if such patterns are similar in different samples. We also consider as an important limitation, not including a larger sample since it would provide a better understanding regarding the investigated difficulties that are specific to children with mental delays. Hence, upcoming studies might consider replicating our study with a larger sample size and provide further information on the field. Another limitation is not including additional variables. We did not explore if children benefited from speech and language therapy, and if yes, how long they are part of the therapeutic processes. Future studies can make a comparison between samples and investigate if there is a difference in speech sound level between children who benefited from speech and therapy sessions, and those who did not. Additionally, another limitation was not finding adequate resources on a national level. Our study is the first one, implying speech sounds difficulties of children with mental delays in Kosovo, and the possibility of making comparisons or further explorations was limited.

Conclusions

In conclusion, speech sounds difficulties are present among children with mental delays, impacting their communication skills and overall quality of life. From our findings, we emphasize the importance of early intervention which is critical for improving their communication abilities.

Therapy sessions should be designed based on the child's needs and requirements, and toward children with mental delays a professional collaboration is needed between the speech therapist, parents, and family. Therefore, by providing adequate support, children with mental delays can overcome their articulation difficulties and improve their quality.

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Need for Rational Thinking: Self-Identity and Social Intelligence of Indigenous Adolescence

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Abstract

After Africa, India has been a home for many indigenous communities who are still untouched by modern lifestyle. In particular indigenous adolescence is the one with the least exposure to the external world. There is a huge gap between how indigenous adolescence perceives them and how they understand interpersonal relationship with the non-indigenous group. Even though Government takes many initiatives they still hesitate to come out their comfort-zone and lagging in interpersonal relationship with non-indigenous people. Results found that rationality indirectly mediates the relationship between self-identity and social intelligence. Adolescence's who are taught to think rationally are better able to assess events using facts and evidence, which allows them to respond appropriately with a deeper comprehension of the circumstances through reasoning. So, rational thinking helps to reduce perceptual bias, conflict resolution between their group likewise improves scientific thinking and effective communication of indigenous students. Indigenous researchers should develop intervention programs to improve their rational thinking, which helps to enhance their social intelligence and most importantly they believe their own ability to make wise decisions.

After Africa, India is one of the nations with most significant indigenous populations worldwide. 8.6% of India's population is made up of indigenous people, who are spread out over the nation's territory and varied geographical areas with over 10.2 million indigenous people (Kumar et al., 2020). Most of the tribal communities reside in forested or hill locations and have less exploration in the external group. Over a century has passed since psychology began to explore indigenous mental health. In particular, psychological research on rational thought in this field of study only recently started, and it should have paid more attention to individual differences (Stanovich, 2016). To reason is to choose reasonable goals, behave appropriately in light of one's goals and beliefs, and maintain impressions that are reasonable with the available evidence. Although intelligence tests measure many significant aspects of thinking, they do not evaluate rational thought. Therefore, intelligence and at least some elements of rational thought are only weakly related. This statement applies to indigenous community who live in the separate settlement. Indigenous people live with their group in the forest area, which differs from non-tribal community. These communities are facing in-group and out-group conflict with others. Having biased thinking characteristic of rational cognition is notably unconnected to intelligence (Stanovich et al., 2013). This limited thinking plays a vital role when intergroup cooperation and coordination are

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the objectives. These group commitments can also result in more problematic psychological tendencies.

Psychologists believe that identity is created via an individual's interaction with their environment (Jenkins, 2014; Sharma & Sharma, 2010). One factor potentially affecting students' risky behavior is their social identity. Due to individual differences, people sometimes behave differently in social circumstances. These unique variations referred to social intelligence in psychology literature. The ability to comprehend others and act intelligently about others is referred to as social intelligence, a term first used by Thorndike (1920) to explain human behavior. Self-identity defines a combination of factors, including identity, honesty, and individualistic framework, that emerges and changes the adaptability and reorientation in a dynamic context (Ahuja et al., 2019; Branje, 2022; Schneider, 2007; Schneider, et al., 2002). Identity plays a vital role during adolescence (Shulman et al., 2016; Verhoeven et al., 2019), and it the first step in developing one's identity is to examine all facets of who they are, including their beliefs (Banales et al., 2020; Leeuwen, 2022; Perner & Roessler, 2011), ideas, emotional state (Demmrich & Wolfradt, 2018; Hatano et al, 2022; Haviland et al., 1994), and behaviors (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018; Barkley-Levenson & Galván, 2014).

Socialization was essential to identity formation during adolescence (Umaña-Taylor, et al., 2006). Identity and social-related factors play a vital role in the period of adolescence (Yamada, 2009). Previous studies also indicated that social-related factors such as social skills (Laksmiwati et al., 2022; Monika et al., 2021), Social presence (Zhan & Mei, 2013) and social awareness (Samuel, 2016) were positively associated with self. According to Pang (2020), a sense of belonging and social support is related to self-presentation. Indigenous people have a powerful sense of belonging to their particular group, especially adolescence in the stage of identity development. Studies found that the social intelligence of adolescence was significantly associated with study habits (Bhat & Khandai, 2016), academic class (Rani et al., 2019), and academic achievement (Isaac & Ikechukwu, 2019).

Many researchers considered rationality as a mediating factor of psychological variables (Ghorbani et al., 2016; Marshall et al., 2021).

Based on previous findings, researchers investigated indigenous adolescence' self-identity and social intelligence separately, but the association between indigenous self-identity and social intelligence has yet to be explored. Studies found that significant relationship between rationality and identity; Especially dimensions of rationality most characterize the identity (Branchetti, 2015) and rationality correlated to social intelligence (Burgoyne et al., 2022). Previous findings supported that rationality mediates the relationship between academic procrastination, life satisfaction and achievement (Balkis, 2013), mindfulness and dental anxiety associated with ration thinking (Yao et al., 2023). However, no previous studies examined the indirect effect of rationality in the association of self-identity and social intelligence of indigenous adolescence.

Aim And Hypotheses

This study investigates the association between self-identity and social-intelligence, and how that association mediates through rationality. Based on previous studies, the following three hypotheses framed with reference of Ramayah et al. (2016).
There will be a significant difference in Self-identity and social-intelligence of indigenous students.
Rationality mediates the relationship between self-identity and social-intelligence.
Self-identity has an indirect effect on social-intelligence through rationality.

Materials and Methods

Participants

Three hundred and eighty-four (384) indigenous adolescence from the Nilgiris district participated in this study (192 boys, 192 girls). The inclusion criteria are (a) Ages between 12 to 18 years; (b) participants belong to indigenous community (c) Informed consent obtained from the participants. Correspondingly, participants who did not volunteer for this study were excluded.

Measures

Socio-demographic information about indigenous adolescence age, birth order, family type and gender were gathered for this study.

Self-Identity

Participants' level of identity was assessed via 35 items Cheek and Briggs (2013) developed Aspects of Identity Questionnaire - IV used, which includes three subscales plus a set of "special" items such as 10 items of personal identity orientation, 7 items social identity orientation, 8 items collective identity orientation and 10 items of special items. Items are rated 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1 (not important to my sense of who I am) to 5 (Extremely important to my sense of who I am). The internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .78 (Balkis, 2013). This study found the inter-reliability coefficient was α = .71.

Tromso Social Intelligence Scale

The 21 items self-report Tromso Social Intelligence Scale 7-points Likert scale developed by Silvera et al. (2001) consisted 3 factors such as Social information processing (SIP), Social skills (SS), and Social awareness (SS). Reliability coefficient found from 719 participants was .83.

Shortened General Attitude and Belief Scale

To determine the rationality of the participants, Shortened General Attitude and Belief Scale (SGABS) developed by Lindner et al. (1999) was used. In this scale rationality dimensions are used to assess the rational thinking of the participants. In previous research, this shortened measure was found to correlate highly and significantly with the original version of the GABS (correlations for subscales ranged from .84 to .98). In addition, the SGABS has been found to be correlated with measures of trait anxiety and depression. The subscales of this measure were found to have moderate to high test-retest reliability and to have average levels of internal consistency Cronbach alpha values of .79 or greater.

Statistical Analysis

Analysis was conducted by using version 26 of the Statistical Package of Social Sciences. Normal distribution was verified and found to be expected. Descriptive analysis was used to find out the mean, standard deviation (SD) and percentage of the socio-demographic data. Pearson correlation coefficient was performed to assess the associations between dimensions of self-identity, social intelligence and rationality. A smart PLS is used to inspect the mediating role of rationality in the association between self-identity and social intelligence.

Using hierarchical multiple regression, the hypotheses describing the relationship between the variables (i.e., self-identity, social intelligence and rationality) and the mediating role of rationality were examined. The mediation model is becoming more and more common, and it plays a noteworthy impact in evolving knowledge in the field of social psychology and theory development (Bullock et al., 2010; Pieters, 2017; Wood et al., 2007) and also scholars from business, psychology and education have expressed their interest and special attention to this mediation effect (Memon et al., 2018; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple linear correlation analyses executed using SPSS version 26 software and mediation analysis was performed using Smart PLS software.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher submitted the proposal with questionnaire, consent form and researcher contact information to obtain permission from the Ministry of tribal welfare department in Tamil Nadu. With permission from the Ministry of tribal welfare department, data were collected from indigenous adolescence in the Nilgiris. Participating was optional; one could opt out at any moment.

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics Of Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the participant's gender, family type, Father and mother's education and occupation in this study. A total of 394 indigenous adolescence (Boys - 49.1% and Girls 50.9%), with ages ranging from 12 to 19 years (Mean = 1.71; SD = 0.951). Most of the participant's parents completed school-level education (Mothers = 69.45; Fathers 71.1%). Furthermore, 68.8% of participants belong to the nuclear family (Mean = 1.31; SD = 0.465). The majority of the participant's parents working as coolie/ daily wages (Mother = 68.2; Father = 76.3%).

Description of Self-identity, Social Intelligence, and Rationality

The mean score of self-identity was 3.79, social intelligence was 4.44 and rationality was 3.78. The dimension of unique identity has the lowest score compared to other dimensions; meanwhile, social identity dimension of social skill had the highest mean score compared to other scores.

Self-Identity, Social Intelligence, Rationality And Socio-Demographic Variable

Results show that mean score of Female (4.50), Joint family (4.49), Indigenous adolescence, father who completed undergraduate (4.83), mother (Professional course) had more social intelligence compared to other variables. Compared to the father's occupation, mothers who worked in the public sector (4.67) had more social intelligence.

Table 1.

Relationship between self-identity, social intelligence and rationality

Constructs	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Self-identity	Personal identity	1							
	Collective identity	.277**	1						
	Social identity	.323**	.313**	1					
	Special items	.321**	.502**	.388**	1				
Social intelligence	Social information processing	.058	.006	.069	.116	1			
	Social awareness	.013	.007	.150*	.063	.494**	1		
	Social skills	.144	.078	.203**	.098	.579**	.652**	1	
Rationality	Rationality	.233**	.348**	.242**	.245**	.287**	.188*	.243**	1

**significant at .01 level and *significant at .05 level.

Table 1 shows that bivariate analysis of the association between self-identity, =social intelligence, and rationality. Pearson correlation coefficient shows that self-identity dimension of personal identity is significantly associated with collective identity, social identity and rationality at a .01 level. Collective identity is significantly related to social identity, special items and rationality at the .01 level. Social identity significantly associates with special items, social skills, and rationality at a .01 level. Meanwhile, social identity is positively associated with social awareness at a .05 level. Special items are significantly associated with rationality at the .01 level. Social information is associated with social

awareness, social skills and rationality at a .01 level. Social awareness is associated with social skills and rationality at a .01 level. Social skills are associated with rationality

at the .243 level. The mediating factor of rationality is significantly associated with dimensions of self-identity and social intelligence at the .01 level.

Table 2.
Indirect Effect of Rationality

Steps	Path Effect	Independent variable (IV)	Dependent Variable (DV)	Beta	P value
1	Direct effect of self-identity on rationality	Rationality	Self-identity	0.378	0.000
2	Direct effect of rationality on social intelligence	Rationality	Social intelligence	0.279	0.000
3	Direct effect of self-identity on social intelligence	Self-identity	Social intelligence	0.029	0.000
4	Indirect effect of self-identity on social intelligence	Self-identity Rationality	Social intelligence	0.784 3.017	0.000 0.000

Table 2 displays the mediating effect of rationality in the relationship between self-identity and social intelligence by using SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2022). The predictor variable of self-identity, the independent

variable was social intelligence and the mediating variable was rationality. Multiple regression was conducted to find out the mediating effect of rationality.

Figure 1.
Path analysis of Rationality as a mediator in the association between self-identity and social intelligence
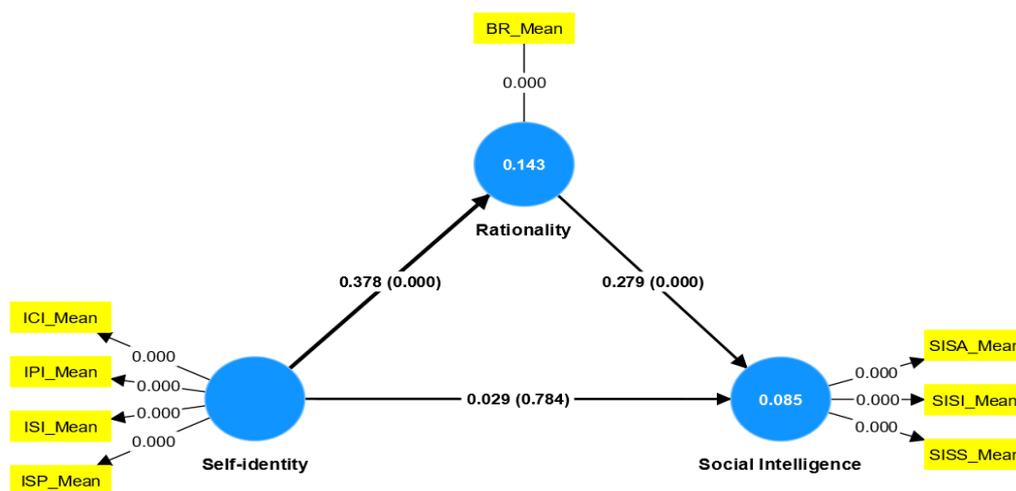
The first test of rationality was regressed on self-identity. Because, dimensions of self-identity significantly related to rationality. Results show that rationality is to be regressed on self-identity (beta = .378, p = .001). Secondly, Social intelligence was regressed on rationality. Since gender, type of family, education, and occupation of the participant's parents are associated significantly with social

intelligence. Findings show that social intelligence was significantly regressed on rationality (beta = .279, p = .001). Third self-identity was significantly regressed on social intelligence (beta = .029, p = .001). Finally, social intelligence was significantly regressed on rationality (beta = .784, p = .001) and self-identity (mean = 3.017, p = .001), respectively.

Discussion

Rationality mediates the relationship between the dimensions of self-identity and social intelligence. Therefore, the results supported to our hypotheses. Self-identity is a collective term that includes a sense of belonging in the social group to identify with the community (Ashmore et al., 2004). Especially people from indigenous groups had strong self-identity towards their social group (Powers & Sakaguchi, 2006). Previous studies found that adolescence's fundamental factor of self-identity significantly correlated to an individual's psychological integrity, mental health, and stability. In growing research in social psychology, identity in adolescence has been positively associated with life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2018), cultural identity, social and emotional well-being (Fatima et al., 2022).

The finding regarding the relationship between self-identity and social intelligence is similar to earlier studies (Falahi et al., 2020), which supported a self-identity dimension of social identity positively associated to social skills and awareness of the social intelligence dimensions. A person's interpersonal and social ties with other people are strengthened by social intelligence since it has positive and constructive aspects and functions. However, social awareness is the element of social intelligence that promotes proper behaviors in social settings and is a vital component in those with high social intelligence. People will feel more powerful and empowered and hence more socially trusted if they develop their social identities and make more social connections. Due to their interactions with society and increased knowledge and awareness of the community, these individuals feel more confident and are less apprehensive about joining it. On the other side, students who have not developed their social identities feel less optimistic due to apprehension about living in the social community and not understanding the community, as well as potentially a sense of helplessness in the face of potential issues. Of course, the contrary interpretation of this relationship is also possible. In other words, those who feel more trustworthy engage with society more and have stronger social identities. However, the wellspring of meaning and experience for people is their identity. Although each person may have multiple identities, the fact that these identities are all the same in society creates a solid foundation for social trust. Membership in social groupings is the source of social identity. According to certain studies, a person can have a social identity in addition to a global identity; these identities do not necessarily conflict with one another but can work together. And move in the direction of society's advancement (Akdemir, 2018; Thomas, 2019; Vincent Ponroy et al., 2019).

Lone and Khan (2018) also found that indigenous adolescence exhibit less patience while acting under pressure because of the social environment in which they have grown up, conditioning them for such action. Indigenous pupils are less cooperative, less able to communicate with one another amicably, and less able to consider all sides of an issue. The indigenous students lack self- and other confidence. They are less cooperative since it is difficult to believe what they do is proper or wrong (Acharya & Kshatriya, 2014). Due to less exploration of the outside world and maximum support and pampering of their family, we found no relationship between personal and collective identity and dimensions of social intelligence.

Meanwhile, Social identity of indigenous adolescence was significantly associated to social awareness and social skills of social intelligence dimensions. These findings also supported that social identity of students related considerably to social intelligence (Mikaeili & Ahmadi, 2022). As previously mentioned no relationship between personal and collective identity to social intelligence but through rationality there is an association between self-identity and social intelligence. Our findings also supported that rationality mediates the relationship between self-identity and social intelligence. Studies found no association between self-identity and social intelligence, but experiencing rational thinking positively impacts the association between self-identity and social intelligence of indigenous adolescence. The cognitive component of rationality mediates the relationship between the psychological element of self-identity and sociological part of social intelligence. According to Evans and Stanocich (2013), intelligence is a hallmark rationality behavior and plays a vital role in intelligence. Our

results also found that a positive association between rationality and social intelligence. Alexander (2000) supported a strong positive association between rationality and social intelligence. Furthermore, our findings showed that, a positive association between rationality and social intelligence. Branchetti (2015) studies show that rationality associate to identity determinants. Indigenous adolescence with rational thinking leads to impact their self-identity. Having specific thought like rationality may influence helps to understand them and resolve interpersonal conflicts (Baron, 2020; Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2004; Rafique et al., 2020). Our findings also specified that self-identity indirectly affects the social intelligence through the mediator of rationality.

Limitations

As our sample was focused on indigenous adolescence, this limited our applicability to other age-group indigenous populations. Future research should conduct the study with age group indigenous community. The research area of this study is in the Nilgiris, future research could aim at state and country-level indigenous populations to improve the representation of the indigenous community. We recommended longitudinal studies for indigenous adolescence so that we can explore their identity through their social connections.

Conclusion

This study explores the mediating role of rationality in the association between self-identity and social intelligence among indigenous adolescence. Findings supported the hypothesized structural model, indicating that rationality partiality mediates the relationship between self-identity and social intelligence. Rationality is an important cognitive component that improves social intelligence. Indigenous adolescence have a strong identity towards their social community, but they would not socialize with other community people. So, their identity did not impact their social intelligence. But with the help of rationality, indigenous people change their perspective toward society, creating high social intelligence levels. Indigenous psychology researcher should thoroughly understand their way of life so that government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and policymakers may implement the rational thinking-based program.

Acknowledgement

Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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The Intersection of Language Impairment and Rehabilitative Language Immersion in Autism: A Comprehensive Analysis

Professional paper

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Abstract

This paper discusses the literature on language acquisition in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), highlighting rapid changes in the field. Researchers in psycholinguistics are exploring language acquisition theories due to ASD's significant differences across language, social, and cognitive domains. The study highlights areas where knowledge is lacking and explores potential future directions. While pragmatic deficits are commonly associated with ASD, clinicians and researchers should consider phonological, morph syntactic differences and rehabilitation to change the condition of phonological errors, which impact language comprehension and production.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Behaviours, Language Acquisition, Language Impairment, Social cognition.

Language skills development is a unique milestone with a uniform course across children, despite differences in structure, intelligence, sociability, and culture. However, not everyone acquires functional language skills. Language delays or deficits indicate developmental impairments, aiding in understanding the process and highlighting the developmental trajectory of language acquisition (Pierce & Bartolucci, 1977). For both theoretical and practical reasons, it is essential to look into the atypical pattern of language acquisition in children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). This knowledge can be used to create interventions and treatments for these kids. Determine the prerequisites for language development in kids with typical development by understanding the atypical course of language development in ASD (TD). When researching childhood disorders, researchers should take a developmental approach and look at how the disorder develops over time (Curtiss et al., 1992).

The history of language development research is replete with debates between nativist and constructionist perspectives. Learners with language impairments are an essential source of information regarding the cognitive domains that influence language acquisition and the constraints on language acquisition. Important issues about domain-specific predispositions for language learners and domain-general mechanisms that may underlie language acquisition can be addressed by looking at language deficits, their causes, and the related strengths and weaknesses in non-language domains. Social cognition, attentional and learning mechanisms, the understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, and met representational abilities are some of the

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associated mechanisms and processes (Katz et al., 1992). The two main objectives of this article are to examine the evidence regarding language acquisition in the areas of pragmatics and discourse functions, phonology, the lexicon, morphology, and syntax in individuals with autism spectrum disorders, as well as what these findings suggest about language acquisition in the general population.

Autism is a group of diseases that affect how a person interacts with other people, how they talk, and how they understand what other people say. A third sign was that the person had limited and very regular motor behaviours and strange and persistent mental interests. ASD probably doesn't have a single cause, but there does seem to be a clear effect of hereditary differences and a large neural element (Landa et al., 1991). Language studies have utilized the "broader autism phenotype" to understand ASD and its impact on the brain. Infant siblings of individuals with ASD have been particularly helpful in identifying early signs and describing the autism phenotype. Research has shown that first-degree relatives of ASD may have less complex speech than those with other psychiatric disorders. Additionally, young brothers of children with ASD have a high rate of language delay, emphasizing the importance of speaking skills in presenting ASD in the real world (Kjelgaard & Tager-Flusberg, 2001).

ASD is primarily a condition affecting language and communication skills, with language milestones, particularly by age five, being highly linked to a long-term prognosis. However, there is a lack of research on the causes of communication problems and delays. Experts argue that language delays are mainly caused by a lack of social interest or reciprocity, and many early language studies were conducted before reliable diagnostic methods were available. This lack of empirical attention may be due to the fact that early language studies were conducted before there were strict, reliable diagnostic methods, potentially involving individuals who were not strictly "autistic" (Dahlgren & Gillberg, 1989).

The high-level deficiencies in pragmatics, discourse, prosody, morphology, syntax, phonology, and phonetics that are present in ASD are discussed in this paper. It examines studies on language development in ASD and its implications for language learning. Reviews are organised by topic in a different sequence.

Linguistic Forms in Asd

Language difficulties in individuals with Asperger's syndrome (ASD) are often linked to deficits in social motivation, while fundamental language skills like phonology and morphology remain intact. Research indicates that language impairments are present in the majority of individuals with ASD, including deficits in pragmatics and discourse processes. Early studies suggested that around 50% of affected individuals never acquire functional speech, while more recent estimates reveal a smaller proportion of non-verbal individuals. The average age at which children with ASD generate their first words is 38 months, compared to 8-14 months for children with TD. Recent studies suggest that children with autism exhibit a greater degree of developmental scatter, producing less predictable grammatical structures based on previous productions. Differences may be due to methodological factors, such as the use of spontaneous versus structured tasks (Eigsti et al., 2007).

Atypical traits and domain-specific deficiencies in language output are hallmarks of ASD. Echolalia, or the immediate or delayed imitation of language from conversational partners or media like cartoons or television, is a common behaviour among young children (Tager-Flusberg & Calkins, 1990). In a longitudinal study of children with ASD, Down syndrome, and TD, Tager-Flusberg and Calkins (1990) found that spontaneous utterances of children with ASD were longer and contained more advanced grammatical constructions than imitated utterances. Echolalia, which may not aid in grammatical development, appears to have some communicative function. Over 33% of echolalic utterances generated by children in Prizant and Duchan's sample had a turn-taking function, and 25% had a declarative function. Additionally, individuals with ASD frequently create novel words (neologisms), often with idiosyncratic meanings. This suggests that individuals with ASD exhibit linguistic forms (echolalia, neologisms) that are not observed in children with typical development, at least not with the same

frequency or late in acquisition.

Less Exposure In Pragmatic Functions

The study of language in its social context, or "pragmatics", is central to the study of communication and human interaction. Pragmatics includes both linguistic and non-linguistic functions, including register (changing one's speech depending on whom one is speaking to), turn-taking negotiation, and referential expression choice ("a" versus "the"). The term "discourse", which refers to more extensive chains of thought in a speaker's words, is similar. The development of language skills in children is long, with an asymptote around age five. Pragmatics and discourse are socially motivated domains, requiring speakers to respond to the listener's social status, knowledge, interest, and motivation. Children with ASD who no longer fit the criteria for a diagnosis still face difficulties in speech and pragmatics (Kelley et al., 2006). Studies indicate that individuals with autism use formal language and odd phrasing, known as "Little Professor" communication, for precise and precise communication (Rutter & Schopler, 1992). A lack of expertise in peer relations may account, at least in part, for pragmatic deficiencies. Children who prefer to connect with adults may develop speech patterns and vocabulary more characteristic of adults than those of their own age if they lack exposure to peers.

Both discourse and pragmatics require familiarity with language structure and an awareness of how to put that knowledge to use in conversation. Tager-Flusberg and Anderson found that six children with ASD were less receptive to discourse than their counterparts with Down syndrome (Tager-Flusberg & Anderson, 1991). This deficit lasted for an entire year. Cohesive connections of reference, in which different portions of a sentence point to the same object, were utilised less frequently by children with ASD compared to those with SLI and TD, whose mean utterance length was comparable (Baltaxe & 'sAngiola, 1996). When a conversation breaks down due to a misinterpretation or a lack of clarity on the referent, the participants will engage in conversational repair to get back on track. The repair process typically begins with a request for explanation from the listener; the original speaker must utilise both linguistic and social skills when responding to a request. Typically, children with MR develop this skill by age 5, with older children demonstrating a wider variety of repair procedures and generating more data. However, children on the spectrum struggle frequently to correct misconceptions. Compared to language-matched control children, Volden discovered that the ASD group was able to respond to communication failures using a variety of strategies and by adding more information. The ASD group, however, made more inappropriate remarks (Volden, 2004).

Multiple studies have shown that people with ASD have significant issues with speech, particularly in their ability to react to inquiries and remarks. These impairments persist throughout adulthood (Eales, 1993). Ozonoff and Miller compared the levels of spontaneous speech in 17 Asperger's (AS) and 13 high-functioning autism (HFA) children (mean age, 16 years). There was no correlation between age, narrow interests, or IQ and the prevalence of pedantic speech, which was present in about 76% of the AS and 31% of the HFA group. Comparatively to their peers of similar age and IQ, people with ASD have difficulty understanding indirect requests, laughing, and drawing conclusions (Ozonoff & Miller, 1996). Several studies point to difficulties with narrative discourse, an extension of conversational discourse. Capps, Losh, and Thurber found that 13 children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and a developmentally delayed control group were less likely to identify the causes of characters' internal states during a story-telling task compared to TD controls. The study also found that discourse skills were more strongly linked to the ability to recognize different mental representations and identify the motivations and causes of another person's emotional or mental state (Capps et al., 2000). Children with ASD were also less able to construct clear, explicit links across story events, and story connectedness was not significantly related to recall of the story's "gist". Even high-functioning children with ASD struggled to explain the story's causal structure, discuss characters' motivations, and misunderstand what was happening. Narrative ability is

vital for communication and the structure of one's own thinking. Research has shown that autistic people have difficulties with pragmatics, and cognitive limitations may be as limiting as social delays for language development.

Why do people with ASD often struggle at higher levels of pragmatics and discourse? In the research, two main hypotheses have emerged. The "Theory of Mind" approach has had a significant impact on how we think about autism spectrum disorder (ASD), with some suggesting that difficulties in imagining what other people are thinking are at the heart of the disorder and may place a severe limit on a person's ability to use pragmatic language (Baron-Cohen, 1988). An additional factor may contribute to functional limitations in pragmatics and conversation. It is the goal of the "executive functions" (EF) hypothesis to shed light on the underlying difficulties associated with ASD. In a nutshell, the EF hypothesis proposes that deficits in a group of mental operations linked largely to the frontal lobes' functional circuits underlie ASD. Symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), such as social deficits, communication delays, and repetitive behaviours, may be explained by impairments in executive functioning (EF), which includes processes like working memory, inhibition, set-shifting, goal-maintenance, and cognitive control. The inability to process information from many sources (self and others, for example) or to suppress incorrect, powerful, or prominent emotions may explain why children with autism struggle with pragmatic and conversational tasks. Despite the theory's plausibility, research on the function of EF in pragmatic abilities is mixed. ASD individuals with high or low functioning tend to struggle with pragmatics. Research on social skills, communication, and repetitive behaviors has not yet supported the Mind or EF hypotheses, leaving the question of their explanation open.

Prosodic Abnormalities

Prosody, which includes things like rhythm, stress, and intonation, is closely related to pragmatic skills in both production and understanding. Research indicates that prosodic deficits are prevalent in children with ASD (Rutter & Schopler, 1992). A matched sample of children with language difficulties, including HFA or AS, was analyzed by Shriberg. Misplaced lexical emphasis, slower phrasing, and reduced resonance characteristics were some of the indicators suggesting the ASD group utilised less acceptable prosodic phrasing. While the ASD group did have more utterances classified as "loud", the average pitch and loudness of their speech were within normal limits (Shriberg et al., 2001).

According to a study comparing 31 high-functioning ASD children with 72 typically developing children, the ASD group performed worse on 11 out of 12 prosody subtests. Diehl examined prosodic understanding in ASD by contrasting 22 TD controls of the same age, IQ, and PPVT scores with 21 adolescents with ASD. The ability to employ prosody to clarify grammatical meaning was significantly reduced in those with ASD. Prosodic production and understanding have both been shown to be challenging for people with ASD, although further study is needed to determine why this is the case (Diehl & Paul, 2013).

Syntactic Development In Asd

Syntax is the study of how sentences are constructed from individual words. As such, it's possible that it's the most difficult of the four primary areas of language study. Despite some delays in learning, people with ASD had rather normal syntax. In the 1970s, research showed that children with ASD struggled with learning syntax. Three verbal children with autism, compared to MR and younger TD controls, had poorer production of past-tense verb forms, indicating a deficit in "deictic" syntactic categories. Children with ASD had a harder time understanding transitive verb sentences and relied less on word meanings. They also had a reduced capacity to use syntactic information in their speech, producing fewer transformations, and generalized transformations and having a higher mean mistake rate than control groups. Additionally, they had worse overall scores on a syntactic complexity test (Pierce & Bartolucci, 1977).

The abnormal syntactic development in ASD has been repeatedly demonstrated

in studies, but conclusions must be qualified by the wide range of autism diagnoses at the time. Due to the fact that their performance is at the level predicted by IQ or other mental age measures, research suggests that syntax damage in autistic children with ASD is not unique to these individuals. Similar to typically developing children (TD) who have similar core language scores, they might use syntactic knowledge to create original verbs. Children with ASD have a smaller syntactic repertoire and fewer closed-class words than children with Down syndrome. When comparing children with autism, schizophrenia, or other emotional issues, no appreciable differences were found in their capacity to narrate stories, repeat sentences, or finish stories.

When compared to mentally age-matched TD controls, clinically impaired people speak less complexly, but ASD participants speak as complexly as dysphasic people (Waterhouse & Fein, 1982).

Individuals with ASD suffer from syntactic deficits. A study compared high-functioning children with ASD to typically developing controls, finding that younger participants had a longer mean length of utterance. Roberts, Rice, and Tager-Flusberg found that those with lower IQs were just as disadvantaged as those with SLI, and performance was connected with non-word repetition abilities. They concluded that there are likely two distinct forms of ASD, one with features similar to SLI, and the other without (Roberts et al., 2004).

Research indicates that children with ASD produce language with a rigid grammatical structure and fewer syntactic structures. In a study by Eigsti, older children with autism showed decreased ability to determine sentence grammaticality compared to TD controls. When it comes to the third-person singular and present progressive marking, Eigsti and Bennetto found a link between executive function skills and syntactic distinction knowledge in kids with autism spectrum disorder (Eigsti & Bennetto, 2009). Despite varying opinions on the degree of this delay, the majority of research points to a noticeable lag in syntactic development in children with ASD. A study found that reciprocal attention accounts for 89% of monthly syntactic complexity growth rates, indicating that social and cognitive aspects significantly

impact developmental progress. Cognitive ability in preschool accounts for the largest proportion of variability in language and social skills at school age. However, abilities at school age were not strongly predicted by preschool social abnormalities or the severity of symptoms (Stevens et al., 2000).

Limited Morphological Development

Morphemes are the fundamental building blocks of language, and morphological development is the study of how and why these smallest meaningful units of language are constructed into words. The morpheme ''jump'' is used in many ways to create new words and modify existing ones; for instance, in the words jumper, jumped, jumps, jumpy, and long jump. Children with TD are significantly impacted by probabilistic and rule-based restrictions on the integration of morphemes into words, including neighborhood restrictions, phonological characteristics, and item frequency. Despite the paucity of research on morphological development in ASD children, it appears that they acquire morphological rules in a manner similar to that of typically developing kids. Twelve autistic boys were found to use the same nine morphemes in their spontaneous speech as dysphasic controls but with more aberrant and echolalic speech (Cantweil et al., 1978).

In contrast, 10 children with ASD (mean age 10), when compared to typically developing and developmentally delayed control groups of similar mental age, were more likely to omit obligatory morphemes. Bartolucci, Pierce, and Streiner interpreted this finding as possibly reflecting a specific delay in morpheme production (rather than a general language delay). These contradictory results may highlight the value of control groups; while an ASD group may seem to have syntactic deficiencies when compared to a sample matched on total mental age, these deficits are not noticeable when compared to a population with language impairment (Bartolucci et al., 1980). Churchill hypothesised that youngsters on the autism spectrum have trouble understanding functors like prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns. As a result, investigations of morphological development in children with ASD have produced conflicting results and might benefit from more investigation,

especially given that they were all undertaken before the introduction of the present diagnostic system (Churchill, 1972).

Semantic Processing in ASD

Knowing the meanings of words and how they map onto the real world is just as important as understanding the structure of language, which is what studies of syntax focus on. That's what we call the science of words. Research into ASD people's semantic processing has shown wildly divergent findings.

Research has shown that children with ASD benefit less from syntactic relatedness and coherent sentences compared to their typically developing (TD) control group. They can use word order to enact passive and active sentences and are less affected by the semantic probability of real-world events. Autistic children incorporate syntactic information into their enactments of spoken phrases but are less influenced by semantics than controls. This is consistent with a study by Hermelin and O'Connor that children with ASD did not outperform a typically developing (TD) group on memory tests using sentences or word lists. Further study is needed to understand if people with autism use semantic information to interpret syntactic structure differently than normally developing individuals (Hermelin & O'Connor, 1970). According to recent studies, young children with ASD (mean age 33 months) can learn new words and associate them with new objects at the same rate as typically developing (TD) kids who were matched on language at the first appointment. By the age of 24 months, the TD group had a strong bias against learning new words through form. In word learning for older kids and teenagers, it was discovered that both ASD and TD groups frequently used the mutual exclusivity bias. Children with ASD demonstrated the bias that category labels apply to sets of objects that are mutually exclusive, enabling them to effectively map novel terms onto novel and unnamed objects. The reason why children of school age exhibit a mutual exclusivity bias while toddlers do not exhibit a shape bias may be due to the domain-specificity of these biases as opposed to their linguistic nature or the delayed and extended developmental trajectory of ASD (Tek et al., 2008).

According to the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, it has been discovered that receptive vocabulary strength is higher in children with autism, particularly when compared to standardised syntactic tests. Research indicates that children with ASD struggle with understanding the meanings of verbs, implying their interior mental state. They are more likely to use non-standard vocabulary on word fluency tasks, such as "aardvark", compared to children aged 4 to 9. Visual priming effects remain unaffected in ASD. Children with ASD have a different understanding of mental state verbs and semantic organization compared to their typically developing peers, despite performing at or above their mental age on standardized vocabulary tests and appearing age-typical in their lexicon size (Kamio et al., 2007).

Articulatory Problems

Phonology, which describes how a speaker arranges the sounds of a language to encode meaning, intersects with phonetics, which deals with the actual production and articulation of speech. Since it has been demonstrated in numerous clinical investigations that phonology is sensitive to neurological abnormalities, phonology is an excellent area of study for ASD (Culbertson & Tanner, 2001).

Several studies have demonstrated that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in children of various ages has no impact on phonology. In both structured and unstructured speech contexts, Bartak, Rutter, and Cox discovered that ASD children had fewer articulatory difficulties. In comparison to controls with SLI, 89 children with high-functioning ASD showed comparable findings. The Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation findings for both groups fell within the normal range. On the GFTA, those with the lowest PPVT scores performed the worst, but this was not true when groups were separated based on IQ into impaired and non-impaired individuals. The area of language development least impacted by ASD in children is phonology (Bartak et al., 1975).

Research has shown that individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have significant phonological difficulties. A study of 9 children with ASD found lower scores on the Edinburgh Articulatory Scale

compared to typically developing children and children with MR. A study comparing 80 children with ASD between the ages of 9 and 10 showed higher phonological impairments. A study comparing 30 people with HFA or Asperger's to 53 age-matched controls showed a higher prevalence of articulatory and speech impairments in the ASD group. About 23% of school-aged children with autism demonstrated substantial impairments in expressive phonology (Rapin et al., 2009).

Studies reveal that while most people with ASD do not have any particular deficits, low-functioning individuals with autism often experience difficulties with phonology and/or articulation, especially in early childhood. On the other hand, it's possible that just a subset of people on the autism spectrum have difficulties with phonology, while the remainder follow a more or less conventional course of development in phonology.

Motivational And Attentional Issues

Due to challenges with motivation and attention, persistence, and computer-administered testing, it is difficult to generalise linguistic and communicative skills in autism. Children with ASD might perform better in computer-assisted tests, although findings from standardised tests and spontaneous speech samples might vary. Children who are not receptive may not accurately reflect their underlying talents. The challenge of selecting appropriate variables and control groups makes ASD research tough. In the past, researchers frequently contrasted homogenous control groups with heterogeneous ASD groups using mean IQ. However, researchers are now in favour of a higher cutoff of group differences that are no more than 20 points and similar ability ranges. Also, it can be helpful to choose several control groups, such as one that is matched on verbal IQ and age.

Examining people with PDD, high-functioning autism, or Asperger's syndrome raises questions about differences on the autism spectrum. Researchers must describe their samples and offer thorough diagnostic details about the ASD population. To study how IQ, language, and social deficits interact, a homogeneous sample may be preferred. Current research has tried to

distinguish between people with ASD who have noticeable language problems and those who don't. Understanding the origin or phenotype of certain autism-related illnesses can be aided by taking into account the generalizability of findings across the full spectrum. By taking a broad view of abilities, the "individual differences" perspective enables the investigation of skills' correlations, predictors, and precursors (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003).

Pragmatic Functions and Discourse Functions in Language Acquisition

In contrast to earlier studies in ASD, which revealed abnormalities across several language domains, most recent analyses concentrate on deficiencies in discourse and pragmatic processes. Inadequacies in many facets of language use are increasingly being discovered by researchers, exposing a pattern of strength and weakness in social and cognitive processes. Understanding the effects of these processes can be aided by identifying these patterns.

Facilitating the Mind and Skill

The decoupling of language, social, and cognitive skills in ASD is challenging to understand. It is possible that one process influences another, which then reinforces or promotes the development of the first. For example, cognitive level influences initial language input, with higher-functioning children having greater attentional capacity. Verbal skills may facilitate the growth of theory of mind capacity, which in turn promotes effective social interactions and language skill development. Separating individual contributions from these interdependent processes presents a challenge (de Villiers et al., 2021).

Working memory, attention, inhibition, theory of mind, and low-level perceptual abilities are just a few of the capacities that will need to be carefully broken down into their most basic (and operationalizable) parts in order to address these issues. Additionally, large enough sample sizes will need to be collected in order to determine the relative contributions of different factors to variance. Also, this strategy requires strong analytical methods that can assess development over time.

Impaired Performance on the Implicit Learning Task

There is a lot of curiosity about how statistical regularities in language could aid in learning a new language right now. Little is known at this time regarding whether or not children with autism may employ statistical characteristics of language differently than typically developing youngsters. People with autism had considerable difficulties with an implicit learning test; however, Barnes observed no changes in implicit learning using functional neuroimaging (Barnes et al., 2008). One such area where this type of learning system might be put to use in language acquisition is in the study of the interplay between linguistic competence, implicit learning, and the recognition of linguistic regularities.

Autism In Nonverbal Children

Approximately half of those diagnosed with autism will not acquire any usable verbal language abilities, according to earlier estimates. However, recent advances in diagnosis and early intervention have increased the likelihood that more children will go on to develop verbal abilities, but precise numbers are not yet available. The potential exists to dramatically advance our understanding of the probable hurdles to acquisition by studying this cohort of children who can learn language only with rigorous early therapy.
This can be accomplished through intervention studies, in which targeted abilities are systematically taught with their potential ripple effects. More generally, intervention studies allow researchers to evaluate the effect of improvement in one (perhaps non-linguistic) area, like executive functioning, on another (possibly linguistic) domain, like language acquisition. Fisher and Happe say that some early work in this area has been very encouraging (Fisher & Happé, 2005). The rehabilitation model can be applied not only to change the condition of phonological errors but also to maintain communication awareness and acquire a language.

Conclusion

To conclude, the domain of autism spectrum research is a rapidly-evolving and stimulating area within the fields of psychology and education, characterised by advancements in fundamental scientific knowledge and practical clinical applications. Language acquisition researchers have increasingly focused on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as a subject of study. This is due to the potential for investigating significant variations in language, social, and cognitive abilities across a broad spectrum of domains associated with this disorder and related conditions. Consequently, it has functioned as a type of "inherent laboratory" to investigate various hypotheses of language acquisition by applying the rehabilitation model not only to change the condition of phonological errors but also to maintain communication awareness. Simultaneously, there exists a temptation to disregard certain nuances in performance and aptitude that are inherent in dealing with a developmental disorder, which may not always manifest in a tidy and predictable manner. The manuscript analyses current research on language development in people with autism spectrum disorders, examines potential developmental ramifications and outlines promising research directions.

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The Power of Education: How Individuals and Organizations Shape the Future

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Abstract

This article aims to explain and empirically prove that human resource management processes and practices influence individual and organizational performance, significantly contributing to the advancement of education in an organizational context. The reliability test was used to measure the level of internal consistency of the construct; Correlation analysis and OLS regression models were used to test the hypothesis. Questionnaires were distributed to 607 employees from 41 companies. The analysis shows that individual and organizational performance grew proportionally to the human resources selection process. There was a strong correlation between individual performance and education/training; a weak correlation between employee compensation and organizational performance; and a moderate correlation between individual performance and career development. Variables such as workforce competencies, motivation, and effective work structures had a strong effect on organizational performance. Based on the findings, we strongly recommend and encourage all companies in this study and beyond to develop a strategic plan to successfully guide their employees and implement processes and practices that improve individual and organizational performance, thus enhancing education in the business context. In the Balkan countries, especially in Kosovo, there is a lack of research on human resource management practices and processes. Therefore, this study will assist organizations in their efforts to improve HRM processes and practices, contributing to a better understanding and implementation of education strategies in organizational settings in this region.

Keywords: HRM processes and practices, individual performance, organizational performance, education, future

Important in this paper is the objective which aims to highlight the importance of human resource (HR) processes and practices for individual and organizational performance. Since the success of an organization depends on skills and abilities, HR practices and processes play a crucial role in employee commitment.

Armstrong (2006) defined HR and (HRM) management as: "for the management of the most valuable assets of an organization, which are the people who work individually and collectively and contribute to the goals, a state-wise and coherent approach is used". Today, HRM-related issues are fundamental to the economy of every country.

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Organizations should make the utmost effort to employ people with the right skills. Human resource management and performance have been widely researched (Guest, 1997).

Addressing HRM concerns within the organization requires academic and scientific support. The present study has considerable value, given the importance of HRM and the lack of research on the subject in Kosovo. It also provides the basis for further investigations. Effective HRM practices and processes are indispensable for good organizational performance; indeed, they are the essence of an organization's existence (Babel'ová et al., 2020). Employees' performance, satisfaction, and engagement, on which the success of an organization is built, are closely related to these (Alola & Alafeshat, 2021; Nadarajah et al., 2012; Saleem & Khurshid, 2014).

The present study complements the literature on HRM practices and processes, especially in Western Balkan countries. It offers suggestions to companies on how they might improve their HRM practices and processes and thereby their performance. The main objectives of the study are:
- Impact on Human Resources practices and processes (recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction) on individual performance within the organization.
- The relationship/connection between HR practices and individual performance.
- The relationship/connection between HR practices and organizational performance.
- A suitable model that can predict individual performance within an organization.

Measuring performance has always been a challenge. It requires a commitment to implementing a series of activities within the enterprise (Lokaj & Xhemajli, 2014). Human resource management is one of the most important elements in achieving individual and organizational goals (Mansor et al., 2014) and ultimately success (Sheehan, 2014). Effective HR practices and processes ensure that employees are both skilled and motivated (Wojtczuk-Turek, 2017).

The relationship between HR practices and processes and individual and organizational performance has been the focus of a considerable amount of research (Gile et al., 2018; Montoro-Sánchez & Ribeiro Soriano, 2011). Effective HR

practices and processes increase employees' innovation, creativity, problem-solving skills, confidence, and engagement (Prieto & Pérez-Santana, 2014). These processes and practices—which comprise recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction—are the subject of the present study.

Recruitment is the process of choosing the best candidates with outstanding qualifications (Mohammad, 2020) consistent with the organization's needs. Studies have shown that the recruitment and selection process positively influences organizational performance (Pahos & Galanaki, 2019). Recruitment can also help the organization gain a competitive advantage (Amin et al., 2014).

Education/Training is considered to be the catalyst for improving the performance of the organization and its employees (Truitt, 2011). Education/training can be used to support the organization's leaders and remove workplace obstacles (Richardson et al., 2014). It is fundamental in increasing employee motivation and it can predict organizational performance (Sendawula et al., 2018). It can also help to overcome diversity issues and alleviate conflict within teams (Yeager & Nafukho, 2012). Furthermore, it plays a vital role in the retention and development of talent (Jyoti & Rani, 2017).

Motivation studies have shown that powerful motivation leads to high organizational performance (Zhu & Wu, 2016). Shoraj & Llaci (2015) suggested that the most important motivational factors for employees were financial remuneration and good communication; job satisfaction had no effect. Motivating employees is important if they are to be retained. Demotivated employees are inclined to leave organizations for their competitors (Dobre, 2013).

Compensation is the largest single cost in most organizations. Hence, the extent to which resources are allocated effectively is likely to have a major beneficial impact on organizational performance (Mejia et al., 2010). Onwuka and Onwuchekwa (2018, p.45) found that there is a positive relationship between compensation and organizational performance. Daniel (2019) stated that compensation not only led to better organisational performance but also better relationships between employees. Han & Hong (2016) measured the level

of accountability and organizational performance through staffing, performance evaluation, and compensation, and concluded that compensation had the strongest relationship with organizational performance. *Career development* has been shown to have a positive effect on both organizational and individual performance (Weng & Zhu, 2020). It is important because it gives them satisfaction and a sense of achievement. Supporting employees and giving them career opportunities improves their performance as well as that of the organization (Saleem, 2014). Osibanjo et al. (2014, p. 67) discovered that career development was a determining factor in organizational performance.

Human Resources Practices and Processes and Employee Performance

Muchhal's (2014), who studied 512 respondents, found that HR practices such as compensation, promotion, and performance evaluation were positively correlated with each other and were statistically significant. In another study (Mahmood et al., 2021, p. 2907), recruitment, selection, and compensation were positively correlated with employees' performance and were again statistically significant. Khoreva and Wechtler (2018), who used ability motivation and opportunity theory variables in their study of 300 employees and 34 supervisors, found that HR practices result in innovative job performance.

Human Resources Practices and Processes and Organisational Performance

To measure the correlation between organizational performance and HRM practices, Rafael Triguero-Sánchez et al. (2013) used training, selection,

Designee, flexibility, reward, evaluation, communication effectiveness, job stability, quality and equality at work as variables in their examination of the subjective performance (individual, group, and organizational) of 102 companies. They found that HR resources policies and practices had a positive effect. Jashari and Kutllovci (2020) studied 161 manufacturing enterprises and found that recruitment and selection, training development, flexible rewards, employee involvement, and working conditions were strongly related to overall organizational performance.

Methodology

This study used a sophisticated combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to verify the researched facts and collect a comprehensive data set. The aim was to find the basic themes that would ultimately serve as the pillars of the survey. Using a multifaceted approach that included numerical analysis and in-depth qualitative research, this study attempted to extract valuable insights and synthesize them into key themes for questionnaire design. According to Dzogovic and Bajrami (2023, p. 158), this means that critical self-reflection does not reduce the value of the research work; on the contrary, it improves and increases its quality, that is, through introspection and intellectual research, the researcher confirms the integrity of his results and gives depth and authenticity to the research, which in turn increases its importance and contribution to the research field.
Recruitment is an activity that has a series that starts with a company that wants human resources (HR) and looks for positions in HR that are desired until they are accepted.

Figure 1.
Model Structure: Dependent and Independent variables
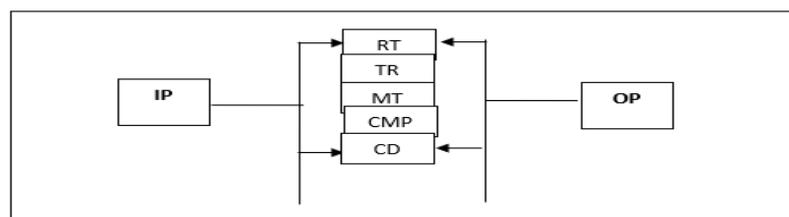
Note: RT=recruitment; TR=education/training; MT=motivation; MP=compensation; CD=career direction=organisational performance and =individual performance

Source: Authors

Note: RT=recruitment; TR=education/training; MT=motivation; MP=compensation; CD=career direction=organisational performance and =individual performance

Questionnaires were distributed to 607 employees in 41 enterprises**.** The ordinary least square (OLS) regression model structure forms two models with the following independent variables: recruitment (measured by 19 questions); education/training (measured by 14 questions); motivation (measured by 15 questions); compensation/reward (measured by 3 questions); and career direction (measured by 3 questions). The dependent variables were organizational performance (measured by 22 questions) and individual performance (measured by 10 questions). The first condition that qualifies the OLS regression model is when all ordinal questions are added together to form a composite score (continuous scale) for each variable. A composite score is simply the sum of several different sub-scores, also known as components (Coombs, 1953). From a statistical standpoint, composite scores were preferable because they tend to provide a more reliable and valid measure of our construct. Because composites combine information from multiple smaller, repeated measures of the construct, they are more reliable and valid.

The model was therefore introduced to predict individual and organizational performance with the explanatory variable of recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction, while individual and organizational performance were the dependent variables. The OLS regression applied here was multiple regression analysis because we considered more than one independent (or what we also call explanatory) variable. Mathematically, it can be expressed generally as:

$$Y_i = B_o + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5X_5 + \varepsilon$$
$$Y_i = B_o + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5X_5 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Where Y_i is the organizational performance and Y_i is the individual performance, X_1 is recruitment, X_2 is education/training, X_3 is motivation, X_4 is compensation, and X_5 is career direction. Bo is the intercept while B1 to B5 are the slopes or coefficients estimate. Ɛ is the Error term that takes care of all other factors that are not included in the model.

Meanwhile, the following OLS assumptions had to be satisfied:
- Assumption of linearity. The fitted model should be linear in its parameters.
- The error term should not be correlated with the explanatory variables; autocorrelation occurs when the assumption is violated.
- Assumption of normality. The residual error should be approximately normally distributed because we cannot have perfect normality in practice.
- Assumption of homoscedasticity. The error term is expected to have a constant variance (homoscedasticity); violation of this assumption is called heteroscedasticity.
- There should be no multicollinearity. This is another very important OLS assumption that must be carefully observed because the presence of multicollinearity usually gives misleading *p*-values and R-squares. Multicollinearity is said to occur when we have two or more independent or explanatory variables that are highly linearly correlated. We usually measure this with the variance inflation factor (VIF) in practice (VIF = 1/tolerance and tolerance = 1–R-square). R-square is the coefficient of determination. When the VIF of the independent variables is less than 5 (VIF < 5), the model is free from the problem of multicollinearity; VIF > 5 is an indication of the presence of multicollinearity; and VIF > 10 is an indication of severe multicollinearity (O'Hagan & McCabe, 1975).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Instrument reliability and accuracy were examined using SPSS Version 26.0. Discriminant measures were then examined to see if they provided different results. Table 1 shows the Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average extracted (AVE) for each variable. The factor loading reflects the magnitude of the correlation between the measured variables and the latent variable. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the variables. All measures had a Cronbach's alpha above the threshold of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1.

Composite reliability, VIF, AVE, and correlation of the construct values

Variable	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
Recruitment	0.735	0.767	0.754	**0.868**				
Education/Training	0.722	0.819	0.769	0.711	**0.877**			
Motivation	0.727	0.788	0.765	0.708	0.744	**0.875**		
Compensation	0.841	0.745	0.530	0.324	0.351	0.346	**0.728**	
Career Direction	0.826	0.793	0.689	0.657	0.634	0.632	0.367	**0.830**

Source: Authors

Note. The bold diagonal values are square roots of the AVE.

To validate the measurement model, composite reliability and AVE values were investigated. Composite reliability values for all measurements of the model meet or exceed the recommended value of 0.70. It is also suggested that the AVE variance measures should be above the accepted cut-off value of 0.50, indicating that half of the items in the sample should contribute to the variation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 shows that all current model variables have AVE values greater than or equal to the minimum recommended value of 0.50. All values reported in the present study for composite reliability and AVE meet the recommended values. The statistical analyses show that the model exhibits adequate convergent validity and reliability.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. deviation	N
Recruitment	70.32	11.182	607
Education/Training	51.69	10.357	598
Motivation	60.55	11.335	604
Compensation	11.27	4.478	607
Career direction	11.40	2.590	607
Organisational performance	81.51	15.606	601
Individual performance	34.54	7.605	607

Source: Authors

The descriptive statistics in Table 2 show that organizational performance has the highest mean value of 81.51 and the highest standard deviation of 15.606, indicating that it has the highest variability. This is due to the fact it was measured by 22 questions, which is relatively higher than the others. Meanwhile, compensation has the lowest mean of 11.27, which suggests that, on average, the respondents believed that employees are not well compensated.

Career direction has the lowest standard deviation of 2.59, which shows that it has the least variability or deviation from the mean. Motivation is a very important approach in increasing organizational performance; it is recommended to use more motivational methods from leadership in private businesses, which should motivate employees to look at problems from a new perspective and contribute to increasing their potential Lokaj and Sadrija (2020).

Table 3.
Human Resources Practices and Processes

Variable	Recruitment	Education/Training	Motivation	Compensation	Career direction	*p*-value
Organisational performance	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.434	0.782	0.000
Individual performance	0.704	0.673	0.626	0.325	0.575	0.000

Source: Authors

Note. Correlation is significant at the 1% level

As can be seen in Table 3, the correlation coefficient for organizational performance and recruitment is 0.741, It explains a strong relationship between organizational performance and recruitment. This implies that the more effective the organization's recruitment, the better the organization's performance and vice versa.

The correlation analysis coefficient between organizational performance and education/training is 0.741, indicating a strong positive relationship between organizational performance and education/training. This implies that the more the organization invests in employee education/training, the better the organization's performance and vice versa.

The correlation analysis coefficient between organizational performance and motivation is 0.741, indicating a strong positive correlation or relationship between organizational performance and motivation. This implies that the higher the employees' motivation, the higher the organization's performance, and vice versa.

The correlation analysis coefficient between organizational performance and compensation is 0.434, indicating a weak positive correlation between compensation and organizational performance. This implies that the higher the employee's compensation, the better the organization's performance and vice versa.

The correlation analysis coefficient between organizational performance and career direction is 0.782, indicating a strong positive relationship between career direction and employee career direction. This implies that the higher the career direction, the better the organization's performance, and vice versa.

The correlation analysis coefficient between individual performance and recruitment is 0.704, indicating a strong positive relationship between recruitment and individual performance. This implies that the more effective the recruitment and selection process, the higher the individual's performance within the organization.

The correlation analysis coefficient between individual performance and education/training is 0.673, indicating a strong positive relationship between education/training and individual performance. This implies that the more HR invests in education/training, the higher the individual's performance within the organization.

The correlation analysis coefficient between individual performance and motivation is 0.626, indicating a strong positive relationship between motivation and individual performance. This implies that the higher the motivation provided by HR, the higher the individual's performance within the organization.

The correlation analysis coefficient between individual performance and compensation is 0.325, indicating a weak positive relationship between compensation and individual performance. This implies that the more HR compensates employees, the higher the individual's performance within the organization.

The correlation analysis coefficient between individual performance and career direction is 0.575, indicating a moderate positive correlation between individual performance and career direction. This implies that the more HR assists in guiding the career direction of the employees, the higher the individual's performance within the organization.

The $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ implies that individual performance and HR processes at a significant level of 1% is a significant relationship. In the same vein, there is a significant relationship between organizational performance and human resources processes at a 1% significance level.

Table 4.

OLS Regression Model/Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.871[a]	.759	.757	7.633	1.820

Source: Authors

Note. a. Predictors: (constant), recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction.

R-square = 0.759 indicates that the 75.9% variation in organizational performance can be explained by recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction. The R-square is relatively high, which indicates that the model is adequate. Meanwhile, the Durbin-Watson statistic, D = 1.82 which lies between the two critical values of 1.5 and 2.5, respectively, implies that the error term is not auto-correlated with an order of 1. This supports the assumption that the error term should not be correlated with explanatory variables.

Table 5.

Analysis of Variance

	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	107058.414	5	21411.683	367.490	.000[b]
	Residual	33968.309	583	58.265		
	Total	141026.723	588			

Source: Authors

Note. a. Dependent variable: organizational performance.
b. Predictors: (constant), recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction.

The $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ for the overall regression means that the fitted OLS regression is statistically significant, which explains that there is a linear significant relationship between organizational performance and the explanatory variables (recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction). This also suggests that the model is a good fit for the data and can be used for future predictions of organizational performance.

Meanwhile, the significant linear relationship also satisfies the linearity assumption of the ordinary least square (OLS) regression model, which tells us that the model is linear in its parameters.

The points appear diffused and do not form a clear specific pattern. This shows that the regression model does not suffer a heteroscedasticity problem, and thus meets the homoscedasticity assumption, implying that the residual has a constant variance.

Table 6.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. error	Beta			
(Constant)		2.072			.254	
Recruitment	2.366	.046	.178	1.142	.000	2.573
Education/Training	.248	.051	.183	5.458	.000	2.735
Motivation	.276	.046	.207	5.453	.000	2.699
Compensation	.284	.076	.101	6.194	.000	1.190
Career direction	.346	.176	.381	4.553	.000	2.056
	2.297			13.070		

Source: Authors

The coefficient estimate for recruitment is 0.248, and $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in recruitment, organizational performance will increase by 0.248. Recruitment has a positive significant impact on organizational performance.

The coefficient estimate for Education/Training is 0.276, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, indicating that for a 1 unit increase in Education/Training, organizational performance will increase by 0.276. Therefore, Education/Training has a positive significant impact on organizational performance.

The coefficient estimate for motivation is 0.284, $p = .000 < .01$, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in motivation, organizational performance will rise by 0.284. Therefore, motivation has a positive significant impact on organizational performance.

The coefficient estimate for compensation is 0.346, $p = .000 < .01$, indicating that for a 1 unit increase in compensation, organizational performance will increase by 0.346. Therefore, compensation has a positive significant impact on organizational performance.

The coefficient estimate for career direction is 2.297, and $p = .000 < .01$, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in career direction, organizational performance will rise by 2.297. Therefore, career direction has a positive significant impact on organizational performance.

Recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction are very important practices that have a positive impact on organizational performance. Meanwhile, the VIF for each of the explanatory variables (recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction) is less than 5, which indicates that the model does not suffer from a multicollinearity problem.

Figure 2.

Organisational Performance (Histogram)
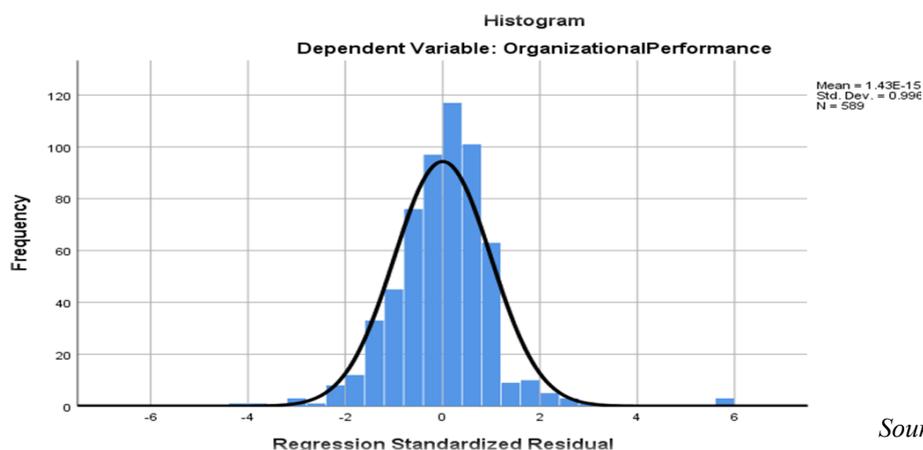
Source: Authors

Figure 2 shows that the residual for the estimated organizational performance is approximately normally distributed because it follows a dumbbell shape, which is a major feature of a normal distribution.

Table 7.

Regression − Model Summaryb

Model		R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	753[a]	.567	.563	5.060	1.511

Source: Authors

Note a. Predictors: (constant), recruitment, education/ training, motivation, compensation, and career direction.
b. Dependent variable: individual performance.

That R-square = .567 indicates that the 56.7% variation in individual performance can be explained by recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction. The R-square result indicates a measure of good fit. Meanwhile, the Durbin-Watson result (D) = 1.511 falls between the two critical values 1.5 and 2.5, indicating that the error term is not autocorrelated with an order of 1. This supports the assumption that the error term should not be correlated with explanatory variables.

Table 8.

Analysis of Variancea

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	19716.498	5	3943.300	154.030	.000[b]
Residual	15078.924	589	25.601		
Total	34795.422	594			

Source: Authors

Note. a. Dependent variable: individual performance; b. Predictors: (constant), recruitment, training, motivation, compensation, and career direction.

The $p = .000 < .01$ for the overall regression means that the fitted OLS regression is statistically significant, indicating that there is a significant linear relationship between individual performance and the explanatory variables (recruitment, education/training, compensation, motivation, and career direction). This also suggests that the model is a good fit for that data and can be used for future predictions of individual performance. Meanwhile, the significant linear relationship also satisfies the linearity assumption of the ordinary least square (OLS) regression model.

The coefficient estimate for recruitment is 0.267, and $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in recruitment, individual performance will increase by 0.267. The $p < .01$ implies that recruitment has a positive significant impact on individual performance.
The coefficient estimate for education/ training is 0.197, $p = .000 < .01$, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in education/ training, individual performance will increase by 0.197. $p < .01$. This means that education/ training has a positive significant impact on individual performance.

Table 9.
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	*t*	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	-1.561	1.360		-1.148	.251	
Recruitment	.267	.030	.387	8.855	.000	2.595
Education/Training	.197	.033	.266	5.893	.000	2.764
Motivation	.058	.030	.086	1.918	.056	2.735
Compensation	.068	.050	.040	1.352	.177	1.196
Career direction	.250	.116	.084	2.154	.032	2.079

Source: Authors

The coefficient estimate for motivation is 0.058, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in compensation, individual performance will increase by 0.058. The $p = .056 > .05$ significance level means that compensation is not statistically significant.

The coefficient estimate for compensation is 0.068, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in compensation, individual performance will increase by 0.068. The $p = .177 > .05$ significance level means that compensation is not statistically significant.

The coefficient estimate for career direction is 0.25, indicating that for a 1-unit increase in career direction, individual performance will increase by 0.25.

The $p = .032 < 0.05$ means that career direction has a positive significant impact on individual performance.

In sum, recruitment, education/training, and career direction are very important practices that have a positive impact on individual performance, while compensation does not make a significant contribution. Meanwhile, the VIF for each of the explanatory variables (recruitment, education/training, motivation, compensation, and career direction) is less than 5, which again shows that the model does not suffer from a multicollinearity problem.

Figure 3.
Individual Performance (Histogram)
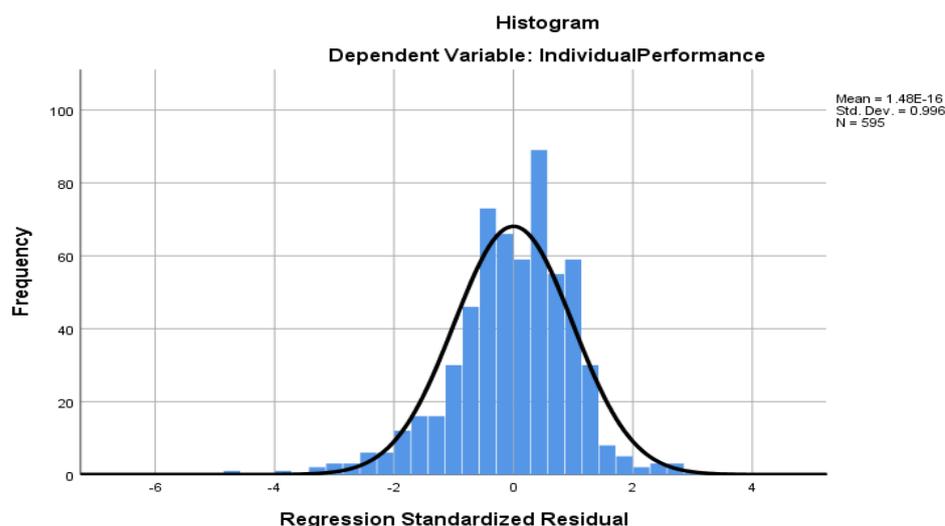
Source: Authors

Figure 3 illustrates that the residual for the estimated organizational performance is approximately normally distributed because it follows a dumbbell shape, which is a major feature of a normal distribution.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine how human practices and processes impact individual and organizational performance. Given the correlation between individual performance and human resources, individual performance will rise in proportion with the selection process. There was a strong correlation between performance and education/training of 0.673, indicating that individual performance was positively correlated with human resources, and this resulted in better overall performance. A correlation coefficient of 0.325 implied that there was a weak correlation between employee compensation and performance in the organization. The correlation coefficient between individual performance and career planning of 0.575 indicated a moderate correlation; in other words, if an employee's personal human resources have a positive impact on their career plan, then their career will progress.

However, $p = .000 < .01$; individual performance and human resources had a significant correlation at the 1% significance level. There was an established correlation between organizational performance and HR (i.e., workforce skills, motivation, and the effectiveness of the work structures and practices). This is in keeping with John Delaney and Mark Huselid (1996), who found support for their hypothesis that HRM inputs such as recruitment and selection, education/training, compensation, and career direction had a strong effect on company performance.

The coefficient estimate for motivation was 0.058, $p = .056 < .10$, indicating that for every 1-unit increase in motivation, individual performance rose by 0.058. The $p < .10$ implied that motivation had a positive significant impact on individual performance at a 10% significance level.

Meanwhile, diagnostic measurements were performed to ensure that the results were valid, reliable, and repeatable. The results indicated that recruitment, education/ training, motivation, and career direction should be enhanced to improve individual performance.

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FTO Gene Polymorphism and Physical Activity in Relation to Body Mass Index

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the frequencies of alleles and genotypes of the single nucleotide polymorphism of the FTO gene (rs17817449) and the intensity of physical activity in relation to the BMI of subjects in the student population. Genotyping was performed using the PCR-RFLP method. 94 subjects stated that they were not physically active, 57 subjects were moderately physically active and 52 were intensely physically active. In the total sample, the risk allele G of the investigated polymorphism rs17817449 of the FTO gene had a lower frequency (41.8%) compared to the normal allele T (58.13%). Although a higher frequency of the risk allele G was found in the group of overweight subjects compared to the group with BMI < 25, the difference was not statistically significant (p > 0.05).

Keywords: BMI, FTO gene, physical activity;

Obesity is becoming a serious public health problem that affects not only adults, but also children and adolescents, therefore the analysis of the frequency of this condition is very important. The causes of obesity are multifactorial, including genetic, emotional, behavioral and environmental factors and lifestyle including eating habits and physical activity, family history, endocrinological characteristics and others. On the other hand, the resulting comorbidities of excessive obesity are numerous and include hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, diabetes mellitus type II, myocardial infarction, infertility, osteoarthritis, anxiety, depression and others. The identification of risk factors for the development of obesity is of great importance for its prevention. Properly created lifestyle habits play important role in the prevention of occurrence of obesity. The aim of this study was to determine the frequencies of alleles and genotypes of the single nucleotide polymorphism of the *FTO* gene (rs17817449) and the intensity of

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physical activity in relation to the body mass index (BMI) of the subjects.

Anthropometric body mass index is the most commonly used tool for associating the risk of developing health problems with overweight at the population level. Calculation of BMI is based on the ratio of body weight expressed in kilograms and the square of a person's height expressed in meters. The recommended BMI values are the same for both sexes, ranging from 18.5 to 24.9 kg/m2. According to the classification of the World Health Organization for the adult European population, BMI values from 25.0 to 29.9 kg/m^2 indicate overweight, while people whose BMI is between 30.0 and 34.9 kg/m^2 belong to the first degree obesity group. Furthermore, obesity of the II degree means people whose BMI is from 35.0 to 39.9 kg/m^2, and the last category in which BMI values > 40.0 kg/m^2 mean obesity of the III degree, i.e. morbid obesity (James et al., 2001).

The *FTO* gene is the first identified gene associated with obesity according to genome-wide association studies. The association was confirmed in the European populations (Loos & Bouchard, 2008), although the relation of *FTO* gene polymorphism on obesity is not fully understood. Recent studies show that it is not only associated with obesity, but also with metabolic syndrome and the occurrence of cancer. One of the main roles of *FTO* gene is the regulation of food intake and energy expenditure in humans and animals. The *FTO* gene is expressed in all tissues, but it is mostly represented in the brain, in the region of the hypothalamus, which plays a key role in the regulation of food intake (Frayling et al., 2007). Some studies show that the levels of the *FTO* gene iRNA transcript are either unchanged in adipose tissue or elevated in peripheral blood cells in people who carry the *FTO* risk alleles for obesity compared to people who do not have the risk alleles. It is likely that the obese phenotype in individuals who do not carry risk alleles of the *FTO* gene is not a consequence of the loss of its function per se, but the obese phenotype is the cause of a change in the expression of the *FTO* gene or the expression of other genes that affect the expression of *FTO* (Mizuno et al., 2018).

The association of the *FTO* gene with obesity is undoubtedly proven in humans by the presence of the single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) located within the regions of intron 1 and intron 2 of the *FTO* gene (Zhao et al., 2014). The SNP of rs17817449 *FTO* gene contains two variant alleles: the normal, wild-type, allele T and the mutated allele G. Carriers of the mutated GG genotype have a 1.7 × increased risk of developing obesity, while individuals with the GT genotype have a 1.3 × increased risk of developing obesity compared to individuals with the TT genotype (SNPedia, 2023).

According to the WHO recommendations, regular physical activities such as walking, cycling or dancing, can have significant health benefits. They can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and osteoporosis, help control body weight and improve mental well-being. Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week to maintain health, which can be replaced by 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week. The aim of this study was to determine the frequencies of alleles and genotypes of the single nucleotide polymorphism of the *FTO* gene (rs17817449) and the intensity of physical activity according to the BMI of the subjects in the student population of northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Materials and Methods

Subjects

The research included 203 subjects of both sexes from the student population of northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis, which the subjects confirmed by signing the form for consent. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee for Scientific Research of the University of Tuzla.

Methods

Collecting of biological samples for genotyping, anthropological measurements and interviewing participants were carried out in the premises of the University of Tuzla. For DNA isolation, two swabs of the buccal mucosa were sampled using sterile collection tools, rubbing the inner surface of both cheeks for 20 seconds. Genotyping was

achieved by the polymerase chain reaction-restriction fragment length polymorphism (PCR-RFLP) using a set of primers5'-AGGACCTCCTATTTGGGACA-3' and reverse primer 5'-AGCTTCCATGGCTAGCATTA-3'. The PCR reaction mixture in its final volume contained 25 μl: 2.5 μl 10X PCR buffer, 0.2 μlTaq polymerase 5 units/μl, 2 μl 25 mM MgCl2 and 2 μl 2.5 mMdNTP mixture (Taq DNA Polymerase 1000 units kit, Qiagen, Germany) and 2 μl of each primer (10 mM), 13,3 μl sterile water and 1 μl of DNA sample. Thermal cycling conditions for amplification were as follows: 95 °C for 3 min, followed by 35 cycles of 95 °C for 45 s, 61 °C for 45 s, 72 °C for 1 min, and a final extension at 72 °C for 7 min. The expected maximum size of the PCR product was 828 bp, which was verified by agarose gel electrophoresis with a follow-up DNA marker (50 bp DNA Ladder; New England Biolabs, UK).

The *FTO* gene amplification product (10 μl) was digested with the restriction enzyme AlwNI (New England Biolabs, UK), using 0.2 μl of this enzyme and 5 μl of rCutSmart buffer (New Englands Biolabs, UK), according to (Abdelmajed et al., 2017). The restriction products were separated on a 2% agarose gel, where fragments of 498 and 330 bp were observed in the homozygous wild type TT genotype, fragments of 828, 498 and 330 bp in the heterozygous - GT genotype, and in the homozygous mutated genotype - GG only a fragment of size 828 bp.

A medical scale was used to determine the body mass index. BMI values were calculated by determining the ratio of body weight expressed in kilograms and the square of a person's height expressed in meters.

In order to determine the level of physical activity, subjects were asked to fill out a survey containing questions about the usual frequency of physical activity (PA). Based on their responses and according to Bauman, the respondents were classified into three categories: (1) physically inactive (PI) – respondents who do not engage in physical activity; (2) moderately physically active (MPA) – subjects whose usual frequency of performing physical activity is less than 2 hours/week; (3) intensely physically active (IPA) – respondents who perform intense physical activity more than 2 h/week (Bauman et al., 2017).

The chi-square test of independence was used to analyze the distribution of the basic characteristics of the examined sample between groups of subjects according to BMI, formed according to genotypes, and then according to allele frequencies. All values of $p < 0.05$ were considered statistically significant.

Results

The study included a total of 203 subjects who were divided into two categories according to BMI, 42 subjects with BMI > 25 overweight and 161 subjects with BMI < 25, recommended body weight. Of the 42 subjects who were classified as overweight, i.e. BMI > 25 kg/m2, 6 had a value of 30 < BMI < 34.9, 3 subjects had a BMI > 35. In both groups, as well as in the total sample, the lowest relative frequency was determined for the genotype of the mutated homozygote GG, in the total sample 16.75%, in the group of subjects with excessive body weight 19.04%, and in the group of subjects with the recommended BMI 16,15%. Table 1 shows the frequencies of genotypes and alleles of the *FTO* gene polymorphism rs17817449 according to body mass index in two groups in relation to BMI.

Table 1.

Total and relative frequencies of genotypes and alleles of the rs17817449 FTO gene polyorphism in relation to body mass index

Genotype	BMI (N%)		Total	χ2	p
	BMI ≥ 25	BMI < 25			
TT	13 (30.96%)	54 (33.54%)	67 (33.00%)		
GT	21 (50.00%)	81 (50.31%)	102 (50.25%)	0.235	0.889
GG	8 (19.04%)	26 (16.15%)	34 (16.75%)		
Total	42	161	203		
Genotype	BMI ≥ 25	BMI < 25	Total	χ2	p
TT	13 (30.96%)	54 (33.54%)	67 (33.00%)	0.101	0.751
GT+GG	29 (69.04%)	107 (66.46%)	136 (67.00)	OR (95% CI)	p
Total	42	161	203	1.126 (0.542-2.340)	0.750
Allele	BMI ≥ 25	BMI < 25	Total	χ2	p
Allele T	47 (55.95%)	189 (58.67%)	236 (58.13%)	0.206	0.650
Allele G	37 (44.05%)	133 (41.30%)	170 (41.87%)	OR (95% CI)	p
Total	84	322	406	1.119 (0.689-1.816)	0.650

Out of a total of 203 respondents, 94 stated that they did not practice physical activity (PI), 57 respondents were moderately physically active (MPA), exercising less than 2 hours/week, and 52 subjects were classified as intensely physically active (IPA) as they performed physical activity more than 2 h/week. Table 2 shows the frequencies of genotypes and alleles in relation to the above-mentioned categories.

Table 2.

Total frequencies of genotypes and alleles of the rs17817449 FTO polymorphism in relation to the intensity of physical activity

Genotype	Physical activity (N%)				χ2	p
	PI	MPA	IPA	Total		
TT	32 (34.04%)	17 (29.8%)	18 (34.62%)	67 (33.00%)		
GT	45 (47.87%)	29 (50.9%)	28 (53.85%)	102 (50.25%)	1.655	0,799
GG	17 (18.09%)	11 (19.3%)	6 (11.53%)	34 (16.75%)		
Total	94	57	52	203		
Genotype	PI	MPA+IPA		Total	χ2	p
TT	32 (34.04%)	35 (32.1%)		67	0.085	0.770
GT+GG	62 (65.96%)	74 (67.9%)		136	OR (95% CI)	p
Total	94	109		203	0.916 (0.510-1.647)	0.770
Alleles	PI	MPA+IPA		Total	χ2	p
Allele T	109 (57.98%)	127 (58.26%)		236	0.003	0.955
Allele G	79 (42.02%)	91 (41.74%)		170	OR(95% CI)	p
Total	188	218		406	1.011 (0.681-1.502)	0.955

Out of a total of 161 subjects with a recommended body weight (BMI < 25kg/m²), 81 declared not physically active, 43 were moderately active, while 37 were classified as highly active. Table 3 shows the distribution of genotypes and alleles of subjects with a determined BMI < 25 kg/m2 in relation to the intensity of physical activity.

Table 3.

Total and relative frequencies of genotypes of the rs17817449 FTO polymorphism according to the intensity of physical activity in subjects with BMI < 25 kg/m2

	BMI < 25				χ^2	p
Genotype	**PI**	**MPA**	**IPA**	**Total**		
TT	27 (33.33%)	14 (32.56%)	13 (35.14%)	54		
GT	38 (46.91%)	21 (48.84%)	22 (59.46%)	81	4.318	0.365
GG	16 (19.76%)	8 (18.6%)	2 (5.4%)	26		
Total	81	43	37	161		
Genotype	**PI**	**MPA+IPA**		**Total**	χ^2	p
TT	27 (33.33%)	27 (33.75%)		54	0.003	0.955
GT+GG	54 (66.67%)	53 (66.25)		107	**OR (95% CI)**	**p**
Total	81	80		161	1.019 (0.530-1.960)	0.955
Alleles	**PI**	**MPA+IPA**		**Total**	χ^2	p
Allele T	92 (56.8)	97 (60.63%)		189	0.488	0.485
Allele G	70 (43.2%)	63 (39.37%)		133	**OR (95% CI)**	**p**
Total	162	160		322	1.171 (0.751-1.826)	0.485

Of the 42 respondents who were found to be overweight (BMI ≥ 25), 13 of them were not physically active, 14 were moderately active, while 15 were classified as highly active. Table 4. shows the frequency distributions of genotypes and alleles in relation to the intensity of physical activity in subjects with BMI ≥ 25.

Table 4.

Total frequencies of genotypes of the rs17817449 FTO polymorphism according to the intensity of physical activity in the group of respondents BMI ≥ 25

	BMI≥ 25				χ^2	p
Genotype	**PI**	**MPA**	**IPA**	**Total**		
TT	5 (38.46%)	3 (21.43%)	5 (33.33%)	13 (30.95%)		
GT	7 (53.85%)	8 (57.14%)	6 (40.0%)	21 (50.0%)	2.535	0.638
GG	1 (7.69%)	3 (21.43%)	4 (26.7%)	8 (19.05%)		
Total	13	14	15	42		
Genotype	**PI**	**MPA+IPA**		**Total**	χ^2*	p*
TT	5 (38.46%)	8(27.6%)		13	0.497	0.481
GT+GG	8 (61.54%)	21(72.4%)		29	**OR (95% CI)***	**p***
Total	13	29		42	0.610 (0.153-2.429)	0.482
Alleles	BMI≥ 25				χ^2	p
	PI	**MPA+IPA**		**Total**		
Allele T	17 (65.4%)	30 (51.73%)		47	**1.359**	0.244
Allelel G	9 (34.6%)	28 (48.27%)		37	**OR (95% CI)***	**p***
Total	26	58		84	0.567 (0.218-1.479)	0.246

Discussion

Out of a total of 203 subjects who participated in the study, 42 were overweight, while 161 had the recommended body weight. These results were expected as the study was conducted in the student population, where the age of subjects ranged from 21 to 25 years. 94 of subjects stated they were not physically activitive (PI), 57 subjects were moderately physically active (MPA) and 52 were intensely physically active (IPA).

In the total sample of this study, the risk allele G of the *FTO* polymorphism rs17817449 had a lower frequency (41.8%) compared to the normal allele T (58.13%). Accordingly, the frequency of recessive GG genotype was lower compared to the TT and GT genotypes. Although a higher frequency of the risk allele G was found in the group of overweight subjects compared to the group with BMI < 25, the difference was not statistically significant. The results of this study suggest that the G allele may not be a risk factor for the development of obesity, but as other studies show, its frequency is higher in the group of subjects with excessive body weight.

According to various studies, the rs17817449 *FTO* polymorphism shows a significant association with body mass index in the populatios of Europe and North America (Dina et al., 2007; Frayling, 2007; Price et al., 2008; Hubacek et al., 2008; Hunt et al., 2008), Korea (Cha et al., 2008) and North India (Prakash et al., 2011), but no association was found for Hispanic and African American (Wing at al., 2009) and Chinese Han populations (Li et al., 2008). In these studies an association of the rs17817449 *FTO* polymorphism with the elevated blood glucose, insulin resistance, percentage of fat tissue and blood pressure was found.

The results of this study suggest that the moderate and intense levels of physical activity may not mitigate the harmful effect of the allele G or prevent the development of excessive body mass. A higher frequency of the G allele was found in the group of subjects with a higher BMI, who engaged in certain physical activity. Out of a total of 42 subjects with a BMI ≥ 25, 29 of them performed moderate or intense physical activity, 72.4% of which were carriers of

the risk allele G, genotypes GT + GG. The frequency of the same category of genotypes, GT + GG in physically active subjects and who had the recommended body mass was lower, 66.25%. Physical activity in subjects with excessive body mass was not connected to the G allele genetic risk. It might be of interest in further studies to analyze muscle mass, also other factors, such as diet in this group of subjects. This study fails to imply that physical activity could overcome the genetic predisposition for obesity. However, the uneven distribution of subjects must be taken into consideration as a limiting factor of this study.

Conclusion

According to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study of the rs17817449 *FTO* gene polymorphism relation with body mass index in the student population of northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. A higher frequency of the risk allele G is found in the group of subjects with excessive body mass compared to the group with recommended values. However, the difference is not statistically significant. Further studies with an even distribution of BMI categories in connection with physical activity and diet would contribute to the understanding of the association of genetic factors, lifestyle and BMI and could provide an effective prevention of the development of obesity.

Conflict of Interests
The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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An Investigation of Social Care in Elementary School Students

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

The implementation of learning activities based on cooperative activities and mutual interaction is quite limited during the COVID-19 pandemic so that students' concern is not well honed. The purpose of this study is to survey the condition of the social care character of elementary school students in Indonesia. The method used in this research is a survey by distributing questionnaires to elementary school students. The scale used in this study is the Guttman scale. The results showed that the social care character of elementary school students is still low and needs to be reinforced after the pandemic through cooperative learning-based activities and other social activities. Most students still often experience bullying by their friends. Therefore, there needs to be efforts from various parties to reinvigorate the social caring character of elementary school students.

Keywords: Elementary School, Investigation, Social Care

Humans are essentially social creatures that need care for others, especially in this age of globalization (Aulia & Wuryandani, 2019; Naparan & Gadong, 2021). Entering the 21st century, the world of education began to transform into value-based education and character-based education while remaining sensitive to the social conditions that exist in society. The attitude of social care is very necessary in social life, because through this attitude one can ease each other's burdens, both in terms of economic, social, and so on. The character of social care is also very important to foster a sense of brotherhood, kinship, and keep away from arrogant, selfish, and individual traits. But often the character of social care is not developed early enough (Anggito et al., 2023). In fact, care that is internalized from an early age will become a solid foundation in giving birth to collaboration, synergy and cooperative abilities.

Schools must be a place to strengthen character education so that it can instill a sense of caring and kinship between students (Lickona, 1996). School is a means of organizing education that has the potential to instill and strengthen social care value education through the help of teachers and all elements in the school. However,

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the formation of social care attitudes towards others in the school environment is arguably difficult to implement and must be instilled early. Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to foster social care attitudes in children from an early age as a provision for life in the future (Mahmutovic & Hadziefendic, 2020). Modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important step in a student's education (Pula et al., 2023). So that children have a socially caring attitude towards the surrounding environment.

The reasons for the erosion of these values are complex and varied, including social inequality or social position caused by people's selfish attitudes, lack of understanding or cultivation of the principles of social care, and lack of tolerance, sympathy and empathy. The fading of children's social care character towards the surrounding environment will affect the social development process of elementary school students (Fazrin & Radjak, 2023; Indarjo et al., 2019). The main thing that underlies the importance of social awareness for elementary school students is as an effort to prevent the emergence of criminality among students, as well as support the success of the student learning process in the school environment and society. However, during the 19 pandemic since 2020, teaching and learning activities have been carried out online and caused the optimization of social skills development to run less well. Indicators of someone said to have a caring character according to the Josephson Institute are as follows (Kreie & Cronan, 2000). According to the Josepshon Institute, caring people are kind, compassionate and loving. They have empathy, the ability to understand and feel the sadness or pleasure of others. The highest form of caring is altruism, or sacrificing one's own interests for the benefit of others. Caring people are not cruel, selfish, or self-centered. Therefore, in simple terms, the indicators of caring according to the Josephson Institute are being kind, compassionate and showing care, saying thank you, forgiving others, and helping people in need (Gregg & Hill, 2015).

Empathy is one of the important elements of caring studied by the Josephson Institute. The ability to empathize shows

several essential things related to social care, namely 1) helping to solve other people's problems, 2) paying attention to others, 3) understanding other people's difficulties, 4) showing a sense of tolerance, 5) having a point of view, and 6) not being quick to judge others (Gilbert et al., 2017). Character value is still an abstract concept, so to see that the value has been well internalized is to see concrete actions based on these character values. These values can be observed through student activities at school, at home, and in the community.

Social care is very important to be reinvigorated immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic. This is because by having good social care, students will tend to achieve maximum student learning achievement and be able to enjoy their lives more happily. Therefore, the education sector is very important in an effort to strengthen the character of social care in students. This study aims to investigate the social care attitudes of elementary school students after the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

Methodology

This research uses the Unweighted Cross-Section Survey method. This survey approach aims to group the population in the same data collection period. This survey was conducted for one month, starting from May 01-31, 2023. Respondents in this study were 246 elementary school students spread across 13 elementary schools in Indonesia. Respondents were selected based on the school curriculum using the phase B independent curriculum. The next criterion is that the students have experienced online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021). This criterion was set because students' post-pandemic social care attitudes are likely to affect the resulting survey results.

The instrument used in this research is a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire contains the social care character of elementary school students developed from the adaptation of indicators at the Josephson Institute that have been adjusted. The following aspects of social care according to Kreie & Cronan (2000) developed in this study.

Table 1.

Social Caring Indicator

No	Aspects	Operational Indicators
1	Kind	Students have seen their friends laughing at people who make mistakes
		Students enjoy working with others because it is very exciting
2	Loving	Students have been ignored when asking for help from classmates
		Students have seen their friends being rude to others
3	Compassionate	Students have seen classmates who are disrespectful to others
		Students have been teased by classmates

The data in this study were obtained by distributing questionnaire sheets to students in 13 elementary schools. The scale used in this study is a Guttman scale in the form of Yes and No options that have been validated beforehand. This survey questionnaire was distributed by visiting each school and asking permission from the principal and each homeroom teacher.

Students are still accompanied and strived to be able to fill in the questionnaire sheet with the actual conditions and circumstances.

Results and Discussion

This study was conducted involving 246 elementary school students with the following percentages of males and females.

Figure 1.

Results of Kind Indicator in Social Care Character of Elementary Students
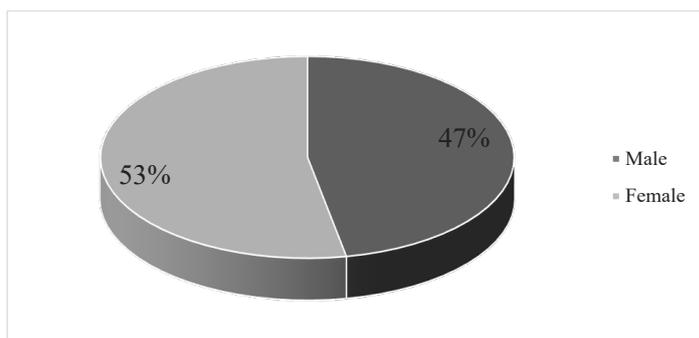
The survey results on the investigation of social care attitudes in elementary school students used three aspects proposed by the Josephson Institute, namely: kind, loving and compassionate.

The following are the survey results regarding the condition of the social care character of elementary school students after the Covid-19 pandemic

Kind Aspect

Figure 2.

Percentage ratio of male and female students
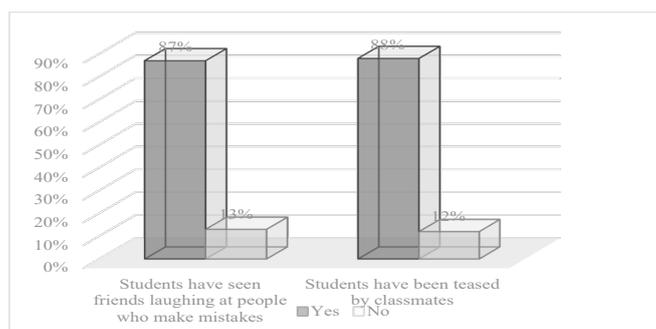
Based on the survey results above, it can be seen that the percentage of students who have been laughed at by their friends when they make mistakes is quite high, namely 87%. This shows that most students have been laughed at by their friends. Of course, this incident is quite worrying because of the low sense of respect and care between students when their colleagues experience difficulties or mistakes. In addition, students also often get ridiculed by their friends. At least 88% of students have been teased by their friends. This is certainly quite worrying because these teasing activities can often lead to other negative actions, such as fights and hostility between students.

In line with the results of the kind aspect research above, the Children's Worlds Survey in Indonesia revealed that 52.5% of primary school students had been physically bullied by other children at school at least once in the past month. 60.6% had been bullied verbally, and 49.6% had been bullied psychologically. In addition, some studies reveal that bullying can lead to mental health disorders (Copeland et al., 2013; Fanti & Kimonis, 2012), being bullied increases depression (Xie et al., 2022), increased suicidal ideation (Kim & Leventhal, 2008), lower academic performance and adverse impact on children's physical health (Irwin et al., 2021).

What needs to be considered is that the impact of teasing and bullying each other can have an impact on children in various phases of their lives. In fact, some studies have even revealed the effects of bullying on children's later life (Copeland et al., 2013). Although it is often underestimated because the issue of bullying often arises and gets a lot of attention from the public, the reality is that this action still often occurs (Nguyen et al., 2020). Even though victims of bullying are reported to experience psychosomatics and depression in the future.

Loving Aspect

Figure 2.

Results of Loving Indicator in Social Care Character of Elementary Students
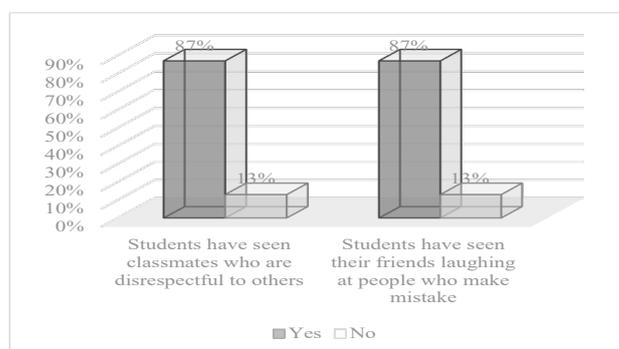
Based on the results of a survey on aspect loving, it was noted that 78% of students had been ignored when asking for help from their friends. This result is certainly a quite alarming finding considering that a sense of concern for his friend who asks for help is often ignored by his own friend. Social caring character can be interpreted as a character that is shown by efforts or actions that always want to provide assistance to others who are in trouble or need help (Riski & Ain, 2022; Ülger et al., 2014; Wuryani et al., 2018).

Social care begins with the willingness to "give" rather than "receive". Being social and helpful are universal teachings and are strongly encouraged by all religions. However, the sensitivity to carry these out cannot just grow in a person because it requires a process of training and education. Having a caring spirit for others is very important, every individual cannot live alone. Character development in students is realized in the form of self-development so that students are able to be themselves, have healthy competitiveness and care for the surrounding environment.

In addition, another indicator is that 87% of students have seen their friends being rude to their classmates. This is in line with research showing that aggression among children and adolescents is increasingly

worrying (Salimi et al., 2019). This is in line with the statement issued by UNESCO in the year which estimates that about 30% of all students annually experience some kind of violence at school (UNESCO, 2018). This percentage is quite high considering that violent actions should be minimized, especially at the elementary school level. In social psychology, violence refers to behaviors that arise to harm others (Fite et al., 2014; Johnson, 2009).

Physical abuse refers to intentionally harming someone to cause pain such as hitting, pushing, throwing objects, etc. (Shachar et al., 2016). Approximately, one in every 10 children suffers from repeated violent behavior or is bullied by peers (Abu Al Rub, 2018). Violence that occurs between students can have a direct impact on students. Violence causes adverse effects on social competence, efficiency, and interpersonal relationships (Chen et al., 2010; Jenkins et al., 2017) and may develop a negative image among peers and teachers, peer rejection, academic performance, delinquency, self-harm, aggression, and anxiety (Leff & Waasdorp, 2013; Zinatmotlagh et al., 2013). These negative impacts are not expected to increase massively, especially at the elementary school level considering that students are in the golden age period. Therefore, prevention and reduction of violence in students before this age is recommended (Cross et al., 2012).

Compassion Aspect

Figure 4.
Results of Compassionate Indicator in Social Care Character of Elementary Students
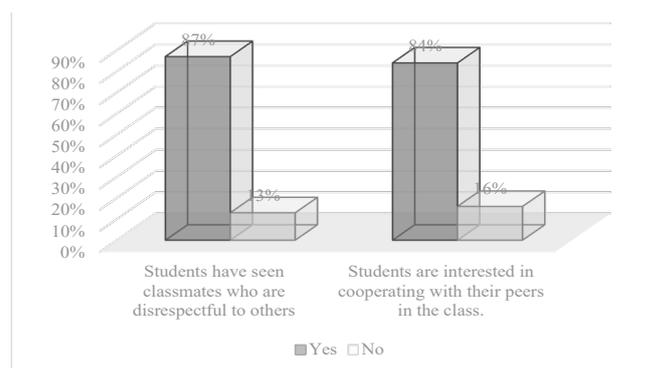
Based on the survey results, 87% of students have seen their classmates behaving impolitely to others. This finding is a consideration that politeness is still a big concern for the world of education in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the percentage results on the survey regarding cooperation between students show quite good results. The survey accumulated that 84% of students were happy to cooperate with their colleagues in class. This shows that even though they often act disrespectfully to others, they are always eager when given tasks to do in groups. However, this spirit of cooperation is sometimes less reinforced by mutual care and respect between students. Students are still limited to enjoying joint activities because they can rely on each other, especially on their friends who are considered to understand the material.

The importance of language politeness since elementary school is due to a number of problems that are currently happening. These problems are the many quarrels and fights that occur among students and in the community (Di Fabio & Duradoni, 2019). Many children or students do not respect their elders (Muammar et al., 2018). It is important to consider in communication to avoid conflict and create good harmony. This means that the application of politeness in the learning process of language skills is very important, so that students become more active in speaking in class and become more accustomed to using polite language (Effendie, 2014).

Based on this fact, the strength of good social care can be one of the solutions to overcome social problems that occur in students in today's digital era. Basically,

a student should have an attitude of social care because human nature is a social being who always needs other people and cannot live alone (Hulawa, 2019; Jati et al., 2019). The waning of life based on social care among the younger generation as a result of globalization is very unfortunate because Indonesian society has a good and noble manners value system.

Often at school and in the home environment it is clearly seen that children lack the character value of social care, such as children who are indifferent to friends around them, children do not want to help their friends in times of difficulty, even children are also lazy to help with work at home (Riski & Ain, 2022). Character education and academic learning should not be considered as two separate things, but rather there should be a strong and mutually supportive relationship. Caring schools and classrooms make students feel liked and respected by teachers and fellow students, so students will be more likely to work hard and achieve. Therefore, learning in elementary schools should also support the implementation of social caring characters.

Conclusions

Students at the elementary school level are a very important phase to start cultivating the character of social care which is important in supporting their role as social beings. However, the facts in the field show that both the kind, loving, and compassionate aspects of the character of social care according to the Josephson Institute show that students' social care character is still low.

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Evaluation and Self-Evaluation of Teachers During the Educational Process

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Abstract

The position of teachers in modern teaching and changes related to educational reforms require a high degree of professionalism from teachers themselves, which, as Marentic Pozarnik (2000, p. 4) points out, is essentially "the ability of detailed professional judgment appropriate to the situation (reflection) as well as methods and procedures". It is important for "trained" teachers to know, in a special, responsible way, to learn from their practice. At the same time, experiential and reflective approaches to learning imply a changed role of teachers, and only in the second step the application of specific methods and techniques are suitable for encouraging experiential learning (Vizek Vidovic & Vlahovic Stetic, 2007, p. 303). In the concept of "critical professional", the teacher in the educational and wider social field implies an awareness of the responsibilities of his profession at an individual level and society as a whole. A critical professional is able to think critically, both about his practical work and about the context of his work. He has developed an implicit understanding of the practical situation and the wider context. Professionals - experts at a higher level of professional activity are able to monitor and reflect, reconstruct and articulate knowledge gained from experience (Valencic Zuljan, 2001, p. 136).
The very concept of reflection comes from the Latin reflectere that means reflection, contemplation, judgment. It is a process of experiential learning based on in-depth analysis of one's own practice and cognition, in other words connecting and directing the thinking and actions of an individual (metacognitive process) (Bell et al., 1993, as cited in Skok, 2002, p. 14).

Keywords: *valuation, measurement, grading, assessment, evaluation, monitoring*

The teacher and his role in accomplishing educational tasks is a very contemporaneous topic in modern times. The role of the teacher has changed significantly in relation to the role he had in the traditional school. Therefore, in contrast to the traditional approach to determining the personality characteristics of teachers, it is necessary to point out some important characteristics of the role of teachers in the educational process, especially in the implementation of the educational tasks:
- The role of teachers in a modern school is not down exclusively to the realization of

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pre-given curricula, content, goals and tasks.
- Teacher, as an imminent social person, realizing the tasks of the pedagogical process, also contributes to the development of social relations.
- The dynamism of the teaching process and the mutual relations between teachers and students depend on the role of the teacher. Therefore, the teacher must be engaged in improving the organization and character of the educational process.
- In order to be effective, the teacher must actively work on studying and discovering the legality of the educational process.
In other words, the teacher is an active participant in the development of pedagogical science, and not only, or exclusively, the implementer of its results.
- In the modern socio-historical moment, which marks the rapid development of science and technology as well as civilizational trends in building new social relations that focus on taking care of man, the school has gone through a lot of transformation. It becomes a school of learning as one learns, it develops students' communicative abilities, and it is a school of work and creative cooperation between teachers and students. It is also a school of search, discovery, and even failure as a regular side effect of such a complex process. In such a school, the role of the teacher changes significantly, it can no longer be an authoritarian lecturer, communicator and assessor in charge of selecting students, but a democratic strategist, helper, friend, regulator, and even a therapist whose goal is to ensure maximum student development according to his abilities and aspirations.
- Taking over the role of organizer, coordinator, associate, helper and leader, the teacher in the best way prepares students for self-education, develops in them the need for learning and training, and prepares them for the process of lifelong learning.
- Modern school and we are free to assume that if it will be the same in future schools, it has to rely on self-employment, self-interest, self-search, self-examination and self-evaluation. This is the most important prerequisite for successful inclusion in the world of permanent education. In such a school, the role of the teacher also changes significantly; he has to reject the role of leader, he has to demonstrate more and tell less to students, he must not use enforcement,

and teaching should take place in such a way that the needs of both teachers and students have to be respected. The teacher of such a school has to permanently work on his own professional development and constantly search for ways, forms and means of the most successful educational process.
- The teacher's function has changed by modern educational technology. With the development and improvement of teaching technology, the role of teachers is becoming increasingly complex, multifaceted, multifaceted and multimedia.
- The teacher of a modern school becomes the bearer of new communication, a factor that unites the activities of all other educational factors (family, school, television, radio, theater, film, literature, work collectives, self-education and society as a whole),
- The relations between teachers and students in the new school have to be imbued with a new value orientation, the essence of which is democracy, humanism, tolerance and preparation for life in conditions of fierce competition in the market.
- In a democratic society, upbringing and education will leave the narrow institutional framework. In such conditions, the teacher has an important role in overcoming the isolation of upbringing and education from democratic currents that humanize society and liberate man.
The fact that there is a special theory in learning about the teacher's personality
- pedeutology, which "... studies and considers general and specific properties and characteristics, ie subjective conditions to be met by a person to whom society entrusts education and upbringing of young people" (Pedagogical Dictionary, II, 1967, p. 114), speaks clearly enough about the constant interest of philosophers, pedagogues, psychologists, sociologists and other professional and scientific workers in studying the role and position of teachers in the process of upbringing and education (Kačapor et al., 2005, pp. 343-357).

The teacher, as well as the student, must believe in his success in the educational process. Only a teacher who truly believes in his success can succeed. That is why one of his main roles is to create conditions for successful work, talk to students, respect their suggestions, develop a pleasant climate in the classroom in which both students and

he want to work. Instead of coercion, he must favor conscious discipline.

Teachers are experts in carrying out the goals and tasks of upbringing and education at school. In order to achieve the necessary qualification for the title of teacher of a certain profession, it is necessary to complete the appropriate level of education. The basic tasks of teachers are reflected in the following:

- to enable students to adopt a certain system of knowledge;
- formation of practical skills and habits, which represent a realistic assumption and basis for the development of cognitive abilities and capabilities;
- shaping the scientific view of the world, human society and man;
- enabling the connection of knowledge with practical (professional) activity;
- "transfer" of knowledge from different fields of science, culture and art (a special part of the scientific discipline that is included in the curriculum of the subject he teaches), as well as production, techniques and technology;
- acting on all spheres of the student's being as human beings in development;
- building a complete human personality and all its positive qualities;
- developing and enriching the student's intellect, emotions, will and character; in other words, he is obliged to educate and educate, which means that he acts systematically and systematically on three processes:
- the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and habits,
- the process of developing physical and intellectual strengths and abilities and
- the process of enriching the emotional and building the volitional sphere (developing positive personality traits, forming beliefs and attitudes and adequate human actions).

These three processes are known in modern pedagogical literature as three teaching tasks: material, functional and educational, with the first two related to education, and the third to education (intellectual, physical, moral, work and aesthetic education).

In the available literature in this field, the most common interpretations are that evaluation first appeared in the field of health and education. Today, evaluation, as a phenomenon and a pedagogical concept, is a very current pedagogical topic (Kacapor et al., 2005, p. 13). However, although the story of evaluation in education is very common, it is still an innovation that, both in theory and in practice, many still approach it very differently (Erculj & Trunk Sirca, 2000, p. 49; Brejc, 2006, p. 41). In order to accomplish such delicate tasks, it is necessary for a teacher to have a broad and solid general education, to know especially well about the teaching discipline, to have a solid pedagogical (especially didactic and methodological) and psychological education. Since upbringing and education are socially conditioned, the teacher's constant task is to harmonize teaching, ie educational activities with the requirements of society.

How evaluation and self-evaluation, both as a phenomenon and as a process, have always attracted the attention of experts in various fields and have often resulted in conflicting understandings.

The purpose and goal of one of the first, still valid definitions of evaluation in the field of education was written down in 1949 by the author Ralph W. Tyler. It says: "Evaluation is the process by which we determine the extent to which we have achieved the goals of education" (Ferjan, 2005, p. 290). Patton (1990, pp. 158-159), however, emphasizes that conducting evaluations in practice is usually focused only on one purpose - improving the program or deciding on it. Ferjan (2005, p. 290) thinks similarly, believing that evaluations are usually performed "during the implementation of the curriculum in order to improve the process itself." According to Ljubotina (2006, p. 2), evaluation can be "quite generally called a set of procedures intended to determine the results achieved by an activity planned to achieve a certain goal (certain values, evaluation)".

Standards and criteria, that is, their clear setting is that aspect of evaluation whose existence and knowledge are necessary to deal with this issue. Many authors warn about that. Ljubotina points out that in the evaluation process, in addition to defining the goal, it is important to define the evaluation criteria. Insufficiently precise evaluation criteria are a difficulty. One of the reasons for that is insufficiently precise and unspecified goals and tasks of upbringing,

education and teaching, or debatable, hypothetical and insufficiently scientifically verified evaluation criteria (Bjekic et al., 2007, p. 3). Standards, as an expert agreement, raise the quality and correctness of professional evaluation procedures, which also represent "principles that guide the evaluator in evaluation and are not a mechanical collection of rules" (Slivar, 2006, pp. 17-19).

The type of research is a determinant of evaluation attributed to it by many authors. It is about approaching evaluation as a systematic use of scientific research methods to evaluate the plan, implementation and results and the effectiveness of the program, policy or the observed problem (Rossi & Freeman, 1993, as cited in Kump, 2000, p. 13). These authors classify the evaluation among the applied scientific research. It differs from basic research, which focuses on the development of theory, in that it focuses on changing the existing one (Richardson et al., according to Macur, 1996, as cited in Kump, 2000a, p. 13).

Evaluation and decision-making, as the purpose of evaluation, is present in most definitions of this term (Scriven, 1967, 1983, 2000; Beeby, 1977; Courtenay, 1996; Wolf, 1996, as cited in Ivaničič, 2000, pp. 199-200). Cronbach (1983, 2000) understands evaluation in a broader sense and implies that it means "collecting and using information to make decisions about the educational program."Stufflebeam (Stufflebeam et al., 1983, 2000) thinks similarly, describing evaluation as "the process by which we collect data and information that serves us to make decisions." Deshler (1984, as cited in Ivanicic, 2000, p. 199) states that evaluation covers everything from measuring the achieved goals, through gathering useful information for decision-making, to the fact that evaluation is such a process where the evaluator does not have only one predetermined best design, but connects internal and external variables in the model used.

Thus, most authors approach evaluation as a systematic, critical analysis, the purpose of which is, in addition to evaluation, decision-making and strategic planning (Patton, 1987; Toulemonde, 1995) and training (Kristoffersen, Sursock, Westerheijden, 1998, as cited in Kump, 2000a, p. 13).

Research Part

The main populations of this research are primary and secondary school teachers in Kosovo. A representative sample was designed from a defined population of teachers. All schools were randomly selected. Within schools, teachers were also randomly selected. Properly filled in questionnaires were returned by 172 teachers from 10 different schools. There were no rejected questionnaires.

Due to the incompleteness of the data, a smaller number of teachers entered the processing of data on individual items and questions from the questionnaire. Namely, some teachers did not answer the seventh question in the questionnaire, which was an open-ended question. A total of 49% of respondents (26% of primary school teachers, 15% of high school teachers and 8% of vocational school teachers) received statistical processing on this issue. It can be said that methodological conditions for sample representativeness and generalization of results are provided.

The research was conducted according to the model of non-experimental causal research. By character, it is mostly exploratory and to a lesser extent structural-descriptive and explicative. In relation to the epistemological criterion (level of knowledge of the pedagogical field), the basic method of the empirical part of this research is descriptive (descriptive review, survey) and causally non-experimental (explicit and exploratory, causal review) method of pedagogical research. The description was the function of presenting the characteristics of the treated phenomena, analysis of certain samples and the connection between the phenomena. As this research is focused on the present, these methods have led to reliable facts about the existing objective reality, i.e. The state and relations in the existing school practice in the field of evaluation and self-evaluation of teachers. The opinions and attitudes of teachers consider subjects of the evaluation and self-evaluation process.

The extent to which research is needed to raise the quality of teaching practice is always based on understanding the teaching itself, that is processing teaching content, and putting it in a practical context (theory in action) and its evaluation and self-

evaluation (critical examination and review) through further changes in practice. If we want to deal with this issue, we must deal, in practice, as the key to success in the teaching process, to explore the attitudes of teachers who will improve the process of evaluation and self-evaluation.

Analysis of Obtained Results

The offered factors of this task are:
(1) Professional development of teachers;
(2) Reaction and readiness of teachers for changes;
(3) Quality solution within the law;
(4) Openness of teachers to evaluation and self-evaluation by other teachers;
(5) Intercollegiate cooperation in school;
(6) Support of relevant factors that

accompany the teaching process and
(7) Quality improvement of modern methods, techniques and instruments of work. A five-point Likert-type assessment scale accompanies these factors: (1) not relevant at all, (2) not relevant, (3) moderately relevant, (4) relevant, and (5) fully relevant. According to the above factors, our research hypothesis could move in the direction of the task: the differentiation of primary and secondary school teachers in determining the factors relevant to improving the evaluation and self-evaluation process is small or negligible. During our research, the following results were obtained:
Figure 1 shows the average values of the assessment of the importance of individual factors for improving the evaluation and self-evaluation process.

Figure 1.

Average values of assessing the importance of individual factors for improving evaluation and self-evaluation
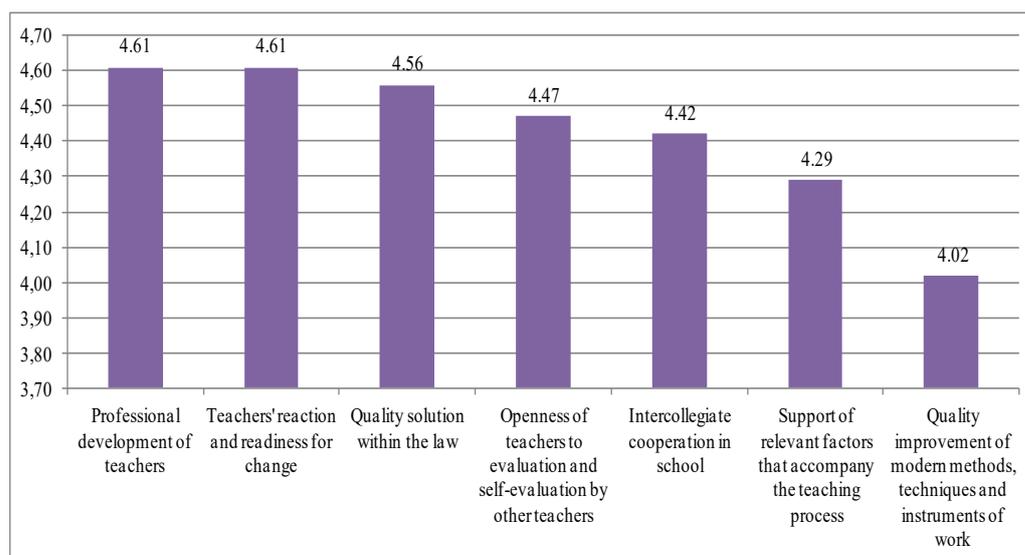
Of the offered factors for improving the process of self-evaluation, the teachers set the development of abilities and motivation for their application as the most important, and ranked them:
1. Professional development of teachers (average value 4.61),
2. Teachers' reaction and readiness for change (4.61),
3. Quality solution within the law (4.56),
4. Openness of teachers to evaluation and self-evaluation by other teachers (4.47)

5. Intercollegiate cooperation in school (4.42),
6. Support of relevant factors that accompany the teaching process (4.29),
7. Quality improvement of modern methods, techniques and instruments of work (4.02).

Table 1 shows the results of testing the significance of the difference in the assessment of the importance of factors for improving the process of self-evaluation with regard to the narrower professional specialty

Table 1.

Testing the significance of the difference in the assessment of the importance of factors for improving self-evaluation with regard to the narrower professional specialty of primary school teachers

	Narrow professional specialty	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	N	Mann-Whitney U	p
Professional development of teachers	*classroom teaching*	4.76	.449	89	193	p>0.05
	subject teaching.	4.62	.637	126		
Teachers' reaction and readiness for	*classroom teaching*	4.89	.344	89	151	p>0.05
	subject teaching.	4.46	.761	126		
Quality solution within the law	*classroom teaching*	4.64	.501	89	202	p>0.05
	subject teaching.	4.62	.637	126		
Openness of teachers to evaluation and self-evaluation by other teachers	*classroom teaching*	4.01	.731	89	197	p>0.05
	subject teaching.	4.08	.845	126		
Intercollegiate cooperation in school	*classroom teaching*	4.51	.517	89	201	p>0.05
	subject teaching.	4.46	.761	126		
Support of relevant factors that accompany the teaching process	*classroom teaching*	4.65	.501	89	179	p>0.05
	subject teaching.	4.38	.752	126		
Quality improvement of modern methods. techniques and instruments of work	*classroom teaching*	4.86	.341	88	101	P<0.05
	subject teaching.	4.08	1.093	126		

The above results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the answers of primary and secondary school teachers only in the assessment of the importance of quality improvement of modern methods, techniques and instruments (Mann-Whitney U = 101; p <0.05). There is no statistically significant difference in the assessment of their importance in other possible factors for improving the self-evaluation process.

Table 2 shows the results of testing the significance of the difference in the assessment of the importance of factors for improving the process of self-evaluation with regard to the narrower professional specialty of secondary school teachers.

Table 2.

Testing the significance of the difference in the assessment of the importance of factors for improving self-evaluation with regard to the narrower professional specialty of secondary school teachers

	Narrow professional specialty	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	N	Mann-Whitney U	p
Professional development of teachers	*Professional school*	4.37	.468	63	301	p>0.05
	Gymnasium	4.25	.652	66		
Teachers' reaction and readiness for	*Professional school*	4.58	.423	63	199	p>0.05
	Gymnasium	4.12	.824	66		
Quality solution within the law	*Professional school*	4.29	.496	62	261	p>0.05
	Gymnasium	4.31	.711	66		
Openness of teachers to evaluation and self-evaluation by other teachers	*Professional school*	4.11	.712	63	132	P<0.05
	Gymnasium	4.04	.799	66		
Intercollegiate cooperation in school	*Professional school*	4.27	.622	62	266	p>0.05
	Gymnasium	4.15	.756	66		
Support of relevant factors that accompany the teaching process	*Professional school*	4.38	.564	62	216	p>0.05
	Gymnasium	4.28	.695	66		
Quality improvement of modern methods. techniques and instruments of work	*Professional school*	4.66	.421	61	122	P<0.05
	Gymnasium	4.19	0.965	66		

The presented results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of secondary school teachers and high school teachers in assessing the importance of improving the quality of modern methods, techniques and instruments (Mann-Whitney U = 122; p <0.05) and the acceptance of self-evaluation by other teachers (Mann-Whitney U = 132; p <0.05). There is no statistically significant difference in the assessment of their importance in other possible factors for improving the self-evaluation process.

Table 3 shows the results of testing the significance of the difference in the assessment of the importance of factors for improving the self-evaluation process with regard to the gender of teachers.

Table 3.

Testing the significance of the difference in the assessment of the importance of factors for improving self-evaluation with regard to the gender of teachers

	Narrow professional specialty	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	N	Mann-Whitney U	p
Professional development of teachers	*Male*	4.28	.725	77	125	P<0.05
	Female	4.80	.407	266		
Teachers' reaction and readiness for	*Male*	4.58	.758	77	204	p>0.05
	Female	4.67	.606	266		
Quality solution within the law	*Male*	4.27	.724	76	137	P<0.05
	Female	4.73	.450	266		
Openness of teachers to evaluation and self-evaluation by other teachers	*Male*	4.02	.785	77	201	p>0.05
	Female	4.07	.785	266		
Intercollegiate cooperation in school	*Male*	4.31	.727	77	171	p>0.05
	Female	4.53	.629	266		

Table 3. *continum*

Support of relevant factors that accompany the teaching process	*Male*	4.20	.727	77	159	p>0.05
	Female	4.60	.621	266		
Quality improvement of modern methods. techniques and instruments of work	*Male*	4.58	.757	77	165	P>0.05
	Female	4.20	1.064	266		

The presented results show that, in relation to the sex of teachers, there is a statistically significant difference in assessing the importance of the factors of teacher education (Mann-Whitney U = 125; p <0.05) and in seeking adequate legal solutions (Mann-Whitney U = 137 p <0.05) in the process of improving evaluation and self-evaluation. In both cases, female teachers on average more often than teachers attach more importance to education and adequate legal solutions. In other offered factors relevant to improving the competence of self-evaluation of teachers in teaching, there is no statistically significant difference between teachers.

Based on the analyzed data and the obtained results, we can conclude that the working hypothesis is fully confirmed.

Conclusion

Accordingly, we can say that evaluation and self-evaluation as phenomena process a very current pedagogical concept took almost two centuries to be constituted and introduced as a professional activity (Mozina & Oresnik, 2002). The field of self-evaluation, as a requirement of the modern moment (Kacapor et al., 2005) abounds in very different theoretical approaches (Erculj & Trunk Sirca, 2000, Brejc, 2006). In this context, we accept that this paper follows the approach of most authors who understand evaluation and self-evaluation as correction and self-correction of teaching and teachers as "inseparable and causally connected" (Bjekic, 1999) in the concept of new professionalism and "an important factor in professional development" (Razdevsek Pucko, 2004). We also emphasize the importance of the strategy of professional development of teachers (which is still in its infancy in our country), its demand for a different evaluation of teachers' work and that the method of evaluation is already a form of professional development.

Thus, taking into account all the theoretical dilemmas and practical problems of this process, our experience leads us to contextually set the following framework of teacher evaluation and self-evaluation: it should be understood as a lifelong process of genetically woven human desire to know and improve oneself, owns and other people's experiences (Corovic, 2008).

We tested the assumptions we made in this research on a representative sample of 172 primary and secondary school teachers, written survey and scaling techniques, and adequate statistical procedures. The sample structure by type of school consists of 63% of primary school teachers (26% of primary school teachers and 37% of subject teachers) and 37% of secondary school teachers (18% of high school teachers and 19% of vocational school teachers). According to the gender of the respondents, the sample consists of 78% of female teachers and 22% of male teachers. According to age, the structure of the sample consists of 16% of teachers in the group up to 30 years, 63% of teachers in the group from 31 to 50 years and 21% of teachers in the group over 51 years.

We understood the importance of this ranking of factors for improving the self-evaluation process as a clear emphasis on the fact that teachers are still not sufficiently trained and competent for self-evaluation, which can be a significant guide for institutions that support the professional development of teachers. Among the examined offered factors, teachers pointed out the importance of increasing the ability to implement them (education and readiness of teachers for change, adequate legal solution) and increasing motivation for their application (support of relevant factors, support of school colleagues). As less important factors, teachers ranked the simplification of methods, techniques and instruments of self-evaluation and the acceptance of self-evaluation by other teachers.

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The Judicial Institutions Response to Human Trafficking: A Case Study From Southeast Europe

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Abstract

Trafficking in human beings is a phenomenon of global proportions, which on the one hand violates basic human rights and on the other hand represents a modern form of slavery. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors that are directly related to the level of development of the state, such as the economic situation, poverty, difficult housing conditions, low level of education, socio-cultural factors, etc. Trafficking in human beings in Kosovo concerning the number of inhabitants is considered to be high, despite the measures taken by the justice institutions. In this paper, the main focus is based on the analysis of the contribution of justice institutions concerning the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo and the comparability of cases of trafficking during the years 2017-2022. Furthermore, the conclusions of this research emphasize the necessary measures and policies that should be undertaken by the institutions of justice for the prevention and combating of this negative phenomenon at the country level. It also includes the importance of international legal cooperation, public awareness, and protection of victims through institutional channels. Only through inter-institutional cooperation and the raising of social awareness success can be achieved in the combat against this phenomenon, namely to protect basic human rights and freedoms.

Keywords: *International legal cooperation, justice institutions, Trafficking in Human Beings*

In post-war Kosovo, the criminal offense of Trafficking in human beings is continuously increasing in the number of cases. Trafficking in human beings, apart from being one of the most serious crimes, is also considered a contemporary form of slavery, which results in the violation of basic human rights and freedoms that are protected by the highest legal acts, whether local or even international. Historically, the countries most affected by this negative phenomenon are the transitional countries that face a higher degree of economic, political, educational, social, etc. problems. However, trafficking in human beings is not absent even in developed countries, but the approach and form of its occurrence are different. The treatment and study of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings, due to its complex ature, requires a specific commitment both for state institutions and for researchers in this field (Abdyli, 2016). To fundamentally understand the definition of the criminal offense of trafficking in

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human beings, we must examine and analyze its legal aspect, in general, and the elements of this criminal offense in particular. The elements of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings include recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by threat and the use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or the abuse of a position of vulnerability and giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation (Law on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims of trafficking, 2013, Article 3). The entire course of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings goes through three main stages: recruitment of the victim, transportation, and transfer, and the third stage, the destination of the victim, through which it is intended to achieve the goal of the perpetrator (Gashi, 2023). According to the data, criminal groups in Kosovo or through it illegally from other countries or to other countries transport women usually with the purpose of exploitation for prostitution (Gashi, 2014). Unfortunately, the number of victims keeps increasing, which made this *"criminal business"* even more profitable, both regionally and globally (Halili, 2007). On the other hand, the state institutions, namely the institutions of justice, must work in the direction of discovery and analysis of the causes, factors, and circumstances that influence criminal behavior in society (Halili, 2011).

In the legislation of the Republic of Kosovo, the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings for the first time is foreseen in the UNMIK Regulation (No. 2001/4) on the Prohibition of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo. Later, the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings was also foreseen in the Provisional Criminal Code of Kosovo (UNMIK/RREG/2003/25) 2004, the Criminal Code of Kosovo (NO. 04/L-082) 2013, and recently in the Criminal Code of Kosovo (NO. 06/L-074) 2019 which is in force. In Article 166, paragraph 6.1., of this Code, the term "trafficking in human beings" means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by threat or the use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or the abuse of a position of

vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation (Criminal Code of Kosovo, 2020, Article 166, 6.1). Despite the changes that the legislation in question has undergone over the years, the definition of the phrase "Trafficking in human beings" in terms of meaning and content remains the same.

To prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, the relevant institutions of the Republic of Kosovo have approved the Law on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Human beings and the Protection of Victims of Trafficking. In this law, the entire process of this phenomenon is determined, starting from the qualification of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings, investigation, and criminal prosecution to the assistance and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings (Law on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims of trafficking, 2013). Likewise, there is also the National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings 2022-2026, which, through strategic objectives, aims to strengthen the state mechanisms that will influence either the investigation, criminal prosecution, and punishment, but also the identification of victims, providing their necessary protection and international cooperation (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2022).

In terms of legislation, the state of Kosovo over the years has made significant progress in terms of legal regulation, but now the question arises as to how much the relevant institutions have achieved to implement these legal norms in practice. Thus, through this scientific paper, we will more closely reflect the real state of justice institutions towards the perpetrators of this negative phenomenon in the country.

This research employed diverse research methodologies to gain a nuanced understanding of the practices and policies employed by justice institutions in Kosovo for the prevention and combatting of human trafficking. From the perspective of Dzogovic and Bajrami (2023), who advocate for a qualitative research approach in comprehending complex phenomena, the choice of this method is deemed most suitable for a thorough exploration

of the intricacies inherent in the studied phenomenon. Methodological rigor is crucial in ensuring the coherence of the theoretical framework and methodology, thereby guaranteeing the quality of the derived results and constructed data (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023, p. 161).

Within this framework, the research encompasses an examination of legal provisions and strategies employed by justice institutions in addressing human trafficking, a comparison of the incidence of human trafficking cases between 2017 and 2022, and an evaluation of the collaborative dynamics among the Police, Prosecutor, and Court. Additionally, an analysis of factors influencing the limited resolution of cases is conducted. The primary objective of this study is to enhance comprehension of the role played by justice institutions in investigating and prosecuting human traffickers. At the same time, the research seeks to heighten societal awareness regarding the perils of trafficking associated.

In conclusion, the study presents pertinent findings to advocate for increased collaboration among judicial institutions. Emphasis is particularly placed on fostering enhanced cooperation with international entities, civil society, and private institutions to improve the identification processes for both perpetrators and victims. It is imperative to underscore the significance of judicial institutions extending collaborative efforts beyond international entities to encompass partnerships with civil society and private organizations. Such proactive engagement is posited to facilitate more efficient and effective identification of both perpetrators and victims of criminal activities, ultimately contributing to the cultivation of a society characterized by heightened safety and justice for all.

Discussion

Justice institutions concerning the punitive policy against perpetrators of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo

Post-war Kosovo, as a country in transition, despite the efforts, continues to be the object of criticism concerning the justice system, respectively, with the punitive policies. One of the most important forms of reducing the number of cases of trafficking in human beings is the punitive policy that is used against the perpetrators of this criminal offense. If the punitive policy together with its forms of implementation in practice are efficient and show success, then we can talk about prevention and combat against criminality in society. In Kosovo, there are several institutions that according to the law, cooperate for the prevention and combat against the trafficking of human beings, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kosovo Police, Kosovo Judicial Council, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Science Technology and Innovations, Ministry of Local Government Administration, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Agency for Gender Equality, State Prosecutor, Courts, Office for Protection and Assistance to Victims and Municipalities. In addition, there is significant inter-institutional coordination between the police, the prosecution, and the courts, as the three main state links in the implementation of the law, are necessary. Only in this way, Kosovo can talk about an efficient punitive policy, namely the rule of law. On the contrary, the failure of any link from these three makes it impossible to successfully implement the punitive policy in general and that towards the perpetrators of trafficking in human beings in particular. Taking into consideration the role and importance of repressive measures concerning the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings below will be given data on the number of cases initiated by the police, prosecution office, and Kosovo courts for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo during the period 2017-2022.

Volume and dynamics of cases initiated by the Kosovo Police for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo 2017–2022

The Kosovo Police, the Directorate for the Investigation of Trafficking in Human Beings, with the investigative work and operative plan, manages to identify the various criminal groups, manage cases, and discover and management of victims

of trafficking human beings, victims who are referred to the police directly or also from other institutions. To prevent and combat organized crime in general and trafficking in human beings in particular, the Kosovo Police is also based on the Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, which has taken into consideration the best practices of the police of developed countries, including all bilateral and international agreements that are in the interest of the state (Kosovo Police, 2016).

It is worth noting that the Kosovo Police during the years 2020-2021 has organized campaigns aimed at raising social awareness against trafficking in human beings. Thus, in 2020, despite the restrictive measures against the spread of the pandemic "COVID-19 virus, the Kosovo Police organized an awareness campaign with the motto *"Don't be silent, stop trafficking in human beings"*. Likewise, the Police have implemented the operational plan

"Autumn 2020" in the entire territory of the Republic of Kosovo. During the operation, 17 premises and 133 people were controlled. Municipal inspectors have closed 3 premises and issued fines and warnings for lack of work documentation (Kosovo Police, 2021). Meanwhile, in 2021, the Kosovo Police held several meetings to raise awareness with educational and health institutions. As a result, the Police implemented the Operational Plan *"Identification of children in street situations as possible victims of trafficking"*, which resulted in the identification of 18 child beggars and the identification of 23 adult beggars (Kosovo Police, 2022). Likewise, throughout the year 2022, the Kosovo Police took care to extend its activity by organizing preventive activities and awareness lectures for school students throughout the country to raise their awareness and awareness about negative phenomena in society (Kosovo Police, 2023).

Table 1.

Data on the number of cases for criminal offenses of the nature of Trafficking in Human Beings by the Kosovo Police during the years 2017-2022

Criminal offenses of nature trafficking in human beings	POLICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO						
	NUMBER OF CASES						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Trafficking in human beings	40	19	25	20	27	20	151
Enabling prostitution	27	42	36	11	40	26	182
Dealing in prostitution	36	41	35	17	33	49	211
Exploitation for slavery	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Removal of organs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others...	130	138	34	14	31	44	391
TOTAL	233	240	131	62	131	139	

As can be seen from Table 1, according to the official data of the Kosovo Police, the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings and other related criminal offenses are quite widespread in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. Only during the years 2017-2022, the Kosovo Police registered 151 cases for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings, initiated 182 cases for the offense of Facilitation of Prostitution, for engagement in prostitution in a total of 211 cases, for exploitation in slavery with only 1 case and other offenses but related to the nature of trafficking in human beings are 391 cases. In total, the

Kosovo Police during the years 2017-2022 for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings and other criminal offenses related to trafficking in human beings have registered 936 cases (Kosovo Police, 2020a, 2020b, 2023). Based on these data, it is observed that the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings during the years 2017-2022 has had a slight increase and decrease in cases. However, if we compare these figures with previous periods, during 2015, 165 cases were initiated for investigation, 6 criminal groups of trafficking in human beings were eliminated; arrested 178 suspected persons were, of which: 48

persons were suspected of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings; 37 suspected of facilitating or forcing prostitution; 11 suspects for the criminal offense of sexual services of a trafficking victim; 12 suspects for other crimes related to trafficking in human beings, as well as 70 suspects for prostitution-minor offenses. It demonstrates that trafficking in human beings is decreasing, but if we compare it with the number of inhabitants of the Republic of Kosovo, it remains high (Kosovo Police, 2016).

Volume and dynamics of indictments filed in the state prosecution office for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo during 2017-2021

To increase the efficiency concerning the prevention and combating of criminality in general and of trafficking in human beings in particular, the State Prosecutor is constantly taking measures in the direction of capacity building both in terms of material, and professional and in increasing the number of prosecutors (Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo, 2017).

In addition to its mission to be independent, impartial, professional, and effective in the investigation, prosecution, and adequate treatment of crime victims, the State Prosecution Office has continuously prepared Strategic Plans for the prosecutorial system. According to the Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo during the year 2016-2018, it approved the Strategic Plan, this plan is aimed at improving and strengthening the prosecutorial system as a whole, advancing relations with the public as well as developing technology (Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo, 2016).

Meanwhile, for the years 2019-2021, they have drawn up the Strategic Plan for the Prosecutorial System, which contains four main strategic pillars. These pillars are based on the continuation and strengthening of the prosecutorial system, the commitment to increase the institutional and professional capacities, and the investigation and prosecution of

the perpetrators of criminal offenses with special emphasis on the perpetrators of organized crime (Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo, 201). The next Strategic Plan for the Prosecutorial System 2022-2024 defines the three-year strategic objectives by structuring them into six main strategic pillars. These pillars have concentrated their main focus on *"professionalism and independence in the prosecutorial system, efficiency, and effectiveness in the prosecution of crime, profiling of prosecutors and handling criminal cases with priority, management, and administration in the prosecutorial system, integrity, accountability, and ethics as well as pillar six included Transparency in the prosecutorial system"*. Each of these pillars also has an action plan (Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo, 2022)

In cases of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings, when the state prosecutor receives the criminal report from the police, he/she can act by dismissing the criminal report, ordering measures for mandatory psychiatric treatment, transfer the criminal proceeding to another state, join proceeding, terminate the investigation, file indictment for issuing a punitive order, file a direct indictment and indictment after conducting investigations (Prosecutorial Kosovo of Council, 2017) Referring to a concrete case, after a criminal report by the Kosovo Police has been submitted, the District Public Prosecution Office in Gjilan (PPH nr. 119/2007) considered that there is a reasonable suspicion against the accused S.J. and I.B., of having committed the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings. Based on this, it was decided to initiate an investigation to gather sufficient evidence necessary to decide whether to file or not the indictment (District Public Prosecution Office in Gjilan, PPH. nr. 119/2007).

Below, the data collected through the research describe the way the prosecutors in Kosovo have responded to the criminal reports against persons who are suspected of having committed the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings during the period 2017-2021

Table 2.

The method of resolving criminal reports against persons for the criminal offense of Trafficking in Human Beings 2017–2021

Annual Report of the State Prosecution Office for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings 2017-2021	Total persons	The criminal report has been dismissed / the report has been closed	Measures for Psychiatric Treatment	Transfer of criminal proceedings to another state	The investigation is terminated	Indictment for issuing the punitive order	A direct indictment has been filed	Indictment after the investigation	Another way (procedure. is joined)	Has been sent to the jurisdiction (Removed from the number of pending cases)
1 Special Prosecution										
2 BP in Pristina	101	8	-	-	24	-	1	68	-	5
3 BP in Prizren	31	4	-	-	13	-	1	13	-	5
4 BP in Pejë	37	4	-	-	13	-	-	20	-	4
5 BP in Gjilan	27	-	-	-	4	-	2	21	-	-
6 BP in Mitrovicë	74	2	-	-	10	-	-	62	-	6
7 BP in Ferizaj	47	1	-	-	1	-	-	45	-	-
8 BP in Gjakovë	11	-	1	-	4	-	-	6	-	-
IN TOTAL	328	19	1	-	69	-	4	235	-	20

PERSONS - WHOSE CASES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED ACCORDING TO THE METHOD OF RESOLUTION

Based on the table mentioned above, during the years 2017-2021 we see that out of a total of 328 persons who are suspected of having been involved in the commission of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings, the most frequent way of resolving criminal reports by the State Prosecution Office was the filing of the indictment after investigating with a total of 235 indictments (State Prosecution Office, 2022, 2023).

In addition to the way of solving the criminal reports by the prosecutors, it is important to know the actions that these prosecutors took during the procedure for solving these criminal reports. Only during the period 2017-2021, the following actions were taken: 63 - Orders for detention, 2 - Requests for additional information, 3 - Orders for covert measures, 216 - Rulings for the initiation of the investigation, 105 - Requests for detention on remand, 42 - Requests approved by the Court, 11 - Rulings on the expansion of investigation, 5 - Suspensions of the procedure, 3- Re-initiations of the procedure after the suspension of the investigations. Whereas, as far as the appeals against the decisions of the Court are concerned, concerning rejection of the request there have been no rejections of the request during these five years, just as there have been no rejections of the decisions of the Court of Appeal concerning appeals (State Prosecution Office, 2020, 2023).

In the State Prosecution Office, cases for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings have not been missing even throughout the year 2022, according to which they received 48 new cases with a total of 71 people. Of them, against 5 persons criminal reports have been dismissed, for 23 other persons the investigation has been terminated, for 48 persons an indictment has been filed after the investigative procedure, while for 1 person a direct indictment has

been filed (State Prosecution Office, 2020, 2023). According to official statistics, in 2022 there was a slight increase in the number of cases and persons suspected of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings, whereas there was a 10% decrease in the number of persons who were indicted after the investigative procedure compared to the period 2017–2021.

In general, the State Prosecution Office in 2022 had 96 active cases with 147 persons involved, of which 48 cases with 76 persons were inherited from previous years. Thus, during the year 2022, it managed to solve a total of 54 cases with 77 persons, while the number of pending cases remained at 42 cases with a total of 70 persons (State Prosecution Office, 2020, 2023).

Based on this research, it is obvious that the State Prosecutor at the country level has made an effort to lower the number of reviewed cases; however, the number of pending cases remains high for a country like Kosovo. In such a situation, the State Prosecutor must take measures to strengthen the institutional mechanisms, which will then be able to influence the increase in efficiency in the combat against trafficking in human beings.

The volume and dynamics of criminal cases convicted for the criminal offense of trafficking human beings in the courts of Kosovo during the years 2017-2021

Seen from a historical point of view, in different periods, including the primitive society, the slave-owning period, and the feudal period, the application of strict measures, namely the imposition of harsh punishments, is considered the main mechanism aimed at combating and preventing crime and which has directly affected the volume of criminal offenses. On the other hand, the tortures and physical and mental ill-treatment suffered by the perpetrators of the crimes were not meant to raise awareness not only of the perpetrators but also of the society as a whole, for the fact that they too must control their actions in the future as otherwise, they are not exempted from such punishments (Halili, 2009). However, with the development and advancement of society and the state order, in general, the system of punishments and

the execution of legal sanctions in practice took a different direction, which changed the volume and dynamics of crimes in general (Abdyli, 2019) So, the most important part of the punitive policy is the application of punishments and other legal sanctions against the perpetrators of criminal offenses, which can otherwise be called the policy of courts (Gashi, 2003). This policy of courts can either increase the volume and dynamics of criminal cases or decrease their number; it all depends on the justice system of a country.

To protect society from criminality, namely from the criminal offenses of trafficking in human beings, the state bodies take measures against the perpetrators of the crime by imposing punishments. Imposing punishments means the opposition to illegal actions by the perpetrators of various criminal actions on the one hand, and on the other hand, it means combating crime and protecting society from negative phenomena. In this context, it is extremely important that the relevant institutions are not influenced by external factors, but that the measure of punishment is proportional to the damage caused. Otherwise, the goal of preventing and combating crime in a society will hardly be achieved (Salihu et al., 2014). Based on the principle of legality, Kosovo's legislation, like most international legislation, considers that each punishment must be determined in advance by law. Whereas the imposition and measurement of punishment should be aimed at preventing and combating that a person does not commit criminal offenses. In addition to punishment, justice institutions must at the same time think about reintegration and re-socialization in society. Therefore, in addition to punishment measures, punishment includes educational-social measures. In practice, the same is done with the perpetrators of the criminal offenses of trafficking in human beings, as one of the most important forms of organized crime in Kosovo.

Taking into consideration the importance of the punishments and their amount concerning the prevention and combat against trafficking in human beings, below we will present the data on the punishments for the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings for the five years from 2017 to 2021, respectively.

Table 3.

The volume and dynamics of adults convicted of the criminal offense of Trafficking in Human Beings according to the type of punishment in the courts of Kosovo 2017-2021

ARTICLE	Description of the type of offence	Method of solution according to cases											
			With Judgment										
			From the cases solved by Judgment, record the cases according to the types of punishments						Expired statute of limitation				
		Total active cases	Punishment of imprisonment	Punishment of a fine	Suspended sentence	Other punishments	With judgment of acquittal	With rejection judgment	Relative	Absolute	Was solved in a different way	Total cases solved	Cases within the jurisdiction of the court
171 139	Trafficking in Human Beings	597	26	9	8	0	12	8	0	0	15	79	1

According to the data in Table No. 3. during the years 2017-2021, a total of 79 cases were resolved in the basic courts of Kosovo, of which 26 were sentenced to punishment of imprisonment, 9 punishments of a fine, and 8 were suspended sentences. While 10 cases have been acquitted, the other 6 cases have been resolved with rejection judgment. During these 5 years, the courts of Kosovo had a total of 378 pending cases from the previous years, while during these 5 years, they received 54 new cases. Therefore, in total, during the years 2017-2021, there were 597 active cases of trafficking in human beings, of which 79 were resolved and another 518 are in the process of being resolved. The small number of treatment and resolving cases of trafficking in human beings by the courts is indirectly harming the work and dedication of other institutions that aim to prevent and combat this negative phenomenon (Judicial Council, 2020).

The inefficiency of Kosovo's courts is not only shown by these five years (2017-2021) but was also identified during an earlier study in which ten years (2005-2014) were researched for the volume and dynamics of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings 2005-2014. According to this research, in the entire territory of the basic and appellate courts in the Republic of Kosovo, 134 adults have been convicted, of which 33 have been sentenced with punishment of imprisonment of 1-2 years with a total of 33 persons or 24.6%, followed by punishment of 2-5 years with 32 persons or 23.8%. Whereas, for the criminal offense of co-perpetration in trafficking in human beings, the most common punishment was 6-12 months, with a total of 102 persons convicted, or 22.8% (Abdyli, 2019). Thus, the small number of cases reviewed over the years shows that the Kosovo judicial system should prioritize work towards building new capacities and accountability at work.

The judicial system in Kosovo since 2014 has made a more obvious contribution to the drafting of strategic plans, such as The Strategic Plan for the Judiciary (2014-2019, 2020-2022), the Communication Strategy of the Judicial Council of Kosovo 2022-2024, the Action Plan for Crisis Management, the Strategic Plan for Improving Access to Justice 2022-2025, efficiency and prioritization of cases within the judicial system, the Strategic Plan for the Efficient Resolution of Corruption and Organized Crime Cases 2022-2024, the Strategic Plan for Improving Access to Justice 2022-2025, etc. (Judicial Council of Kosovo, 2023). However, if we compare the resolution of the cases of the two research periods 2005-2014 and the period 2017-2021, despite these strategies, we do not see any progress in the resolution of cases by the courts. In these circumstances, it is obvious that the

judicial system of Kosovo needs additional mechanisms that will help in the practical implementation of these strategies. Also, the judicial system should develop policies to address the cases that are of higher priority, especially when talking about the nature of the criminal offenses of trafficking in human beings. Another important fact in the context of preventing and combating trafficking in human beings is punitive measures which must be proportional to the damage caused by the perpetrator.

In general, the institutions of justice in Kosovo, and in particular the judicial system, are faced with numerous challenges and weaknesses which are also evidenced in the Strategic Plan for the Efficient Resolution of Corruption and organized crime cases 2022-2024 and the Action Plan in which the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings as a form of organized crime is also included (Judicial Council of Kosovo, 2021). According to this strategy, the main aim is to improve the quality of case resolution, and timely treatment, cope with the statutory limitation, and the confiscation of property resulting from the commission of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings (Judicial Council of Kosovo, 2021). In this context, the judicial system in cooperation with other local and international organizations should work towards the implementation of these strategies and action plans to bring justice by pronouncing meritorious punishments for the perpetrators and support and assistance for the victims.

Justice institutions and international legal cooperation

Historically, in the international aspect, various efforts have been made to deepen international legal cooperation to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings, respectively its forms. In the context of international legal cooperation at the world level, over the years, various agreements and conventions have been signed between states to pave the way for combating and preventing this negative phenomenon. Among the first international agreements that were negotiated for the prohibition of the trafficking of human beings was that of Paris, in 1904, known as "White Slave Traffic". Then it continued with the "International Convention for the

Suppression of the White Slave Traffic" in 1910, "International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children" in 1921, "International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age" in 1933, etc. At the beginning of the 21st century, another very important convention was introduced, which aims to precisely define the notion of trafficking in human beings, and which has also been integrated into the legislation of Kosovo. This convention, known as "The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime", includes a total of four protocols, two of which are related to the field of Trafficking in human beings: "The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children", and "The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air".

In post-war Kosovo, international legal cooperation concerning the institutions of Kosovo in general and those of justice in particular has been a necessity of the time, because now the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings is not only committed within the borders of the Republic of Kosovo but also beyond it. In this aspect, to combat and prevent this negative phenomenon in society, the justice system in Kosovo has often needed help and legal cooperation from other international institutions, either for the identification of the perpetrator, the criminal group, or even the victims. When talking about the criminal offenses of trafficking in human beings, usually international legal cooperation is directed in criminal cases by requesting - offering assistance to another international state, to assist in criminal proceedings.

If the legal cooperation between the states is mutual and efficient, then it helps to speed up the investigation of the cases and bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice. In this regard, Kosovo has signed bilateral and multilateral agreements with several international countries to deepen legal cooperation. Until this period, Kosovo had bilateral agreements with nine countries: Turkey, Macedonia, Belgium, Switzerland, Croatia, Albania, Hungary, Italy, and Germany (Ministry of Justice, 2023). In 2011, for the first time in Kosovo, the Law on international legal cooperation in criminal matters was approved, which was repealed in

2013 to make way for the new law, which in 2022 underwent some changes - additions to it (Law on International Legal Cooperation in Criminal Matters, 2011, 2013, 2022). According to this law, the main goal is to regulate the conditions and all procedural stages between the Republic of Kosovo and other states for the provision of international legal assistance, unless otherwise regulated by international agreement" (Law on International Legal Cooperation in criminal matters, Article 1)

Concluding considerations

Trafficking in human beings as one of the most serious criminal offenses in the contemporary world has in one form or another affected the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. Trafficking in human beings by nature is often considered "moderate slavery", which every year is increasing in the number of cases, respectively in the number of victims. In such a situation, the institutions of Kosovo have made progress in the material aspect by drafting strategies, laws, and codes that aim to combat and prevent this negative phenomenon. However, despite this regulation, there are still a large number of unsolved cases of trafficking in human beings in Kosovo. The institutions of justice, namely the police, the prosecution, and the courts, whose aim is the rule of law, must do more throughout the process until the case is resolved completely. Otherwise, with the current number of unsolved cases of trafficking in human beings, it cannot be said that enough is being done by the justice institutions. Based on official data, the Kosovo Police appears to be one of the institutions that have undertaken the most measures in the field of preventing and combating trafficking in human beings with a total of 151 cases during the period 2017-2022. Meanwhile, in the prosecutorial system, a positive movement is observed in the direction of examining cases, while the situation in the judicial system remains worrying with a total of 79 cases solved out of 597 in total during the period 2017-2021. Failure to resolve cases in time means that year after year, many criminal cases of trafficking in human beings are inherited. In such a situation, the judicial system must increase the professional capacities within it to increase the efficiency for the resolution

of cases. Another challenge of the judicial system is the advancement of information and communication technology, which makes the courts even more transparent during the decision-making and accountability processes, including statistical reports on the volume and dynamics of adults and minors convicted of the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings according to the type of punishment and their duration. On the other hand, the judicial system should also contribute to the increase of trust concerning the victims of trafficking in human beings by timely handling cases and pronouncing the deserved punishment for the perpetrators. Further, the justice institutions in Kosovo make their contribution in the field of combating and preventing trafficking in human beings is a prerequisite to focusing on two additional types of cooperation: internal cooperation in the triangle between the police, prosecutor, and court, and international legal cooperation that would affect both the guarantee of the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

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Resilience to Physical and Emotional Stress

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Abstract

Resilience is the ability of an individual to successfully adapt to stressful and challenging situations. However, resilience encompasses not only the way we react to a specific stressful situation but also how we cope with accompanying physical, psychological, and social challenges. A resilient person is not immune to failures, losses, and the effects of stress. It is the way a person responds after the initial shock that stands out and distinguishes resilient individuals from others. The aim of this study is to examine differences in resilience and quality of life among early and middle-aged participants, as well as the relationship between these variables. We aim to determine the importance of self-efficacy, perseverance, social support, internal locus of control, and coping and adaptation strategies for preserving the physical and mental health of individuals under the impact of stressful life events.

Resilience

For the development of mature personality, it is necessary to master techniques for coping with life challenges. Some individuals find it easier to do so, and we refer to them as resilient. Any exposure to stress, crises, and traumatic experiences has the potential to have lasting effects on psychophysical functioning. The consequences can be particularly pronounced if threatening situations are experienced during childhood or adolescence. However, whether there will be consequences and how pronounced and disruptive they will be for further functioning depends on the individual's characteristics and strength (Stepanovic, 2023)

Orientation towards these positive aspects of personality represents resilience. Resilience, therefore, implies a person's ability to adequately respond to stress. It is an adaptive response of the individual that has a protective role (Stepanovic, 2023).

What promotes the development of resilience are functional family relationships, quality time spent together by children and parents, the psychophysical health of parents, academic success and support from teachers, engagement in extracurricular activities, dedicating attention to hobbies, belonging to a prosocial peer group, and supportive broader social community (Stepanovic, 2023).

It follows that the development of resilience is closely related to the formation

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of personality as a whole. Being resilient does not mean that a person does not react to stressors or experience negative emotions, but rather that they deal with them in a functional way and overcome them (Bonanno, 2005). It is correct to consider resilience as a dynamic process that takes place throughout one's life, rather than as a state, characteristic trait, or specific personality trait (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998)

It is variable and varies depending on social situations and developmental phases. Sometimes the role of internal resilience is more pronounced, and other times the role of external support, but generally, for more effective problem-solving, the interaction of both factors is necessary. This also means that one can react in one way at one moment in life and differently in another (Block & Block, 1980).

Firstly, resilience is a response to difficulties, which implies the ways in which an individual responds to problems, so without adversity, resilience does not exist (McGinnis, 2018).

Secondly, resilience carries within it the possibility of recovery. A person is capable of returning to or recovering from adversity, reaching or surpassing their previous level of functioning.

Thirdly, resilience is generally described in terms of well-being, rather than pathology. Strengths, rather than deficits, are seen as resources that enable individuals to overcome adversity.

Resilience Models

There are three general classes of resilience models - compensatory, protective, and challenge models - that explain how resilience factors affect the trajectory of individuals from exposure to risk to negative outcomes (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

Compensatory Model

The compensatory model best explains situations where a resilience factor opposes or acts in the opposite direction of a risk factor. The resilience factor has a direct impact on the outcome, one that is independent of the action of the risk factor. In the CIET ACIERN-East study, for example, alcohol abstinence or moderation is compensatory in the sense that it is directly and independently associated with a lower risk of youth suicide (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008).

Protective Model

In the protective model, resources or assets mitigate or reduce the effects of risk on negative outcomes. Protective factors can influence outcomes in several ways. They can help neutralize the effects of risk, weaken them without completely eliminating them, or enhance the positive effect of another promotive factor in the creation of outcomes (Stepanovic, 2019). In the ACIERN-East study, drug avoidance, although not directly associated with a lower risk of suicide, is associated with lower alcohol use and, therefore, it is protective in the sense that it enhances the anti-suicidal potential of the latter (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008).

Challenge Model

The third model of resilience is the challenge model. In this model, the relationship between risk factors and outcomes is "curvilinear": exposure to both low and high levels of risk factors is associated with negative outcomes, but moderate levels of risk are associated with less negative (or positive) outcomes. For example, adolescents exposed to moderate levels of risk may face enough risk factors to learn how to overcome them, but they are not exposed to such high levels that overcoming them becomes impossible (Rolf & Johnson, 1999). Many challenge models require longitudinal data. Researchers, for instance, use them to track how repeated exposure to challenges prepares adolescents to cope with adversities in the future. An interesting application of the challenge resilience model is provided by Richardson (Richardson, 2002), for whom "reintegrative recovery" is the most positive outcome of a process involving an individual's reactions to stress or adversity. Resilient reintegration occurs when insight or growth is experienced as a result of the disruption (Stepanovic, 2019).

Research Methodology and Instruments

Research Problem

Any internal or external stimulus that triggers a biological response is known as stress. The compensatory responses to these stressors are known as stress responses. Based on the type, timing, and severity of the applied stimulus, stress can have various effects on the body, ranging from changes in homeostasis to life-threatening effects and death.

In many cases, pathophysiological complications of diseases arise from stress, and individuals exposed to stress, such as those who work or live in stressful environments, are more likely to experience various disorders. Stress can act as a triggering or aggravating factor for many diseases and pathological conditions. Resilience is a psychological construct that helps individuals adapt to uncertainty, trauma, threat, or other significant sources of stress. It has been shown that the majority of individuals return to their previous level of functioning with adequate care after a certain period, and some individuals even experience personal growth during times of crisis. Resilience is not inherited, it may not be equally expressed in all situations, but it can be learned. There is no more important skill for an individual than to "toughen up" and bravely confront the challenges that arise. In this master's thesis, we have reviewed some of the main effects of stress on the primary physiological systems of humans.

Research Subject

We are aware that stressful life events are situations that bring about a sudden change in living conditions and require adaptation and coping from individuals (Armstrong et al., 2011), and successful coping with stressors is referred to as resilience (Ryff et al., 2012).

However, it is important to reiterate that resilience is not a stable characteristic but a dynamic, changeable process. Numerous life events influence changes in resilience (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). Therefore, the subject of this study is to determine the relationship between resilience, negative life events, and the general health of the participants.

Research Methods and Techniques

The applied research method involves online surveying, accessed through a created and posted link, which allowed access to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 23 questions, with questions 1 to 4 relating to demographic data (gender, age, and place of residence), questions 4 to 13 focusing on resilience factors, and questions 13 to 23 addressing the general health of the participants. Descriptive statistical methods were used for data analysis.

Results

The distribution of respondents by gender is 74.1% female and 26% male. The distribution of respondents by age is 81.4% aged 25-40 years, 18.5% aged 41-60 years, and 0.1% aged between 61-70 years. The distribution of respondents by place of residence is 74.3% from the city, 17.2% from suburban areas, and 9.1% from rural areas. Regarding satisfaction with life conditions, 60% of respondents are capable of coping with life problems, while 7.5% are not capable. In terms of achieving life goals, 56.6% consider their life meaningful, 41.8% consider it meaningful only occasionally, and 3.5% find their life meaningless. When facing failures in life, 56.3% of respondents believe that failure discourages them in some situations, 24.7% do not find it discouraging, and 20.4% believe that failure discourages them in life. In solving life problems, 68.9% believe they can cope with them, 30.3% believe they can cope in some situations, and 1.6% do not have solutions to life problems. Regarding managing life events, 58.7% of respondents believe they can control events in their life, 34.5% believe they can control their life in some situations, and 8.37% are unable to control their life. When it comes to dealing with stressful situations, 34.9% of respondents believe they can handle them well, 26.7% are unsure if they can cope with stressful situations, 21.6% believe they can handle them with the help of family, and 19.7% cannot cope with stressful situations. Regarding facing difficult moments or human mortality, 54.5% of respondents believe they can endure tough moments in life, 27.8% believe they cannot, and 20.2% rely on their family to overcome difficult moments.

Distribution of respondents according to hopeless situations in life: 40.9% believe they can endure tough moments in life and face hopeless situations, 28% do not give up in hopeless situations, 24.7% find it difficult to cope in such situations, and 8.36% give up in hopeless situations. Distribution of respondents regarding changes in life: 68.8% see changes as a challenge, 23.8% embrace challenges and do not avoid them, while 9.34% cannot see changes as a challenge. Distribution of respondents regarding adaptation to health problems: 68.6% believe they cope well mentally with health problems, 29.8% struggle mentally with health problems, and 2.4% do not cope mentally with health problems at all. Distribution of respondents regarding self-confidence: 59.3% feel in control of their actions in life and have self-confidence, 34.8% are unsure if they have control over their actions in life, and 7.9% lack control over their actions in life. Distribution of respondents regarding situational factors in life: 58.5% feel drained and unwell only in certain cases and circumstances, 26.8% do not feel drained or unwell, and 15.4% feel drained and unwell in everyday activities. Distribution of respondents regarding the impact of stress on health: 48.7% believe they have no pain, 39% experience pain and pressure in the head only in certain situations, and 13.3% experience pain and pressure in the head. Distribution of respondents regarding everyday stressful situations: 46.2% feel under some pressure in certain situations or occasionally, 30% feel constantly under some pressure, while 24.1% do not feel under any pressure. Distribution of respondents with anxiety disorders: 46% feel fear and tension without a clear reason in certain situations or occasionally, indicating they are under some stress. 32.5% do not feel fear, nervousness, or tension without a clear reason, indicating resilience, while 22.4% feel fear, nervousness, and tension without a clear reason, indicating they have anxiety. Distribution of respondents regarding workplace stress: 41.8% state they haven't noticed being slower in performing daily tasks at work, 37.7% experience it only occasionally, and 21.1% believe they are slower in performing daily activities, indicating they are under stress. Distribution of respondents regarding daily activities at work: 42.3% enjoy performing

daily activities at work, 43.8% enjoy them only occasionally, and 4.9% do not enjoy performing daily activities at work. Distribution of respondents regarding emotional stability: 75.5% believe their life is not entirely hopeless, indicating emotional intelligence. 20.2% feel this only occasionally, in specific situations where their emotional intelligence is unhealthy, while 4.8% consider their life completely hopeless, indicating a lack of emotional intelligence. Distribution of respondents regarding emotional maturity: 73.2% consider themselves emotionally mature, 22.8% sometimes feel worthless in difficult situations, and 4.3% believe they are worthless individuals. Distribution of respondents regarding suicidal thoughts: 84.6% state they have never thought about suicide, 9.9% do so only occasionally, in certain difficult life situations, while 6.1% have considered attempting suicide.

Discussion

The research conducted in this study aimed to contribute to and expand the current knowledge on the importance of self-efficacy, perseverance, social support, internal locus of control, coping strategies, and adaptation for preserving the physical and mental health of individuals under the influence of stressful life events. In our study, regarding life satisfaction, 60% of the respondents are capable of coping with life goals, 33% are capable only in some cases, while 7.5% are not capable. In achieving life goals, 56.6% of the respondents believe their life has meaning and that they achieve their life goals, 41.8% do so only occasionally, while 3.5% do not achieve their life goals and find life meaningless. The largest number of respondents, 56.3%, believe that failure discourages them in some situations, 24.7% believe it does not, while 20.4% believe that failure discourages them in life situations. When it comes to solving life problems, 68.9% can deal with problems in life, 30.3% only in some situations, while 1.6% have no solution to life problems. In managing life events, 58.7% of the respondents have control over their lives, 34.5% can control their lives only in some situations, while 8.37% are not capable of controlling their lives. Stressful situations in life can be controlled by 34.9% of the respondents,

26.7% do not know if they can cope with stressful situations in life, 21.6% can do so only with the help of their family, while 19.7% cannot cope with stressful situations in life. They can face difficult moments or confront human mortality: 54.5% of the respondents, 27.8% cannot, while 20.2% rely only on their family. In hopeless situations, 40.9% of the respondents can adapt, 28% do not give up in hopeless situations, 24.7% have difficulty adjusting in such situations, while 8.36% give up in hopeless situations. Regarding changes in life, 68.8% of the respondents see them as challenges, 23.8% enjoy challenges and do not avoid them, while 9.34% cannot see changes as challenges. When it comes to health issues, 68.6% of respondents handle them well mentally, 29.8% have difficulty coping with health problems, and 2.4% have no mental coping mechanisms for health issues. The majority of respondents, 59.3%, have control over their actions in life and self-confidence, 34.8% are unsure if they have control over their lives, and 7.9% lack control over their actions in life. Regarding situational factors in life, 58.5% of respondents feel exhausted and bad only in certain cases and circumstances, 26.8% don't feel exhausted, and 15.4% feel exhausted and bad in everyday activities. The largest number of respondents, 48.7%, have no physical pains or pressure in the head, 39% experience them only in some situations, while 13.3% have physical pains and pressure in the head. In everyday stressful situations, 46.2% of respondents feel occasional pressure, 30% feel constantly under pressure, and 24.1% don't feel under any pressure. The majority of respondents, 46%, sometimes feel fear and tension without a clear reason, indicating they are under some stress, 32.5% don't feel it, while 22.4% feel fear, nervousness, and tension without a clear reason, indicating they are anxious. Concerning daily activities at work, 41.8% of respondents are not slower in performing daily activities, 37.7% are slower only sometimes, and 21.1% are slower. The largest number of respondents, 42.3%, enjoy performing daily activities at work, 43.8% only enjoy them sometimes, while 14.9% don't enjoy them. In terms of emotional stability, 75.5% of respondents are emotionally intelligent, 20.2% have unhealthy emotional intelligence, and 4.8% are emotionally unintelligent. The majority

of respondents, 73.2%, are emotionally mature and do not think of themselves as worthless, 22.8% do so only in some difficult life situations, while 4.3% consider themselves worthless individuals. Regarding emotional instability, 84.6% state they have never considered suicide, 9.9% have only considered it in some difficult life situations, and 6.1% have contemplated attempting suicide. After careful analysis of the data, the research has shown a high average resilience within our sample. This can be explained by the fact that respondents in this study have the capacity to resist various challenges or threatening circumstances and are satisfied with their quality of life on physical, mental, and social levels, as well as with their living conditions. In this regard, Cummins (1998) suggests that people have developed mechanisms that allow them to maintain a constant level of subjective quality of life under changing objective conditions. However, when certain conditions and situations reach an extreme level, such as chronic severe pain, chronic stress, family problems, or long-term unemployment, a significant decrease in self-perceived quality of life can be expected. Certainly, resilience is one of the factors in preserving and improving quality of life.

Conclusion

Based on everything mentioned in this master's thesis, we can conclude that the hypothesis that the development and encouragement of adaptive coping mechanisms can prevent the occurrence of unwanted consequences of stress has been confirmed. From the analysis of the data from our research, we can see that the respondents have developed adaptive stress coping strategies, indicating resilience to physical and emotional stress, which includes the ability and skills of individuals to see their problems as challenges and opportunities for growth and development. The recommendations of this work would be:
1. Establish a good balance between work and private life.
2. Face difficulties in life, i.e., stressful events.
3. Persevere in work and daily activities despite stressful situations.
4. Develop the ability to provide an adequate response to stressful events in

life, cope with them, and overcome them.
5. Regardless of the source of stress, a common factor for individuals who successfully overcome stressful situations is a stable relationship with a spouse, parents, friends, or someone else in their environment who provides support in

overcoming stressful situations.
One of the key aspects of resilience is the ability to effectively and healthily deal with stress. Stress can be physically and mentally harmful, but resilience can help prevent and protect against the negative effects of stress.

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Why do Employees Prefer to Keep Silent?
Is Fear of Managers and Management's Approach Causing Employees' Silence?

Research paper

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Abstract

This study aims to identify why and under what circumstances employees prefer to remain silent. The qualitative method was used to understand the reasons for the employees' silence, for which in-depth interviews were conducted. In this paper, 20 employees of the private sector in Kosovo were interviewed. Of the employees who were interviewed, seven of them are from the production sector, five from the service sector, three from the private education sector, and five from the trade sector. The interview data determined codes and categories, which were analyzed using the content analysis method. The data provided by the interview participants were analyzed through the MAXQDA 2020 qualitative data analysis program. Three categories with 21 codes mentioned in 263 cases were identified during data processing. The results show that the employees' fear of the managers and the management's approach is among the main reasons for the employees' silence. In addition, other reasons impacting employees' silence have been identified and presented in this paper.

Keywords: the silence of employees, fear of managers, management approach.

Employees are considered the main success factor in an organization (enterprise) and are also seen as a source of change, creativity, and innovation (Beheshtifar, Borhani, & Moghadam, 2012). These can only be achieved when employees freely express their ideas, knowledge, and opinions (Zehir & Erdogan, 2011). The emergence of ideas is also related to a healthy work environment. Undoubtedly, managers have a significant weight in creating a healthy environment for the organization's employees. It is even argued that the manager's leadership style, which is mainly based on justice, motivates employees to feel free to express their ideas (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). In other words, the role of the manager is vital because, through his leadership style, he influences employees to contribute to achieving organizational goals (Senger & Karcıoğlu, 2022). Studies have also shown

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that employees feel free to express their knowledge, attitudes, and opinions on a particular issue or problem in organizations with a pluralistic culture (Yalçınsoy, Işıldak, & Bilen, 2017). Unfortunately, there are also situations where managers cannot create suitable conditions for employees for various reasons. To compensate for their shortcomings and inadequacies, managers refuse to receive support from employees and ignore their opinions. This is one reason managers want employees to stay quiet and not voice their opinions and concerns (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). On the other hand, the behavior of managers can also affect the appearance of silence. These behaviors can be presented in two forms: fear of receiving negative feedback from their subordinates or ignoring subordinates' feedback. Managers who maintain high distance may bias their employees into believing they know the best and most accurate about the organization (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). The inappropriate style of managers and unwillingness to create suitable conditions and environments for employees can result in the appearance of employee silence as a phenomenon. Employee silence directly affects various processes in the organization. Silence is even an obstacle for the organization's management to provide vital information to the organization. For example, improvements in work processes cannot be carried out if employees are unwilling to share information. Withholding information from employees will cause the appearance of various problems, which can become obstacles to many organizational processes (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Likewise, studies have shown that the authoritarian behavior of managers has evoked negative emotions in employees, such as anger, hostility, and fear (Duan, Bao, Huang, & Brinsfield, 2017). In addition, it leads to degeneration within the organization and reduces employee motivation and confidence. It is essential to understand the reasons that lead to organizational silence so that these negativities do not occur or are prevented (Dedahanov, Kim, & Rhee, 2015). As was emphasized above, valuable employees who contribute to the success of businesses are people who create change and innovation using their creativity. Businesses in the globalized world need employees who can clearly express their ideas, but employees

also look for organizations with facilities where they can express themselves freely. Increasing employee motivation and increasing productivity in an enterprise is possible by eliminating organizational silence (Liu, Wu, & Ma, 2009).

The phenomenon of silence as a problem was addressed in the 1970s in Hirschman's paper called "Exit, Voice and Royalty". In the years 1980 to 2000, in addition to silence as a concept, other concepts, such as speaking, reporting problems, complaining, etc., have been researched (Yaman & Ruçlar, 2014). Even though many studies have been conducted in this field, researchers think many studies should be conducted to determine why employees are silent (Brinsfield, 2012). Considering the various factors that influence employees' silence (Duan, Bao, Huang, & Brinsfield, 2017) researchers became more curious to identify these factors. Silence as a phenomenon is considered a complex process, including emotions, thoughts, and other factors that make understanding difficult. Due to these features, it is difficult for the organization to understand why the employees are silent (Üçok & Torun, 2015). For this reason, in this paper, to identify the reasons for the silence, we conducted direct interviews with private sector employees in Kosovo, aiming to shed light on this unaddressed phenomenon in the Republic of Kosovo. The concept of silence is a complex process involving many emotions, thoughts, and interactions with other organizational dynamics. For this reason, the correct understanding of the reasons for employees' silence in organizations is considered essential to find the most appropriate practice for managing organizations.

The concept of silence is a complex process involving many emotions, thoughts, and interactions with other organizational dynamics. Accordingly, the correct understanding of the reasons for employees' silence in organizations is considered essential to find the most appropriate practice for organizational management. Identifying the factors that cause silence will help managers better manage the organization's processes. Professional organizations often encourage their employees to present their opinions, suggestions, and concerns because, according to the leaders of these organizations, the voice of employees is

critical in enhancing the organization's performance (Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014). Therefore, we think that this article will contribute to managers in better managing various processes in the business. We also consider that the problem addressed in this paper can be a starting point for other researchers who can deal with other spheres of this phenomenon. Likewise, during the literature review on employees' silence, no publication was conducted with employees in organizations operating in Kosovo. Due to this fact, we consider that this paper enriches the literature in this field.

Considering what was stated above, in this paper, we have been trying to figure out how to answer research questions, which are presented below. The first goal of this paper is to find out the reasons why the employees of an organization remain silent. Does fear of managers cause employees to remain silent? The other goal is to identify which managers' actions influence employees to decide to remain silent. The interview questions of this paper are based on the questions of this research, which are presented below. The research questions are considered the core of the research design. The research questions are related to all other components of the research design (Maxwell, 2022):

RQ1: Why do employees remain silent in the organization they work for?
RQ2: How can fear impact the silence of officials?
RQ3: Which actions of managers cause the silence of employees?

Following this paper, the literature review part is included, in which we present facts from this field's literature to provide theoretical support for this paper. In addition to the part of the literature review, the part of the research methodology is also presented, with subheadings that explain the research process, the method of data analysis, and the findings of this study. The last part includes the discussion and conclusion, where an attempt is made to explain the relevance of the findings to the research questions of this study.

Literature Review

Silence is a conscious action of employees who do not show their concerns or proposals that can contribute to the advancement of the organization (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Although in the past, silence was interpreted as a positive phenomenon, over the years, silence has been described as a problem (Korkmaz & Aydemir, 2015). Silence as a concept is defined as the inability to express information, ideas, or thoughts, while voice is defined as conveying information and expressing thoughts. What is essential here is to know whether these silent behaviors are conscious or unconscious. The employee's silence may be due to a lack of knowledge or opinion about certain issues (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003).

In the past, silence was defined as the obedience and approval of employees towards the organization's management. In contrast, today, silence is defined as a reaction or disagreement of employees to practices and policies in the organization (Ölçer & Coşkun, 2022). According to Bagheri et al. (2012) employee silence is a situation in which employees voluntarily or involuntarily withhold information that may be useful to the organization (Bagheri, Zarei, & Aeen, 2012). Although employee silence sometimes helps reduce information overload and various interpersonal conflicts among managers, to various researchers, silence is considered a behavior that has more negative than positive effects (Wang & Hsieh, 2013). The silence of employees as a phenomenon is defined as a non-productive behavior resulting from a rigid organizational structure (Srivastava, Jain, & Sullivan, 2019). Similarly, although at first glance, silence may seem like a behavior of being closed to communication, silence is a style of communication. Silence is not limited to stopping talking; silence is also not writing, not listening, distancing, and not caring about things around (Nikmaram, Yamchi, Shojaii, Zahrani, & Alvani, 2012).

The approach of the organization's management, as well as its managers are among the many factors that cause employee silence. Undoubtedly, there are other factors, but mainly, these are the result of the management's approach. Below, we will present facts from the reviewed literature to find theoretical support for this paper. Many organizations are caught in an apparent paradox in which most employees know the truth about some issues and problems within the organization but do not dare to tell this

truth to their superiors (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). The silence is examined in two basic dimensions. The first one is not related to the employees' will, but it is the result of the top-level managers, the enterprise's organizational culture, or the result of the management style. Meanwhile, the second form of employees' silence is entirely of their own volition, and the assessment is not related to the management's approach; in other words, it is with the employees' awareness and as a result of their choice (Blackman & Sadler-Smith, 2009).

Employee silence is considered a behavior that has implications for the individual and the organization. At the individual level, employees' silence results in low commitment, resistance to organizational changes, lack of satisfaction in the workplace, and poor performance. Meanwhile, at the organizational level, silence influences the reduction of the organization's performance and is an obstacle to innovations (Yao, et al., 2022). As a result of numerous studies, at the end of the 1990s, another concept of organizational sound and silence emerged as the "deaf ear syndrome," which is also defined as organizational passivity. This situation is treated as an organizational norm/rule in which employees do not express their dissatisfaction directly. In this context, it seems that the "deaf ear syndrome" results from the lack of organizational policies, the ambiguities of organizational processes, the ignoring of employees, and the accusation of employees in case of giving feedback in certain situations (Harlos, 2001). There is no doubt that silence will harm the employee on the one hand and the organization on the other hand. Employees who believe that they will be harmed due to the expression of existing problems do not express these problems within the organization due to fear. In other words, due to fear and not being considered problematic employees, they do not express their ideas; this way, they are considered as employees who do not contribute to the organization's development (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Studies have shown that silence has a negative impact on employees, resulting in decreased job satisfaction. The fact that employees do not share their knowledge consciously causes increased stress, and consequently, they may experience physical and psychological problems (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Silence will prevent the emergence of new ideas, as well, by preventing the emergence of different points of view, and has a negative effect on the organization's development (Huang, Vliert, & Vegt, 2005). Also, the fear of exclusion from the circle of personnel is one of the factors for the employee to show silence by not showing information. So, exclusion is the cause of hiding feelings and thoughts in the workplace (Gkorezis, Panagiotou, & Theodorou, 2016). Therefore, exclusion can harm a person's ability to form or maintain positive relationships. This shows that there is a relationship between communication and employee silence (Salavatian, Anaraki, & Neyestani, 2017).

The reluctance of employees to talk about work-related issues appears to be associated with many significant individual consequences, as well as negative effects on the organization. Studies have shown that employees who intentionally cut off communication within the organization are exposed to stress and other negative emotions (Cortina & Magley, 2003). Apart from reducing the performance of employees by not using their various skills, silence also dramatically affects the reduction of job satisfaction and greatly impacts the reduction of commitment to the organization or company (Amah & Okafor, 2008). The silence of employees is seen as a major obstacle in the process of change and development of the organization. Employees who remain silent can face burnout syndrome and, over time cannot demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the work they do. This situation can lead to a decrease in the productivity and performance of employees and, therefore, the enterprise's overall performance (Doğan & Kır, 2018). The manager of the organization is the main person responsible for making necessary changes and improving the organization's quality. This is why the manager must create a suitable working environment for employees so that they can show their new ideas. The manager must also take into consideration the opinions and suggestions of employees, allowing them to freely discuss the problems of the organization (Prajogo & McDermott, 2005).

Research Methodology

The qualitative research method was used to find answers to this paper's research questions. The qualitative research method is a research method that follows certain steps to reveal perceptions and understand events in the natural environment with a realistic approach, using data collection techniques such as interviews, observation, and document analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The qualitative method is preferably used to make detailed and in-depth assessments of a given situation (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015). To discover the answers to the questions posed, data collection is required. In this context, the qualitative research method is the role of a tool that creates direct contact with certain individuals to collect data and analyze the data provided by interviews or observation (Merriam, 2009). The events are recorded in detail through the qualitative method, and an appropriate explanation is made. Quantitative research often does not look closely at this invisible world of context and processes, so qualitative research also has an advantage in this context. Qualitative research tries to bring the social world to life, making it multidimensional on two-dimensional paper. In this method, narratives are used to help readers imagine the "feel" of different people and places. They provide details that encourage readers to visualize in their minds through intense descriptions (Weaver-Hightover, 2021).

The preferred research model in this paper is the "case study." The case study is a model in qualitative research methods in which each process, event, subject, or person is examined and explained in detail in their context (Yin, 2018). A case study as a model aims to meet one or more people to understand a topic, phenomenon, or problem (Güler, Halıcıoğlu, & Taşğın, 2015) or to understand the views of the participants, namely the interviewers, about a certain event or phenomenon (Barlett & Vavrus, 2021). In the "case study" model, isolated cases are studied, namely an individual or a group of individuals, an organization, a community, a nation, etc., but through this model, in-depth analysis and description of the phenomenon or the problem is made (Merriam, 2009).

The reason for the selection of the "case study" model for this paper was to gain a deeper understanding (Creswell, 2016) of the reasons for employees' silence and to find out the specific parts of this phenomenon (Barlett & Vavrus, 2021) in organizations operating in Kosovo. The data provided through the "case study" will enable us to create a base so that we can then carry out other studies in this field, but by using other methods to discover the specific aspects of the silence of employees working in organizations in Kosovo. Another reason for selecting the case study is the possibility of describing the data and dividing them into topics (Creswell, 2016), which enables an analysis of a given study.

Sample Selection

The purposive sampling method was used in this study. In some cases, due to the purpose of the study and the knowledge of the researcher, the selection of the sample is made according to the purpose of the paper. This type of sampling is called a "*purposive sample*" (Temmuz, 2009). The purposive sampling technique is also defined as the judgment sampling technique. In this technique, the participant is consciously selected due to their qualifications. It is a non-random technique that does not require a specific number of participants. To put it briefly, the researcher tries to find people who can provide him with information based on his knowledge and experience (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In qualitative research methods, the aim is to discover typologies. Therefore, in selecting the sample, people with knowledge and information related to the topic treated in a study are identified (Kara, 2021). Due to the nature of the work, 20 employees who are employed in medium and large enterprises are selected. The reason for choosing employees from medium and large enterprises is because, in these enterprises they can potentially have more such problems addressed in this study. Employees from different sectors were also selected in order to have a more general overview of the problem addressed. Of the employees who were interviewed, seven of them are from the production sector, five are from the service sector, three are from the private education sector, and five are from the trade sector.

In data collection, the in-depth interview technique was used, which enables the collection of detailed data related to the phenomenon of the study. Initially, the time and place for conducting the interview with the participants in this study were determined, which were carried out in different periods of time. In order to reflect the real situation, preventing the preliminary preparation of the participants for the interview, no information was given regarding the topic of the study. In addition to the questions presented, the participants were asked to show any important events and situations related to the silence of the employees if they witnessed any cases.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to provide data for this research, interview questions have been determined based on the "research questions" presented in this paper. In order to find the most in-depth data about the research phenomenon or occurrence, semi-structured questions were assigned. Semi-structured interviews are such interviews that enable the collection of data that have similarities that enable comparisons to be made between the answers of the interviewers. Through the semi-structured questions, we can ask additional questions and, in this way, provide more data to find support for the "research questions" (Kara, 2021). The interviews were recorded with a voice recording tool. The duration of an average interview lasted about 45 minutes.

After the completion of all interviews, the data were transcribed to derive codes and categories more easily. The participants in the interview were guaranteed that the privacy data will not be presented in the report of this research. Content analysis was used in the analysis of the data obtained

from the interviews for this research. In this paper, tables with codes representing certain categories were created on one side, and the participants' opinions were presented on the other. All these categories and codes are to support the "research questions" which are posed in this paper. In the past, coding and analysis were done manually to discover connections between codes. But, after the 80s until today, programs have been used in order to facilitate the creation of categories, codes, and the performance of analyses. Also, through these computer programs, it is possible to find connections between codes (Güler, Halıcıoğlu, & Taşğın, 2015). In order to find the answers to the questions posed in this study, the data provided by the interviews were carefully analyzed, from which a series of codes and categories emerged, which were presented through tables provided through the program for analyzing qualitative data "MAXQDA 2020". In the tables below, the expressions or "codes" are presented, as well as the frequencies of the codes and their percentages within a category. In this paper, in addition to the data on the frequencies of the codes related to the treated topic, the opinions of the interviewers are also presented to find support for the "research questions" of this study. In these answers, the participants' names in the interview have remained anonymous, and instead of the name, a representative code has been set, e.g., Participant 1 = **(P1)**.

Findings of the Study

In this part, the findings of the study are presented. The following tables are formed by the MAXQDA 2020 program. In this part, the statements of the interview participants who have shown different events related to the studied phenomenon are also presented.

Table 1.
Fear and perceived risk

Codes	Segments	Percentage
Fear of getting fired	28	23.93 %
Fear of being punished	21	17.95 %
Career hazards	17	14.53 %
Revenge of superiors	15	12.82 %
Getting criticized	10	8.55 %
Perceived as parties	9	7.69 %
The danger of being in the minority	6	5.13 %
Getting out of the comfort zone	6	5.13 %
Fear of creating bad opinions	5	4.27 %
TOTAL	**117**	**100.00 %**

The table above shows the list of codes that are in the "Fear and perceived risk" category. From the interviews that have been conducted with the employees, important findings have been provided that help us understand in which cases the employees decide to remain silent as a result of the fear and risk perceived by them. In this category, nine codes were identified, which were mentioned in 117 different cases during the interviews. In Table 1. it appears that the silence of employees is largely related to the fear of getting fired from the workplace, which is the first with 23.93% in this category. Meanwhile, the fear of being punished ranks second with 17.95%. The third, with 14.53%, has to do with employees' concerns about their careers. The table above shows other reasons for employees' silence. In order to understand more closely the reasons for the employees' silence, below are some excerpts from the interviews that took place:

Initially, some of the parts of the interviews that show the reasons for the employees' silence, which is the result of the fear of getting fired from the workplace, are presented. Participant **(P12)** explains this situation by saying: "*One of the owners of the enterprise has dismissed many of his colleagues because they opposed him due to some actions. On the contrary, the other owners are good and open to ideas, but because of this owner, a large part of the employees remain silent for fear of getting fired.*" Likewise, the participant **(P2)** explains his concern about his future by saying: "*In the past, when I worked in another company, I was more spoken, and I was not silent in any way. But now I am 53 years old, and I cannot take the risk of speaking so freely. After this age, finding a new job is much more difficult*". Participant **(P16)** shows his concern by talking about cases from his workplace: "*At the place where I work, there were such cases when some employees left as a result of their reaction. For this reason, I consider that I must remain silent in the place where I work. "Unfortunately, our superior personalizes things a lot, even though a worker's feedback or showing an idea may not have a tendency.*"
Participant **(P10)** connected his silence with the fear of not renewing the work contract; he expressed himself in this way*: "I am afraid that it may have a negative impact because*

in our company we have one-year contracts, taking into account the difficulty of finding a good job." Participant **(P11)** explains the reason for his silence by linking this to the financial uncertainty about his future: "*I have a loan that I have to pay, that is why I am afraid that they may take revenge on me by firing me" so I prefer not to speak*".
Participant **(P13)** talks about the pressure exerted by the management and its influence in this form: "*We have so much pressure that we do not have the courage to say what needs to be said out of the fear of getting punished...*".
Participant **(P7)** expresses his opinion regarding the silence, emphasizing the reason for the silence related to the career of his colleagues*: "I can say that among the work colleagues there are those who are very ambitious for career advancement, taking into account the opportunities given to them due to the expansion of the company's capacities, it seems that very few of the employees can take risks by showing their opinions towards management policies. In other words, silence for them is a chance for the future*". The participant **(P19)** describes the silence as an obstacle to the opportunity he has. He expressed himself in this way: "*I am at the stage when I have been given the opportunity to exercise the same position in the capital, namely in the main branch, which gives me other career opportunities. This is one of the reasons why I do not want to be finical person*".

Likewise, the participant **(P4)** talks about the ambitions of his colleagues, and he explains how his colleagues, to achieve their goals, remain silent in order not to ruin their work*: "In the company that I work for, an internal competition for a managerial position will be opened, the colleagues who have applied for this position seem to be much more attentive and do not give feedbacks as they used to in the past*". On the other hand, the participant **(P9)** has talked about a more specific case in which the expression of opinion has become the cause of being degraded; in a way, the management has punished the employee. He has explained the situation in this way: "*Silence makes me more confident in the position I hold. One of my colleagues was demoted in my company because she was too spoken. In other words, not being silent was a cause for the ruin of her career.*"

Another reason for employees' silence is the fear of retaliation from their superiors. Regarding this, the participant **(P6)** highlighted that: "*If I speak what I think, I suspect that my superiors can harm me and take revenge*". Next, the interviewe was asked an additional question to understand how the superior takes revenge on the employees. Meanwhile, the participant **(P17)** said in this regard: *"...in different forms, e.g., when I need to take leave during working hours, it may not be given permission to do so, or regarding the performance evaluation process, I may be evaluated as an employee who has not shown good performance"*. On the other hand, the participant **(P2)** also shows how his manager retaliates or punishes him: "*Raising our voice or not being silent is considered to have consequences for us, in many cases our manager has retaliated by putting pressure on us and mobbing us*".

The following are other reasons for silence related to the fear that may result in the disruption of comfort. For this, the participant **(P6)** expressed himself as follows: *"I don't want to be mean to others and spoil my comfort, as long as others act in the same way. But if there were others who freely express their opinions, I probably wouldn't stay silent either."* On the other hand, the participant **(P19)** openly reveals the reason for the silence related to not spoiling his comfort and personal interest; regarding this he expressed himself this way: *"I have to be honest that the management of the enterprise has done me a favour by allowing me to be released from the workplace from time to time because I am a member of the board of a public institution. Therefore, in certain situations, I have no interest in being silent*". From the fear of receiving various criticisms and reactions, the participant **(P3)** expressed himself as follows: *"...in some cases not being silent may be unacceptable to others and this may influence their reactions, this is the reason I prefer to be silent"*. With a slightly different point of view, the participant **(P10)** shows his situation in the face of silence or the expression of thoughts, he explains this situation in this way: *"Not being silent about certain problems is like a double-edged sword, on one side the mood of colleagues is being ruined, on the other side the mood of the management of the company. That is, every time you speak, you are being evaluated as a person who is taking sides, for*

this reason, silence seems more appropriate to me". The following are employee concerns or fears related to the potential for isolation or being part of a minority within the organization. Regarding this, the participant **(P15)** said*: "Sometimes we are forced to be silent in order not to be excluded from the personnel, not to create enemies from the personnel and other similar reasons"*. While the participant **(P3)** stated in this: *"...in non-democratic environments I can be alone, that's why I joined the majority...",* he also explains his past experience *"In my previous workplace, I didn't keep silent, but as a result of not keeping silent in most cases I was left alone, I did not have a support from others, so in the company I work for now, I don't want to repeat the same mistake"*. Likewise, the participant **(P5)** shows his concern with his previous experience, saying: "*...due to the expression of ideas, which even though are beneficial to the company, made me look unsuitable to my superior. According to the information I have received, the ideas that I have presented have encouraged competition within the company, and this has become a cause for some to worry. For this reason, I have decided not to show any thoughts or ideas, even though these are in the interest of the company"*. In order not to look bad in the eyes of others, the participant **(P14)** decided to be silent, regarding this he expressed himself this way*: "Another reason for my silence is related to the behavior of other colleagues. In non-formal meetings, discussions on various problems take place continuously. But in meetings, almost no one dares to discuss the problems. In this case, I don't want to be bad either until others don't contribute for the good of the company."* Likewise, the participant (P20) shows the reason for silence by saying*: "... I stay silent because not being silent is becoming the cause of conflicts and misunderstandings"*. For fear of being misunderstood, the participant **(P7)** states that: *"I'm afraid of being misunderstood by others, that's why I think it's better to remain silent..."*. The data in Table 1 help us understand that the category "Fear and perceived risk" that was formed is the result of fear and risk perceived by the employees of these organizations (enterprises). From the codes presented above as well as from the statements of the participants in the interview, it appears that the vast majority

of them are related to the management of the organization or their managers. These facts presented above enable us to make a connection between the research question, from which it appears that the main reason for the employees' silence is fear, but that this fear is based on management or managers or organizations.

Table 2.
Management approach

Codes	Segments	Percentage
Autocratic attitudes of superiors	31	32.29 %
The desire to have control over everything	17	17.71 %
Not accepting mistakes	14	14.58 %
Lack of genuine communication	14	14.58 %
Decision imposition	8	8.33 %
Lack of trust for employees	7	7.29 %
A management approach that takes sides	5	5.21 %
TOTAL	**96**	**100.00 %**

The table above presents important data related to the reasons for employee silence as a result of the company's management approach. In this table, there are 7 codes which were mentioned in 96 different cases during the interviews. From the findings, it is understood that in this category the autocratic attitude of the superiors is the first with 32.29% causing the silence of the employees. The desire for control is the second in a row, with 17.71% that has been highlighted throughout the interviews. This code is also related to the autocratic approach that has caused the silence of employees. The lack of proper communication is the third in a row, with 14.58%, which is an indication that poor communication is an obstacle to the emergence of new ideas or even giving remarks by employees that could be in the interest of the organization. Superiors' not accepting mistakes is also the same as the previous code, that is, with 14.58%, which is an argument that superiors do not like to be criticized or receive remarks from their subordinates. In this category, other codes are mentioned less, but there is no doubt that these are also important factors that affect the silence of employees, which are presented in this table. For this category, as well, only some parts of the interviews are presented to enable a better explanation of this category: Participant **(P2)** explains how the management's approach influences him to remain silent; regarding this, he expressed himself as follows: *"I regret to say that in my workplace we have an autocratic decision-making approach and that everything is concentrated in a few individuals... at the* *same time, the punishment mechanism works against those who are speaking their minds. Considering this situation, I, as well as other colleagues, prefer to remain silent".* Likewise, the participant **(P8)** connected his silence with the autocratic approach of the management, saying that he is not given space to express his opinions, he expressed himself in this way: "The owner of the firm is such that he does not allow us to express our opinions in any form, even though I have a long experience in this sector, but my ideas or remarks are not taken into account, for this reason, I remain silent". Participant **(P7)** tells how his superior intends to have control over everything and influences on his silence, he expressed it this way: *"Our manager is the one who tries to control everything in the company, pretending that he knows everything and does not take into account the opinions of others. As a result of the manager's approach, most of us prefer to be silent."* Participant **(P5)** tells another approach of the management that forced the employees to be silent: *"I believe that no one is perfect; the management of enterprises can also make mistakes and omissions. In the first stages that I started working here, I tried to give my remarks based on my previous experience, but what I have noticed is that the management does not accept that they can make wrong decisions or make concessions, etc. This situation made me step back, not making an effort to intervene".* Participant **(P9)** presents sound communication as an important factor that affects the silence of employees: *"In the company that I work for, there is a*

disconnection between the management and other employees, which is an indicator of the lack of sound communication. This situation made us silent; more specifically, we do not know where to address our problems or ideas that contribute to the advancement of the enterprise. When we show any concern to the superior, he tells us that we do not have the competence for this, etc. ... I think that the problem is in the way of management". Participant **(P2)** qualifies the imposition of decisions as an unpleasant thing, which affects the silence of employees: *"Almost all decisions that weight the future of the enterprise, are taken without consulting the interested parties or people who have skills in certain fields, and who can contribute by stating their opinions. Because of this approach, it seems reasonable to me to remain silent because there is no reason to speak...".* Participant **(P10)** connects the silence of the employees with the lack of trust in the employees, saying: *"The management does not trust us, they don't even consider what we say for the good of the company, that is why I prefer to remain*

silent". Participant **(P1)** shows how the management takes the side of only some employees: *"Managers make discriminations between employees, they value some employees more, and they don't take some of them under consideration at all. This caused me to get irritated and I do not want to express myself about it"*. In another case, it seems that employees prefer to remain silent if their opinions conflict with those of management.

From the codes in Table 2, as well as the statements of the participants in the interview, it appears that the silence of the employees is a result of the approach of the management as well as of the managers. The autocratic attitude of managers, the lack of genuine communication, discrimination against employees, not involving employees in decision-making processes or ignoring them by not allowing them to express their opinions, and lack of trust in employees are among the main factors of employees' silence. These data also present the answers to the research question presented in this paper.

Table 2.
Acceptance of silence

Codes	Segments	Percentage
The belief that there is no benefit in expressing ideas	26	52.00%
Submission to superiors	9	18.00%
Lack of experience	6	12.00%
Silence as a result of low position	5	10.00%
Self-deprecation	4	8.00%
TOTAL	**50**	**100.00 %**

The table above shows 5 codes, which were mentioned in 50 different cases. These are some of the reasons why these employees have decided to remain silent. In general, this category mainly includes pessimistic thoughts stemming from not being able to make changes or contribute to the enterprise. In the "acceptance of silence" category, the first rank is that employees do not believe that expressing ideas can be useful, and this constitutes 52%. Meanwhile, the second in a row is 18.00%, it is related to individuals who, for various purposes, submit to their superiors and prefer to remain silent. The employees' silence is also related to their experience, position, and self-confidence. These are the other three codes in this category. Compared to the other two codes, these codes were not encountered as much

during the interviews but still had an impact on the employees' silence. We have presented some of the employees' statements for this category, as well:

Participant **(P2)** expressed pessimism towards the management, saying: *"Unfortunately, it seems that there is no possibility to make changes due to the rigid attitudes of the management. Therefore, I think my silence is reasonable due to the impossibility of making changes. Even if I raise my voice about a certain thing, I can look bad in the eyes of my superiors, that's why I prefer silence."* Likewise, the participant **(P6)** tells how his status can be jeopardized if he speaks, expressing the opinion that speaking does not do any good: *"I believe that there is no use if I speak, it can even harm me more, ... I look bad*

either in the eyes of the owner or even my colleagues". Similarly, the participant (P10) emphasizes that the expression of thoughts will not contribute to any change, regarding this he expressed himself this way: "One of the reasons I remain silent is that whatever I say cannot change the managers' beliefs...". Participant **(P3)** provides information that the reason for his silence is based on the fact that the management of the company does not give him space in the various decision-making processes; therefore, he considers that there is no benefit if he expresses himself on a particular issue, for this reason, she said: *"I remain silent when I do not believe that something can change in a good direction... I do not want to embarrass myself when it is known that when meetings are held, they are only for formality and usually decisions are made much earlier "*. Another form of silence is when employees submit to the superior without contradicting him in any situation. Regarding this, the participant **(P5)** talks about some of his colleagues saying that: *"when the company is in good condition or when the right decisions are made, it is very natural that there are no objections and reactions, but there are specific cases when some of the company's employees remain silent even though the decisions are to their disadvantage. These employees seem to have submitted themselves to their superiors under all circumstances. I think that this form of submission is not appropriate; a person should have dignity"*. In another situation, it seems that the reason for the employee's silence is the result of a lack of experience in a certain field; for this the participant, **(P20)** says: *"I usually stay silent on topics that I don't have much information on, or I'm not sure about... I don't want to put myself in a bad position in front of others when I have dilemmas about a certain topic."* While the participant *(P1)* relates his silence to the position he has, he says, *"I would have liked to speak, but I remain silent for fear of accidentally making a mistake or saying inappropriate things. Considering that there are people who are in higher positions and with more experience in the company, this is preventing me from speaking"*. Participant **(P18)** relates his silence to his character, saying: *"Actually, I think that I have ideas and thoughts that are beneficial to the company, but since I am a little bit introvert, I don't want to speak on any platform."*

Likewise, the same person in another case expressed himself this way: "I often think that I am worthless enough to take my thoughts into account... that is why I think it is better to be silent."

Although Table 3 does not fully answer the research question of this paper, some of the codes indicate that the primary source of employee silence is the approach of management and managers. The code "belief that there is no benefit from expressing ideas", which constitutes 52% of this category, is the result of the managers' approach. Likewise, the statements included in this part are important evidence proving that the employees' silence is related to the management of the organization.

Discussion

The person within the organization is considered the most critical factor that cannot be replaced by other factors. For this reason, the organization's management must identify the elements contributing to employee motivation. Because an organization with motivated employees will be able to contribute to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization (Güney, Akalın, & İlsev, 2007). Undoubtedly, employee motivation is also related to the work environment. An environment where there is freedom of expression is an indicator of the existence of healthy communication. Because employees' free expression within the organization is an essential tool that helps improve the work environment, which can simultaneously increase employee satisfaction (Bovee & Thill, 2020). In other words, the willingness of employees to express opinions is directly related to the work environment (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003) which is mainly provided by the management.

Undoubtedly, employees' free expression is a value for the organization, but it cannot be achieved so easily due to various factors. One of the obstacles to employee expression is the fear of management in general or the fear of managers. Fear directly affects the employees' behavior and their way of thinking. Anxiety and fear can be one of the causes of employees' silence. These behaviors can be related to an individual's sense of psychological safety. Personal perceptions, thinking styles,

and human behaviors can be influenced by fear, although fear as a phenomenon is considered an emotional phenomenon, which is underestimated in the organizational literature (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, & Edmondson, 2009). However, the research results argue that fear is one of the main reasons for employees' silence. This is also argued by Morrison & Milliken (2000), emphasizing that by raising the voice for a certain issue, it will not be possible to reach any positive conclusion, even though, according to them, the employees are afraid that their status in the organization will be jeopardized. The silence of the employees is also related to fear due to the possible reactions that may come as a result of speaking their minds (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003). Likewise, Scheufele and Moy (2000) point out that employees constantly try to control themselves in their environment because of the danger or fear of isolation. They express their opinions only when they find other people who share the same opinions (Scheufele & Moy, 2000).

Of course, there are other reasons for employees' silence. Some of these are related to the "benefit-cost" theory, in which employees, before speaking about a certain topic or activity, make a calculation comparing the benefits with the costs that may be caused by not remaining silent. According to this theory, employees who do not remain silent may face a cost of loss of energy, loss of status within the organization, increased workload in the workplace, and increased obligations as a result of changing procedures (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003). It can be said that in most cases, the silence of employees may be due to the fear of receiving negative feedback from managers (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). As a result, employees may change their behaviors and choose to remain silent according to the demands and conditions of the environment. So, employees stay quiet to adapt to the work environment (Çakıcı, 2010). From all the facts that have been presented from the literature reviewed for this paper, it seems that the work environment, which is mainly the result of the management of the organization to a large extent, can affect the silence of the employees.

Conclusion

This study was done to see the reasons for employees' silence, with special emphasis on the understanding that the approach of management and managers have a role in employees' silence. In addition, through the method used in this paper, it is intended to deeply understand different situations and the narratives of the participants so that researchers in this field can open new doors for other studies. From the data provided by this study, answers to the research questions of this study have been provided to a large extent. First of all, this study provided findings that helped us get to the core of the problem, understanding in depth the reasons for employees' silence. These data have also provided answers to this paper's other two research questions. So, it is understood that the interviewed employees' main concern stems from the management and managers' approach. Because the approach of a large number of the managers has caused fear in the employees, the employees, instead of expressing their concerns or ideas that could benefit the organization, have decided to remain silent out of fear The results have generally shown that the fear of getting fired, receiving punishments, without the possibility of career advancement, the revenge of superiors as a result of the autocratic approach of managers and many other factors are the main indicators of the findings of this paper. All these may have consequences for the organization's performance. This is why the managers of these organizations are themselves responsible for the improvement of this situation.

When employees perceive that they have high support from management, they are less anxious and freely express their opinions about problems related to their work. Perceiving high support from management enables employees to be more committed and express their ideas more clearly (Wang & Hsieh, 2013). This support can be achieved with healthy communication because in such an environment, employees will give positive feedback instead of being silent, contributing to the solution of various problems (Cetin, 2020). Managers are the key people who ensure the formation of open communication in the organization. They should support open communication

and create an approach that will encourage their subordinates and enable them to raise their voice in organizational matters (Çakıcı, 2010). The fact that managers are clear in their decisions and practices enables employees to have a perception that their superiors value them and provide support through sound communication (Polatçı, 2015). Otherwise, communication in the organizational environment may deteriorate, and as a result, the phenomenon of silence may appear within the organization (Ürek, Bilgin Demir, & Uğurluoğlu, 2015).

Without a doubt, organizations will be able to ensure the continuity of their activity if they meet these day's needs. Among these needs is healthy cooperation with employees, giving them free space to express their ideas and opinions, even if they are negative. Even if all the conditions and opportunities are provided to the employees in an organization, but on the other hand, they are not given the necessary importance, the organizations will not be able to achieve their goals and objectives. To enhance the productivity and performance of employees and accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization, it is essential for employees to freely express their thoughts, even if they are negative. By avoiding silence, the organization can strive towards improvement. Therefore, the management of the organization must provide employees with such an environment so that they dare to express their ideas and thoughts on work issues.

The most important limitation of this research is that it was limited to 20 participants due to time constraints. Additionally, we propose applying a quantitative research method to ensure statistical results to identify other reasons for employees' silence for the upcoming research. However, another study can be designed to review the same issues from the perspective of the managers and this way to secure more thorough data on this phenomenon.

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Exploring the Distance Learning Experience by Parents and Teachers of Students With Disabilities During Covid-19: A Case Study

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

This study examined the experiences of Palestinian parents (n=105) and teachers (n=99) for students with disabilities by the shift to distance Learning during Covid 19, in focusing on communication, student progress, support services, and stress levels. Participants answered a Likert scale questionnaire and three open questions. Findings revealed no significant differences between parents and teachers related to the examine parameters but it is indicated the gender as a significant factor in stress levels. Males, whether parents or teachers, reported less stress. Mothers expressed the least satisfaction with support services, contrasting with female teachers. This highlights possible disparities for mothers in accessing vital support during remote learning. Distance learning introduces distinct challenges, with both teachers and parents highlighting the need for proficiency in online platforms. Emphasizing tech-savviness is crucial in today's educational setting. Both groups stressed the importance of emotional support, extending this need to everyone involved. The conclusion underscores the importance of joint solutions tailored to the specific requirements of students, parents, and teachers.

Keywords: Distance Learning, Students with Disabilities, COVID-19 pandemic, parents, teachers

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in unprecedented challenges across various sectors, with education witnessing one of the most profound transformations. As schools worldwide closed their doors in response to the pandemic, there was a swift pivot to distance learning. While the transition to online education was challenging for many, Students with Disabilities (SWD) and their support systems faced unique hurdles. (Agaton & Cueto, 2021).

The transition to remote learning posed unique challenges, with the success largely

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dependent on technological infrastructure and accessibility (Onyema et al., 2020). While countries with advanced tech infrastructure like China adapted effectively, regions with limited resources, especially those serving low-income or rural populations, grappled with inequalities in access (World Bank, 2020; Fry-Bowers, 2020). Additionally, Distance education threatened the goals of inclusive education and the Individualized Education Program (IEP The pandemic underscored the need for tailored support for students with special needs and their families, addressing challenges like resource accessibility, IEP implementation, and the unique stressors of distance learning. (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021).

This study delves into the experiences of both parents and teachers of SWD during the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to shed light on the challenges, successes, and lessons from this global experiment in distance learning. By understanding their perspectives, to offering insights that could inform future educational strategies, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness in online education. The primary objective of this study is to delve deeply into the experiences of Palestinian parents and teachers in Israel amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular emphasis on the distance learning paradigm and its repercussions for SWD in inclusive environments. The research endeavors to explore diverse facets of the distance learning approach, encompassing aspects such as communication, student progress, support services, and stress levels, in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic and inform future approaches to inclusive education.

Literature Review

Distance learning, though offering the advantage of continuity in education during crisis periods, often assumes a one-size-fits-all approach. However, SWD require specialized instructional strategies, tailored resources, and individualized support to thrive academically (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021). The rapid shift to remote learning posed questions regarding the accessibility and effectiveness of online platforms for these students.
Parents, often the primary caregivers

and immediate support for SWD, found themselves navigating the complexities of online education, striving to adapt to new roles, and seeking ways to ensure their children's educational needs were met (Ortiz et al., 2021). On the other hand, educators, especially those specializing in special education, grappled with the challenge of delivering quality instruction without the traditional face-to-face interaction, a cornerstone of personalized support for SWD (Karasel Ayda et al., 2020). Glessner and Johnson (2020) examined special education teachers' perceptions and experiences as they transitioned to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, their pointed out that the educator's experiences were marred by feelings of detachment from students and colleagues. However, as they settled into routines, they found joy in establishing communication and rapport. While they initially grappled with redefining their teaching effectiveness and adapting to the virtual setting, they sought and found support from administration, technology resources, and peers. By the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, these educators not only embraced the advantages offered by technology but also acknowledged the overarching lesson of the pandemic: the importance of adaptability, care for others, and continuous connection with students and families.

Looking to the future, the literature points towards a need for more concerted efforts in terms of resources, training, and support. Karasel Ayda et al. (2020) provide a compelling argument for schools to ramp up their investments in educator training specifically focused on online instruction for SWD. They also emphasize the criticality of fostering collaboration among parents, teachers, and therapists. Such a collaborative approach, they argue, is essential to ensure that SWD receive comprehensive and tailored support, both during and post the pandemic era.

Lau and Lee (2020) studied the parents' perspectives on the distance learning experiences of kindergarten and primary school students, as well as the support required and screen time during COVID-19 class suspensions. Conducted three weeks post-class suspension in Hong Kong an online survey garnered responses from 6,702 parents, predominantly mothers. Key findings

include: a. most children struggled with distance learning tasks due to lack of interest and home environment challenges. B. Parents without access to online learning expressed more dissatisfaction compared to those with access. They sought more interactive online content, better support from schools, work flexibility, and government aid. C. Elevated screen time without parental oversight was observed during suspensions. Their results indicate the importance of refining distance learning policies and collaborating with families during suspensions. It emphasizes the need for a mix of online and offline learning activities and helping parents manage children's screen time.

Yet, amidst these challenges, the pandemic also illuminated the immense potential of assistive technologies. As Kan and Wang (2021) underscore, assistive technologies have emerged as a beacon of hope in these trying times. When wielded effectively, assistive technologies can play a pivotal role in bridging the accessibility gap, offering SWD a more independently learning experience. Despite these benefits, it seems as though there are still large perceived risks and fears that are not being completely alleviated.

While the Palestinian community in Israel is experiencing numerous socio-cultural transformations due to its exposure to Western influences, it continues to uphold its traditional values. This society emphasizes collectivism, a patriarchal family setup, and distinct gender roles. Furthermore, there's a strong connection to extended families, which sometimes restricts the autonomy of younger members, particularly females. Balancing these time-honored values while integrating newer societal norms poses intricate challenges for its members (Nasser-Abu Elhija & Israelashvili, 2021). Economically, the Palestinian community in Israel predominantly resides in peripheral, socio-economically disadvantaged areas, setting it apart from the Jewish community. This disparity extends to the education sector, especially in terms of digital access (Lissitsa, 2021). The digital divide between Palestinian and Jewish communities in Israel is pronounced, both in terms of infrastructure and digital proficiency. Roughly one-third of the Palestinian community lacks internet access, and where it exists, the connectivity quality is often subpar. (Lissitsa, 2021)

Method

Participants

The sample for this research was based on 105 parents and 99 teachers, among which around 80 percent were females (mothers and female-teachers alike). Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for background characteristics. The age of fifty (50%) percent of the parents ranged from 20 to 30, and another 36.2 percent were within the age range of 31 to 40, and the rest 13 percent were above 40 years of age. A small portion of the parents was unemployed (2.9 percent), while 31.4 reported being house keepers, 48.6 were employees, and 14.3 were either employers or self-employed. Among the parents, 57.1 percent had high school education or less and the rest had some extent of post high school education (e.g., academic or professional studies). The parents' sample covered 28.6 percent students from first and second grades, 42.9 percent from third and fourth grades, and 28.6 percent from fifth and sixth grades. Teachers did not report their age but their years of experience, which varied from less than three years (26.3 percent), between 3 to 9 years (31.3 percent) and 10 and above years of experience (42.4 percent). All teachers held an academic degree, but only 30.3 percent held an MA degree. The teachers' sample comprised of 27.3 percent students from first and second grades, 46.5 percent from third and fourth grades, and 26.3 percent from fifth and sixth grades. Most of reported students was diagnosed with some learning disabilities (parents' report: 67 percent; teachers' report: 71.7 percent), while others were diagnosed with autism to some degree ($\approx$ 10 percent), or other impairments.

Tools

For this research, constructed a set of indicators to assess differences within parents (fathers vs. mothers) and teachers (males vs. females), as well as the interaction between these two explanatory factors (parents X teachers). Descriptive statistics for these indicators are provided in Table 2. All indicator items were measured on a discrete scale ranging from one to five. Table 2 presents means and standard deviations for each indicator, along with internal

consistency (Cronbach's Alpha).
Two challenges emerged when constructing these indicators:
1. The items within each indicator were not identical for parents and teachers.
2. The internal consistencies were not consistently robust across all indicators, particularly for the parent-student communication indicator among parents.

To address the first challenge, compared the responses of parents (n=105) and teachers (n=99), given that the scales were consistent across all items. The identified mean differences in perceived students' progress and received services. Additionally, an item-by-item comparison highlighted differences between parents and teachers in eight out of the 27 comparisons. For instance, there were discrepancies in responses to items such as "I received social and emotional support" and "personalized educational plans for students" (refer to Table 5). Other items that showed differences included statements like "The management provides information about school plans, instructions, and resources."

The second challenge pertained to the parent indicator of communication with students. Despite this, other consistencies were fair, if not high. Notably, the differences between parents and teachers in the communication indicator were not statistically significant, even with the low internal consistency. Consequently, I opted to continue using both indicators in our analysis.

In order to examine the attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the challenges they faced during distance learning during the quarantine period and how they dealt with them, I added the following three open questions:
1. What are the challenges you have faced with distance learning during the Covid-19 period so far?
2. What kind of services or support do you consider necessary to deal with the challenges of the situation and distance learning?
3. What future concerns do you have regarding COVID-19, quarantine or school closures?

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics of Background Characteristics

Parents	Count	Percent	Teachers	Count	Percent
N	105	100	N	99	100
Gender			Gender		
Male	22	21.0	Male	19	19.2
Female	83	79.0	Female	80	80.8
Age			Tenue		
20-31	53	50.5	Less than 3 years	26	26.3
31-40	38	36.2	3-9 Years	31	31.3
41+	14	13.3	10+ Years	42	42.4
Job			Specialization in special education		
Employee	17	16.2	No	24	24.2
Works in an institution	34	32.4	Yes	75	75.8
Independent	15	14.3			
Housewife	33	31.4			
Unemployed	3	2.9			
Pensioner	3	2.9			
Years of education			**Education**		
Less than 12	16	15.2	BA	69	69.7
12	44	41.9	MA	30	30.3
13-16	25	23.8			
17+	20	19.0			
Gender of the student			**Gender of the student**		
Male	58	55.2	Male	47	47.5
Female	47	44.8	Female	52	52.5

Table 1. - continum

Descriptive statistics of Background Characteristics

Diagnosis of the student			Diagnosis of the student		
Learning disability	67	63.8	Learning disability	71	71.7
Autism	10	9.5	Autism	10	10.1
Intellectual disability	9	8.6	Intellectual disability	8	8.1
Visual impairment	4	3.8	Visual impairment	5	5.1
Hearing impairment	6	5.7	Hearing impairment	2	2.0
Other	9	8.6	Other	3	3.0
Grade			**Grade**		
1-2	30	28.6	1-2	27	27.3
3-4	45	42.9	3-4	46	46.5
5-6	30	28.6	5-6	26	26.3
Region			**Region**		
Haifa	16	15.2	Haifa	36	36.4
Center	67	63.8	Center	47	45.5
North	16	15.2	North	15	15.2
South	6	5.7	South	3	3.0

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics and reliabilities of research indicators

Parents B		Teachers A		
Communication with Parents				$t(189) = -1.79, p=.076$
# Items	4	1		
Reliability	.668	Reliability	-	
Means	3.17	Means	3.40	
SD	0.82	SD	1.00	
Students' Progress				$t(202) = -2.73, p=.007$
# Items	5	5		
Reliability	.461	Reliability	.672	
Means	2.94	Means	3.21	
SD	0.70	SD	0.69	
Receiving Suitable Service				$t(193) = -2.92, p=.004$
# Items	9	8		
Reliability	.802	Reliability	.731	
Means	2.98	Means	3.31	
SD	0.90	SD	0.68	
Stress Level				$t(202) = 1.40, p=.163$
# Items	1	1		
Reliability	-	Reliability	-	
Means	3.76	Means	3.54	
SD	1.20	SD	1.11	
Parents'-Students' Communication				$t(202) = -0.82, p=.415$
# Items	3	4		
Reliability	.293	Reliability	.723	
Means	3.39	Means	3.48	
SD	0.77	SD	0.80	

Note. Degrees of freedom were smaller if Levene's test indicated group variance difference.

Result

Table 3 presents the results from the Generalized Linear Model (GLM) for the five research indicators. The objective of these analyses was to discern the main effects of gender or respondent type and their interactive influence on the selected research indicators. Notably, male respondents, irrespective of being teachers or parents, reported diminished stress levels compared to females. No prominent main effects emerged, especially when contrasting teachers with parents. A significant interaction between respondent type and gender influenced the perception of service received (F=3.95, p=.048). An analysis revealed that mothers registered the lowest mean value, standing distinct from female teachers. Conversely, no discernible differences were observed between fathers and male teachers. Figure 1 graphically represents these type*gender variances. It's pivotal to highlight that these differences hinge on fluctuations around the mean (standard errors), implying that female teachers exhibited variations from mothers, despite not recording the apex mean value.

Table 3.

Generalized Linear Model results, Main effects, and interaction

	Person X Gender					Person Type			Gender		
	Parents		**Teacher**								
	Father	Mother	Male	Female	F η_p^2	Parent	Teacher	F η_p^2	Male	Female	F η_p^2
n	22	83	19	80		105	99		41	163	
Communication with Parents	3.43 (0.73)	3.11 (0.83)	3.21 (0.98)	3.45 (1.01)	F=3.15 η_p^2=.016	3.17 (0.82)	3.40 (1.00)	F=0.15 η_p^2=.001	3.33 (0.85)	3.28 (0.93)	F=0.07 η_p^2=.000
Students' Progress	3.19 (0.81)	2.88 (0.66)	3.28 (0.62)	3.19 (0.71)	F=0.85 η_p^2=.004	2.94 (0.70)	3.21 (0.69)	F=2.80 η_p^2=.014	3.24 (0.71)	3.03 (0.70)	F=2.91 η_p^2=.014
Receiving Suitable Service	3.35[ab] (0.93)	2.88[a] (0.87)	3.24[ab] (0.79)	3.32[b] (0.66)	F=3.95* η_p^2=.019	2.98 (0.90)	3.31 (0.68)	F=1.43 η_p^2=.007	3.30 (0.86)	3.10 (0.80)	F=2.06 η_p^2=.010
Stress Level	3.45 (1.26)	3.84 (1.17)	3.00 (1.29)	3.66 (1.03)	F=0.47 η_p^2=.002	3.76 (1.20)	3.54 (1.11)	F=2.53 η_p^2=.012	3.24[a] (1.28)	3.75[b] (1.11)	F=6.93** η_p^2=.033
Parents'-Students' Communication	3.35 (0.74)	3.40 (0.79)	3.66 (0.83)	3.43 (0.79)	F=0.98 η_p^2=.005	3.39 (0.77)	3.48 (0.80)	F=1.58 η_p^2=.008	3.49 (0.79)	3.42 (0.79)	F=0.40 η_p^2=.002

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05; η_p^2 Eta Partial Square for effect size. Latin letters for marginal mean ranking from "a" the smallest and onward.

Figure 1.

Receiving suitable service – GLM results for type and gender interaction
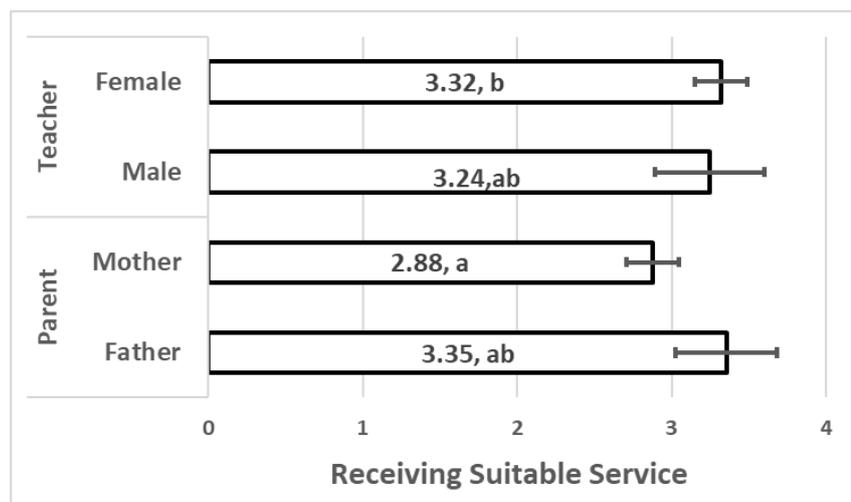
Latin letters for marginal mean ranking from "a" the smallest and onward; Horizontal line for error bars.

Subsequent to initial analysis, delved into potential variations based on students' grade levels and other demographic attributes, which included gender, specific disability diagnoses (distinguishing learning from other types), and regional classifications (spanning Haifa, Center, North, and South). When assessing all outcome variables, no discernible main or interaction effects emerged for respondent types, with the exception of the grade*respondent type interaction concerning stress outcomes. To address these queries, employed a GLM analogous to the previous approach. The resultant data indicated that while both primary effects – grade level and respondent type – didn't significantly account for variations in means, the interaction effect was indeed significant (Wald=8.10, p=.017). A closer examination of this variance revealed that parents of 3rd and 4th graders distinctly differed from teachers of students in the same grades (mean difference=7.19, p=.034). Notably, other stress level datasets, spanning grades and respondent types, exhibited uniformity on average. It is crucial to note that significance thresholds were modulated using the Bonferroni correction to account for multiple comparisons.

In the wake of assessing the support indicator for both teachers and parents, Table 4 offers a detailed, item-by-item analysis utilizing a t-test for independent group comparisons. It's important to highlight that, for these comparisons, items from the parents' and teachers' questionnaires were aligned, even though there were subtle differences in their presentation. Consistently, parents indicated lower levels across the six factor items when compared to the responses from teachers. This trend underpins the overarching disparity in perceived support, as previously illustrated in Table 3.

Table 4.

Parent-Teacher comparison of received support statements, Descriptive statistics, and independent t-test results

	Statements	Parent Mean	SD	Teacher Mean	SD	t
Q1	P: I am satisfied with the services; my son/daughter receives in the classroom during distance learning during the Corona period. T: I am satisfied with the teaching I provide to the student in the classroom during the epidemic	3.16	1.25	3.60	1.08	-2.66**
Q6	P: I received appropriate social and emotional support from school staff during the pandemic in managing stress T: I received appropriate social and emotional support from the school administration during the pandemic to help me cope with stress	2.97	1.25	3.35	1.09	-2.32*
Q11	P: Does your child have an Individualized Education Program? T: The student has an individual educational program	2.79	2.50	3.48	0.91	-2.67**
Q14	P: I especially like the Zoom distance learning program T: I especially like the Zoom distance learning program	2.54	1.26	2.90	1.27	-2.02*
Q20	P: The school provides me with information about school programs, changing guidelines and resources during the Corona period T: The administration gives me information about school programs, changing guidelines and distance learning resources	3.13	1.24	3.53	1.08	-2.40*
Q22	P: In remote learning during the Corona period, my child acquired new skills that he could not do before T: During the Corona period and distance learning, the student acquired new skills that he could not do before	3.00	1.36	3.43	1.05	-2.55*

*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.02$, * $p<.05$; P for parent, T for teacher

Result of open questions

Parent

1. **The first question:** What are the challenges you have faced with your child with distance learning during the Covid-19 period so far?
The most of the answers focused on the aspect of changing the daily routine and accompanying the children throughout the lessons remotely. The second aspect is the children's difficulties in their ability to pay attention to deal with distance learning and the new technological means. Difficulty dealing with new technological means such as the Zoom application, in addition to the weak technological infrastructure.

2. **The second question:** What kind of services or support do you consider necessary to deal with these challenges of the situation and distance learning?
The parents suggested several aspects to improve the ability to deal with distance learning in a crisis situation of the Covid-19 virus:
- Intensive counseling courses to deal with new technological means.
- Follow-up and continuous communication by teachers and the school with parents about students' progress.
- Adaptation of teaching methods proportionally to students' needs and difficulties.
- To provide a suitable technological infrastructure for distance learning
- Creating extracurricular activities for emotional and psychological support for students during distance learning.

3. **The third question**: What future concerns do you have regarding COVID-19, quarantine or school closures?
The majority of the parents' fears are focused on the decline in social skills and the loss of friends for their children, as well as the decline in educational skills and academic achievement. Some parents are worried about shifts in their children's behavior, especially

the shift to aggression.

Teachers

1. **The first question:** What are the challenges you have faced with distance learning during the Covid-19 period so far?
    Most of the teachers focused on the difficulty verifying of access to the attention and interaction of all students within the lessons during distance education. They faced difficulty dealing with new technological applications such as the Zoom, in addition to the weak technological infrastructure

2. **The second question:** What kind of services or support do you consider necessary to deal with the challenges of the situation and distance learning?
    Most of the teachers suggested to providing emotional and psychological support to all the partners in the educational activity, including teachers, students and parents and others. In addition, they are adding the importance of the supporting and training in the using of technological means.

3. **The third question**: What future concerns do you have regarding COVID-19, quarantine or school closures?
    Teachers indicated their fear of students' educational decline, and their inability to provide educational materials appropriately

Discussion

The focus of this research is to intricately explore the experiences faced by parents and educators of SWD during the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. By delving deep into their narratives, our objective is to unearth the multifaceted challenges, celebrate the unexpected triumphs, and discern the lessons derived from this unforeseen foray into distance learning By documenting and understanding these intricate perspectives, the aspire to cultivate a repository of insights. These insights are envisioned to shape and refine future pedagogical strategies in online education, placing a premium on both inclusivity and efficacy.

Central to our research is the quest to holistically understand the lived experiences of Palestinian parents and educators residing in Israel during this global health crisis. Especially poignant is the exploration of how the abrupt transition to distance learning has molded the educational landscape for SWD situated within inclusive educational settings. The study is meticulously designed to dissect various dimensions of this new mode of education. The analyze facets such as communication methodologies adopted, the trajectory of student progression, the efficacy of support services, and the psychological stress indicators associated with this paradigm shift. By doing so, the aim to construct a comprehensive picture of the challenges and potential avenues of improvement that the pandemic has highlighted. This, in turn, serves as a beacon to guide the evolution of future inclusive educational practices.

Utilizing the Generalized Linear Model (GLM), our methodology is structured to pinpoint the primary effects and intricate interactions between gender and respondent type (be it an educator or a parent) on our key research variables. One of the standout discoveries was the stark gender difference in reported stress levels. Males, irrespective of their professional affiliation as educators or their personal roles as parents, consistently reported diminished stress when juxtaposed with their female counterparts. Such findings instigate a deeper introspection into the underlying reasons for this observed gender disparity in stress levels. Factors ranging from societal expectations, gender-specific stress coping mechanisms, or other external determinants potentially play a pivotal role in this dynamic.

Furthermore, a compelling interaction was discerned between the category of respondent and their gender, specifically concerning their satisfaction quotient with educational services rendered. Mothers, in particular, exhibited the lowest satisfaction levels. This sentiment stood in sharp contrast to the feedback provided by female educators. The absence of a pronounced difference in satisfaction levels between male parents and male educators warrants a deeper, more nuanced exploration. Such findings propel us to probe into the intricate web of gender-based anticipations and expectations interwoven within the broader

fabric of educational support systems. Our observations regarding the gender-driven variance in stress levels find resonance with the scholarly findings of Federkeil et al. (2020). Their research insinuates that societal conventions and pressures might exert a more pronounced strain on females. The unique adversities and challenges that female educators and mothers navigate, as spotlighted by Federkeil et al. (2020), could potentially amplify these stress levels.
In our bid to evaluate and juxtapose the perceived support levels among educators and parents, a recurring and unmistakable pattern crystallized: parents, almost uniformly, conveyed lower satisfaction levels. This divergence in perception could be rooted in the parents' direct, unfiltered involvement and their firsthand observation of their child's tribulations and triumphs in the virtual learning milieu. On the flip side, educators, fortified by their pedagogical training and experience, might adopt a more rose-tinted perspective, exuding confidence in the robustness and comprehensiveness of the support mechanisms they deploy. Such divergent perceptual prisms between these two pivotal stakeholders are not a unique phenomenon to this context. Drawing from the insights of Karasel Ayda et al. (2020), it can be postulated that the specialized and professional vantage point of educators may predispose them towards a more favorable, and perhaps optimistic, evaluation of the support systems in place. In stark contrast, parents, with their finger on the pulse of their child's day-to-day academic and emotional journey, might possess a heightened sensitivity to gaps, inadequacies, or areas ripe for enhancement.

In-depth Examination of Stakeholder Perspectives:

In a bid to procure a more granular understanding of the challenges and responses during the distance learning epoch induced by quarantine measures, the meticulously integrated a triad of open-ended queries. The objective behind this approach was to garner in-depth qualitative responses that could shed light on the multifaceted experiences of the involved stakeholders.

A Qualitative Exegesis on Distance Learning's Conundrums:

Both the teachers and parents candidly underscored the labyrinthine challenges associated with mastering emergent virtual platforms. This observation substantiates the surging imperative of fostering technological sagacity within the evolving educational paradigm. Their shared perspectives illuminate the pressing necessity for a fortified, resilient, and user-friendly digital infrastructure matrix in contemporary pedagogical landscapes.
Parents offered profound insights, delineating the manifold challenges they grapple with daily. These encompass orchestrating structured learning schedules whilst simultaneously catering to their offspring's vacillating attention spans and emotional needs. Such intricate revelations illuminate the multifarious dimensions embedded within online pedagogy, which straddle both technologically-driven and behavioral facets. In stark juxtaposition, pedagogues shed light on the herculean task of fostering sustained pupil engagement in a milieu devoid of traditional classroom dynamics and face-to-face interactions.

- The technological impediments highlighted resonate profoundly with the insights proffered by Alea et al. (2020); Ferri. et al (2020) . Their scholarly discourse underscores the quintessential role of a robust technological framework in the successful implementation and efficacy of remote pedagogy. (Kim & Fienup, 2022)
- The behavioral challenges, especially those accentuated by parents, are eerily reminiscent of the apprehensions propounded by Kan and Wang (2021). Their academic treatise elucidates potential pitfalls of a wholly virtual educational milieu, especially for pupils with distinctive requisites or vulnerabilities.

Essential Support Mechanisms in a Pandemic-Induced Pedagogical Landscape:

The collective discourse from both stakeholder cohorts elucidates the pressing desideratum for a deeper and more nuanced indoctrination in digital apparatuses. This sentiment reiterates the irrefutable centrality

of technological erudition and dexterity in contemporary educational praxis.

Parents, with a palpable sense of urgency, accentuated the dire need for enhanced and streamlined pedagogical communication channels. Their discourse underscores the pivotal role of transparent, iterative, and prompt feedback mechanisms. In a more holistic vein, they emphasized the exigency for comprehensive emotional and psychological scaffolding for pupils, which sheds light on the far-reaching psychological and emotional ramifications engendered by the pandemic.

Educators, while echoing the sentiment of emotional scaffolding, expanded its ambit to incorporate the entire spectrum of stakeholders - from pupils to parents, and importantly, to their own professional cadre. Their perspective underscores the pandemic's pervasive and profound psychological reverberations across the educational ecosystem.

- The unanimous clarion for bolstered digital acumen is harmonious with the postulations of Zhou et al. (2020); Haleem et al. (2022). Their academic discourse serves as a clarion call, emphasizing the salience of technological dexterity within the ambit of state-of-the-art pedagogical praxis.
- The collective aspiration for fortified emotional and psychological underpinning echoes the sentiments propounded by Onyema et al. (2020). Their discourse underscores the pandemic's expansive challenges, transcending mere academic conveyance, touching the very essence of human psyche and well-being.

Anticipated Pedagogical Implications in the Post-COVID Epoch:

Both pedagogues and parents vocalized their apprehensions vis-à-vis potential academic lacunae and disruptions emanating from the intricacies endemic to remote pedagogy. The overarching concern revolves around the long-term repercussions of these academic discontinuities.

Parents, with a discernibly heightened sense of concern, proffered anxieties pertaining to their progeny's evolving social acumen. They ruminated on the potential for eroding social bonds, behavioral shifts,

and the long-term implications on socio-emotional development. This sentiment underscores educational institutions' quintessential role as bastions of socio-interpersonal maturation, beyond their scholastic mandate.

Pedagogues, meanwhile, expressed nuanced reservations about their efficacy in transmitting educational content in this unprecedented milieu. Their perspectives shed light on the internal battles and cognitive dissonance they grapple with, as they strive to adapt to this novel educational landscape.

- The shared concerns about potential academic regressions resonate with the prognostications of the World Bank's (2020) dossier. Their meticulous analytical purview indicates potential perennial repercussions on scholastic outcomes due to pandemic-induced discontinuities.
- The emphasis by parents on schools' roles as irreplaceable crucibles for social and emotional growth finds poignant resonance with the insights of Fry-Bowers (2020). Their research spotlights the multifaceted and holistic contributions of educational institutions to a child's overall growth and development.

Conclusion

The results from this study, when viewed in conjunction with previous research, underscore the multifaceted challenges posed by distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. As echoed by various scholars, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses technological, academic, and emotional facets. The converging views of stakeholders, as highlighted both in this study and prior research, emphasize the need for collaborative solutions that cater to the unique needs of students, parents, and educators.

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New Trends in Students' Reading Habits

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

The technology era has caused many changes in the reading habits of students, starting in 2011. However, the universities were not prepared for the enormous challenges they faced with the Pandemic, in late 2019 and early 2020. The pandemic has accelerated the habits of students toward digital resources and the use of more and more electronic materials. Facing this phenomenon, accelerated by the effects of Covid-19, the universities have to face the necessity of the adaptation of teaching methods which meant the use of digital materials.

The article analyses the change in reading habits and the teaching methods in the Albanian and Kosovan context, showing how the universities in the Republic of Albania and Kosovo have been affected by these changes, embracing approaches to information technology. For this purpose, we have analyzed the changes in reading habits in different public and private universities in Albania and Kosovo. A tested questionnaire has been spread to 672 students in both countries, in different programs and different years of studies.

The article shows that under the influence of globalization processes and the development of information technology, reading habits are changing at a frenetic speed, weakening hard copy reading and increasing electronic and that under the Pandemic Covid-19 universities changed the ways of offering teaching methods, accelerating the change of the reading habits of students and weakening the use of printed books as a tool for learning, as well as decreasing the time of reading for pleasure. A more dynamic world caused more focused universities and more rapid changes in the reading habits of the students.

Keywords: Education, new trends, reading habits, universities.

The society where we live, called "the information society" is touched by digital transformation, which has caused behavior changes, especially in reading habits (Mumtaz et al., 2021). The era of digitization of academic literature has been around for about two decades. As Chang et al. (2022) mentioned with the development of the internet, new media reading emerged around 2011 and digital reading has become a way of

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learning and living for contemporary college students. Meanwhile, it seems that the period of the pandemic Covid-19 increased the tendency of students and academics to change their reading habits, giving more priority to reading electronic materials.

This study aims to analyze the change in the reading habits of students studying in the universities of the Republic of Albania and Kosovo, highlighting the role that the universities themselves play in these new trends.

More specifically, the study has the following objectives: 1. to present a general overview of new trends in reading habits for university students in a global context. 2. to show how the universities in the Republic of Albania and Kosovo have been affected by these changes, embracing approaches to information technology. 3. to present the findings of an empirical study that analysis the tendencies of university students in Albania and Kosovo to change their reading habits in the function of their academic progress and the role of the universities in facilitating this process.

Literature Review

Basing on the idea that "knowledge is power", Annabel (2017) perceived reading ability as a way that determines the extent to which an adult engages in the reading process. Support systems in reading development influence people lifelong, no matter a person's age.

Digital content has broken the physical boundaries of homes, libraries, and offices (Shimray et al., 2015). When reading, which is the basic manner of acquiring information, is transformed into a habit, another notion called "reading habit" is created. The university period, which is the most intense stage of formal education, is a period when young people carry out the act of reading the most frequently and necessarily (Erdem, 2015, p. 3984).

According to Chang et al. (2022), habit reflects users' dependence on new information skills. Academic reading ability reflects college students' information literacy. Most students must be exposed to digital academic reading and have the ability to obtain and use digital information, so they have a strong dependence on it.

Referring to Rosli et al. (2017, p. 792), reading habits are calculated as how much a person reads, how often they read, when they read, and what they read. According to these scholars, students from different countries have different preferences (Rosli et al., 2017, p. 293). The same results have been confirmed by St Clair-Thompson et al. (2018) who reported that students, at a University in the UK, spent an average of 14.1 hours per week reading textbooks and journal articles for their assigned reading. Huang et al. (2016) also find that in the United States students spend on college readings an average of 4.94 hours a week on college reading, 4.17 hours on extracurricular reading, and 16.40 hours per week on Facebook. According to Mirza et al. (2021, p. 222), it is found that Pakistani, engineering university students prefer printed books for academic reading and electronic books for pleasure or leisure reading. Very few students use social media for reading and information sharing.

The reading tendency is decreasing all over the world. Based on the data of the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, provided by The National Endowment for the Arts (2019, p. 12) in the USA, in 1992 61% of Americans had read a book for pleasure, not required for work or school, but by 2017 less than 53% (or 127 million) had done so. According to this report in 2017, 23 percent of adults used electronic devices such as e-readers, tablets, and cell phones to read books and o 16 percent of adults listened to audiobooks.

Recently, studies regarding the impact of the pandemic on reading habits have been undertaken. These studies have highlighted various findings related to important changes that have occurred concerning reading habits. Especially during quarantine, some individuals have reported difficulty in concentration and therefore deterioration of reading habits, while some others, in the conditions of social isolation, have seen reading as a therapy, to cope with what was happening outside. A study conducted by Jahan et al. (2021), referred to 700 university students in Bangladesh and showed that 44.6% of students read books for only 1-2 hours whereas 57.4% of them spend 5-6 hours using electronic devices for multiple purposes mostly other than reading, concluding that reading habits have been affected significantly during the pandemic

of COVID-2019. Encouraging student participation within the virtual classroom did not always increase the effectiveness of the online learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic, as this process occurred during a turbulent time for both students and professors (Balaj & Zhigolli, 2022, p. 119). A study conducted by Miftari et al. (2021, p. 41) found that in Bosnia and Herzegovina the lack of adequate equipment for holding online processes during the corona pandemic period, influenced the student's learning process, especially for children with disabilities, children from poor families and other marginalized categories of students. Influenced by the pandemic caused by Covid-19, universities all over the world start using electronic platforms, not only to develop online learning but also to share materials with students, which seems to have affected their reading habits.

A study conducted by West and Chew (2014) showed that mobile devices are the most favorable reading devices for millions of people in the world. People read more when they read on mobile devices.

The study conducted by Mirza et al. (2021, p. 221) has also found that most of the respondents have access to smartphones and the lowest number of the students have access to tablets. However, some students have access to laptops and they utilize more laptops for access to digital content and electronic books, especially when they, as hardworking students of public sector universities, receive free laptops from the government. According to this study, most of the students did not have experience with the Internet, mainly because of the demographic and geographic reasons of the students

because most of them belong to rural areas.

The Albanian and Kosovo Universities Context

The reading culture is strongly related to society. The culture of reading and the reading habit also constitute a process, which is cultivated early in childhood by the primary agency of socialization, which is the family, and then reinforced by other agencies of socialization, where the school also plays an important role. In Albania and Kosovo, two neighboring countries, but with different historical pasts, the primary agency of socialization, the family, tries to encourage children to continue their higher education and to devote themselves to studies, therefore also to take up reading. Parents' expectations are strongly related to children's academic achievement (Zenelaga, 2014, p. 11). In these countries, the reading culture is also promoted by other agencies such as schools, but also through social events, projects, social networks, etc. For example, In Albania in October 2016 throughout Albania, the campaign "See you for a book" (instead of see you for a coffee) took place, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sport, Tirana Municipality, other cultural institutions, the foreign embassies, as well as the University of Tirana, Department of Literary. Every year in Kosovo and Albania the reading culture is promoted as well through book fairs, mainly in the Capitals, Pristina, and Tirana. Referring to the data taken from the Statistic Agency in Kosovo, even though the number of libraries and their founding have increased from 2014 to 2018, the number of readers has decreased

Table 1.
Kosovo context of libraries and no. readers

Year	No of libraries	The titles of books entering during the year	The founds of books of libraries	No of readers
2014	105	17,057	1,608,502	161,713
2015	106	36,798	1,627,745	230,234
2016	108	44,264	1,793,073	278,201
2017	107	35,760	1,782,945	158,176
2018	110	42,038	1,775,435	156,535

Source: Kamberi, 2020

According to a study developed in Kosovo, 88% of respondents confirmed that they read books ad only 12% confirmed that they do not read books. As Aliu (2017) mentioned the readers can be divided into passive readers (those who read only the titles of books and do not deal with the substance) and the active ones. In this last category are included: (1) students, who read mainly with the specific purpose to succeed on the exams (2) readers of popular literature, who are focused on enjoying the best seller and novels books (3) deep readers who are focused more on philosophical, historical, or scientific literature (Kamberi, 2020). The Institute of Statistics in Albania (INSTAT) calculated that the number of book readers has dropped significantly recently in Albania as well. One-third of the population has not read a single book during the last year (Journal Monitor, 21 August 2018). A study conducted by Vero (2019, p. 65) also showed that the number of students who prefer to read books is very little differentiated by the number of students who do not prefer to read books, but for them, the most favorite way to read is E-Book. This means that technology (E–Book) has replaced traditional books (Printed Books). According to INSTAT (2017, p. 11) the results of the Adult Education Survey 2017, which refers to the population aged 25-64, showed that 457 thousand Albanians, or 30.7% of all adults between 25 and 64 years old, turn out to be book readers. Contrary to the assumption that today's young people do not read, the largest group of readers belongs to the age group of 25-34 years with 126 thousand.

Referring to the data taken from "Youth Study in Kosovo 2018/2019", the majority of school-attending youth in Kosovo spend at least two hours per day studying. There has been a slight increase in the number of pupils and students who study more than two hours per day. There is a notably greater number of hours of study for university students compared to other groups. This shows that high schools are perceived to be less demanding than the university level (FESa 2019, p. 39). The same research conducted in Albania showed that young Albanians spend on average two hours a day studying. 17 percent of respondents state they spend 0–1 hour/day studying, 32 percent spend 1–2 hours, 27 percent 2–3 hours, and 23 percent spend more than 3 hours/day. For the latter group, there is a significant increase from only 14.1 percent recorded in 2015, which points to an increase in awareness among young people in a world dominated by the knowledge economy (FESb, 2019, p. 49).

Methodology and Study Hypotheses

Participants

The methodology used for this study purpose is quantitative. Students who followed the bachelor and master programs participated in this study, from 6 universities of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo, 4 public universities, and two private ones. For each university, one specific faculty was chosen, to take information from students who follow different study programs such as social sciences, education sciences, engineering, business management, management of tourism, computer sciences, management of human resources, food technology, and law. In a population of 13 786 students, the sample selected was 697 respondents (confidence level: 98%, margin of error 4.3, population proportion 50). Of them, 386 respondents were from Kosovo and 311 from Albania. The sample size was calculated based on the formula:

Equation 1.

$$CI' = \hat{p} \pm \mathrm{z} \times \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n'} \times \frac{N-n'}{N-1}}$$

where **z** is z score
p̂ is the population proportion
n and **n'** are sample size
N is the population size

Instrument

The instruments used was a questionnaire with structured questions which was delivered online through Google as well as in hard copy version. The results have been provided from the analysis of the data through the SPSS 22 program. For this paper only some variables of the instrument have been taken into consideration.

The instrument was constructed based on the model created by Basuony et al. (2020), being modified based on the empirical context in which the research was developed.

Hypothesis

H1: Based on internet access, the opportunity to use adequate devices, and adequate university platforms, there is a difference in using electronic reading habits between students from the universities of the Republic of Kosovo and those of the Republic of Albania.

H2: The impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes (IELRHLO) differs from the universities of Albania and those of Kosovo.

H3: The impact of university electronic systems on reading habits (IUESRH) differs from the universities of Albania and Kosovo.

The participant's general information

The questionnaire was completed by 697 students, of which 311 students were from universities in the Republic of Albania and 386 from universities in the Republic of Kosovo. 69% of respondents were females and 31% were males.

Table 2.
Respondents according to gender

	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
Female	257	224	481
	82.6%	58.0%	69.0%
Male	54	162	216
	17.4%	42.0%	31.0%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Students from both private and public universities have participated in the survey. In total 68.7% of all respondents were students who study at public universities from both Albania and Kosovo and 31.3% were students from private universities.

Table 3.
Respondents according to kind of the universities

Kind of university	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
Public university	245	234	479
	78.8%	60.6%	68.7%
Private university	66	152	218
	21.2%	39.4%	31.3%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Internet access, use of devices, and university platforms. evidence from Albania and Kosovo universities

To have a clear panorama about internet access, students were asked if they have an internet connection in their place of living or not and, according to the following data, 93.4% of respondents affirmed that they have an internet connection in their place of living and 6.6% did not. There is a slow difference between students from Albania (91.6% of them responded "yes") and students from Kosovo (94.8% of them responded "yes").

Table 4.
Internet connection in the place of living

Affirmation	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
Yes	285	366	651
	91.6%	94.8%	93.4%
No	26	20	46
	8.4%	5.2%	6.6%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding the daily time the students spend on reading, the data show that 40.7% of students spend mostly 1-2 hours on this daily activity, 32.6% spend 2-3 hours per day, and only 14.5% spend 3 or more hours per day on reading. There is a small difference between students who study at Albanian universities (10% of them spend 3 or more hours per day on reading) and students who study at the universities of Kosovo (18.1% of them spend 3 or more hours on this activity).

Table 5.
How much time do you spend reading during the day?

Time spent reading	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
30 min -1 hour per day	59	26	85
	19.0%	6.7%	12.2%
1-2 hours per day	118	166	284
	37.9%	43.0%	40.7%
2-3 hours per day	103	124	227
	33.1%	32.1%	32.6%
3 or more hours per day	31	70	101
	10.0%	18.1%	14.5%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

According to the data students from Kosovo universities, used to read for exams preparation in rapport to the daily reading more compared to the students from Albanian universities. The table below showed that the biggest part of Albanian students uses 21-40% of their daily reading for exam preparation, compared to 11.4% of Kosovo students who do the same, meanwhile 18.1% of Kosovo students use 81-100% of their daily reading for exam preparation, meanwhile, no one of the students in Albania does the same.

Table 6.

The time used to read for exams preparation in rapport with the daily reading

Percentage	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
0-20%	4	4	8
	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%
21-40%	170	44	214
	54.7%	11.4%	30.7%
41-60%	109	162	271
	35.0%	42.0%	38.9%
61-80%	28	106	134
	9.0%	27.5%	19.2%
81-100%	0	70	70
	0.0%	18.1%	10.0%
Total	311	386	697

The study also showed a difference between students who study at Albanian universities and those who study at the universities of Kosovo regarding the kind of electronic devices the students use for reading purposes. 52% of students from Albania affirm that they use mobiles, only 11.9% affirm that use laptops, and 5.1% use other devices such as desktops, tablets, etc. Meanwhile, 23.3% of students in Kosovo universities affirm that use mobiles, 29% use laptops, and 43% use other devices.

Table 7.

A comparison of electronic devices used by students in Albania and Kosovo

The electronic device	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
eReaders	2	10	12
	0.6%	2.6%	1.7%
Mobile	163	90	253
	52.4%	23.3%	36.3%
Tablet	37	112	149
	11.9%	29.0%	21.4%
Laptop	93	166	259
	29.9%	43.0%	37.2%
Others	16	8	24
	5.1%	2.1%	3.4%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding the first source of literature used on the exams, 40.2% of students from Kosovo affirmed that they use as a first source the library of printed books, meanwhile, only 19.9% of students from Albanian universities do so. There is a significant difference between students from Kosovo who use electronic libraries as a first source on the exams (28.5%), comparing to students from Albania who do the same (2.6%), and also a difference between students from Kosovo who use journal platforms (7.3%) and them from Albania who do the same (0.6%). The biggest part of the Albanian students, 74.6%, use electronic material which they print, compared to 16.8% of students from Kosovo who do so. The reason for this can be the limitation on being provided with laptops by Albanian students, which can be considered the most important device for students to give them the possibility to use electronic materials

directly from the devices, avoiding the printing version.

Table 8.

Which is the first source of literature on the exams

The first source of literature on the exams	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
Library of printed books	62	155	217
	19.9%	40.2%	31.1%
Electronic library	8	110	118
	2.6%	28.5%	16.9%
Journal platforms	2	28	30
	0.6%	7.3%	4.3%
Specialized pages	7	28	35
	2.3%	7.3%	5.0%
Electronic materials which I print	232	65	297
	74.6%	16.8%	42.6%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding the electronic platforms that universities in Albania and Kosovo, the data showed that in the universities of Kosovo SEMS and Moodle are the most used, meanwhile in Albanian universities other electronic platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Pitagora, etc., but there is a considerable percentage of students (33.4%) that mentioned that in Albania universities do not use any platform at all.

Table 9.

A comparison of electronic platforms used by universities in Albania and Kosovo

University platform	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
SEMS	13	226	239
	4.2%	58.5%	34.3%
Zoom	56	4	60
	18.0%	1.0%	8.6%
Moodle	0	150	150
	0.0%	38.9%	21.5%
Other (Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.)	138	0	138
	44.4%	0.0%	19.8%
No platform	104	6	110
	33.4%	1.6%	15.8%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding the frequency of reading electronic literature compared to one year ago, more students from Kosovo have "totally agree" (40,4%), compared to the students from Albanian universities (22.5% "totally agree").

Table 10.

This year I read more electronic literature compared to one year ago

Affirmation	Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
Totally disagree	63	8	71
	20.3%	2.1%	10.2%
Disagree	59	32	91
	19.0%	8.3%	13.1%
Neutral	50	80	130
	16.1%	20.7%	18.7%
Agree	69	110	179
	22.2%	28.5%	25.7%
Totally agree	70	156	226
	22.5%	40.4%	32.4%
Total	311	386	697
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding the aim of using electronic literature, there is also a difference between students at Albanian universities and those at Kosovo universities. More students from Kosovo read electronic literature mainly to get general information (54.9% ''totally agree'' compared to 22.8% of students of Albanian universities) to improve their reading habits (50.8% ''totally agree'' compared to 24.8% of students of Albanian universities) and for professional development (51.8% ''totally agree'' to compare to 33.4% of students of Albanian universities), meanwhile students from Albanian universities use electronic literature mainly for fun (32.2% ''totally agree'' to compare to 23.3% of students from Kosovo).

Table 11.

The aim of using electronic literature

The reason for reading electronic literature		Republic of Albania	Republic of Kosovo	Total
I read electronic literature mainly to get general information	Totally disagree	6.1%	1.0%	3.3%
	Disagree	9.6%	4.7%	6.9%
	Neutral	35.7%	9.8%	21.4%
	Agree	25.7%	29.5%	27.8%
	Totally agree	22.8%	54.9%	40.6%
I read electronic literature mainly to improve my reading habits	Totally disagree	7.1%	1.6%	4.0%
	Disagree	15.8%	3.6%	9.0%
	Neutral	34.1%	15.0%	23.5%
	Agree	18.3%	29.0%	24.2%
	Totally agree	24.8%	50.8%	39.2%
I read electronic literature for professional development	Totally disagree	5.5%	0.5%	2.7%
	Disagree	8.0%	1.6%	4.4%
	Neutral	30.5%	15.5%	22.2%
	Agree	22.5%	30.6%	27.0%
	Totally agree	33.4%	51.8%	43.6%
I read electronic literature mainly for fun	Totally disagree	7.1%	13.0%	10.3%
	Disagree	16.1%	22.3%	19.5%
	Neutral	27.7%	22.3%	24.7%
	Agree	17.0%	19.2%	18.2%
	Totally agree	32.2%	23.3%	27.3%

So, regarding the first hypothesis, the study showed a difference in using electronic reading habits between students from the universities of the Republic of Kosovo and those of the Republic of Albania, based on internet access, the opportunity to use adequate devices, and adequate university platforms.

The impact of electronic literature and the university electronic system on students' reading habits and learning outcomes

Below is a summary of the dependent variables with the corresponding items, more specifically two independent variables "The impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes" (IELRHLO) and "The impact of university electronic system on reading habits" (IUESRH).
The reliability test showed a high value of Crombach's alpha.

Table 12.
The reliability results

The variable code	The variable	Nr. of items	The item's code	Items	Crombach's alpha
IELRHLO	The impact of electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes	5 items	IELRHLO1	The electronic literature offers more facilities for the use	.848
			IELRHLO2	The experiences so far with electronic literature have influenced me to get more habits of reading electronic literature (change my reading habits)	
			IELRHLO3	I understand better the electronic literature comparing to the printed one	
			IELRHLO4	I can spend more time reading if I use electronic literature	
			IELRHLO5	Changing reading habits have influenced better learning outcomes	
IUESRH	The impact of university electronic system on reading habits	8 items	IUESRH1	The university offers an electronic system where the teaching materials are uploaded	.891
			IUESRH2	Comparing to the previous year the university put a bigger number of electronic literature in the electronic system	
			IUESRH3	The number of teaching materials has influenced my reading habits	
			IUESRH4	The university organizes training for the students about the way of using electronic libraries	
			IUESRH5	The university organizes training for the students about the way of using electronic libraries	
			IUESRH6	I have attended at least one training on how to use electronic resources	
			IUESRH7	The training has significantly influenced the expansion of the use of electronic sources	
			IUESRH8	The training has significantly influenced the expansion of the use of reading habits	

Figure 1.
*The model of variables relationship*
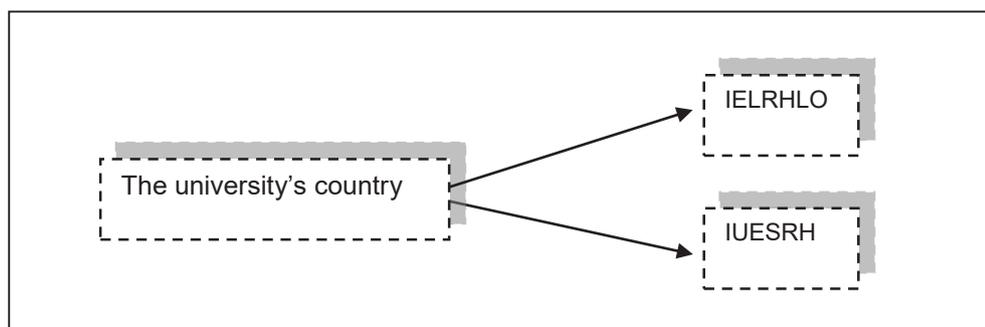
To verify the second hypothesis "The impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes (IELRHLO)" differs from the universities of Albania and Kosovo, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test has been used.
According to this test and the null hypothesis has been rejected (the significance level is .000).

As the following graphs show, the mean rank for Kosovo universities is higher than that of Albanian universities. We can assume that looking that in Kosovo there is a better infrastructure of internet connection, a better students' furniture with electronic devices, and students spend more time on daily reading, in Kosovo the impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes is higher than in Albania.

Figure 2.
The impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes according to the university's country

Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test

University Country
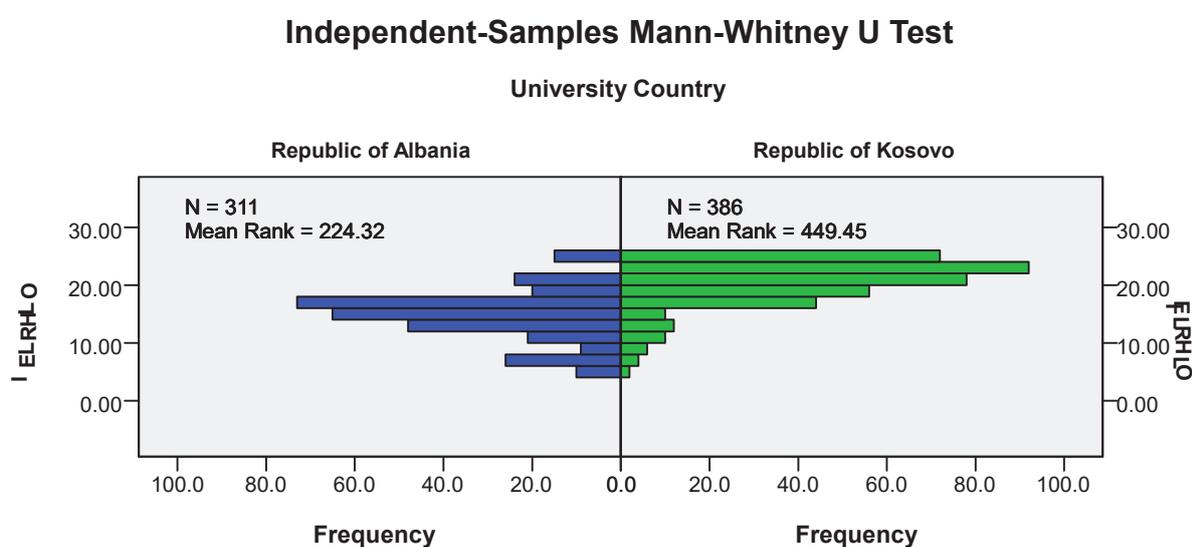
Total N	697
Mann-Whitney U	98,797.000
Wilcoxon W	173,488.000
Test Statistic	98,797.000
Standard Error	2,635.718
Standardized Test Statistic	14.711
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.000

To verify the third hypothesis "The impact of university electronic system on reading habits (IUESRH) differs from universities of Albania and them of Kosovo", the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test has been used as well.
According to this test and the null hypothesis has been rejected (the significance level is .000).
The impact of the university electronic system on reading habits (IUESRH) is also higher in the case of the universities of Kosovo, compared to the universities of Albania.

Figure 3.
The impact of university electronic system on reading habits according to the university's country

Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test
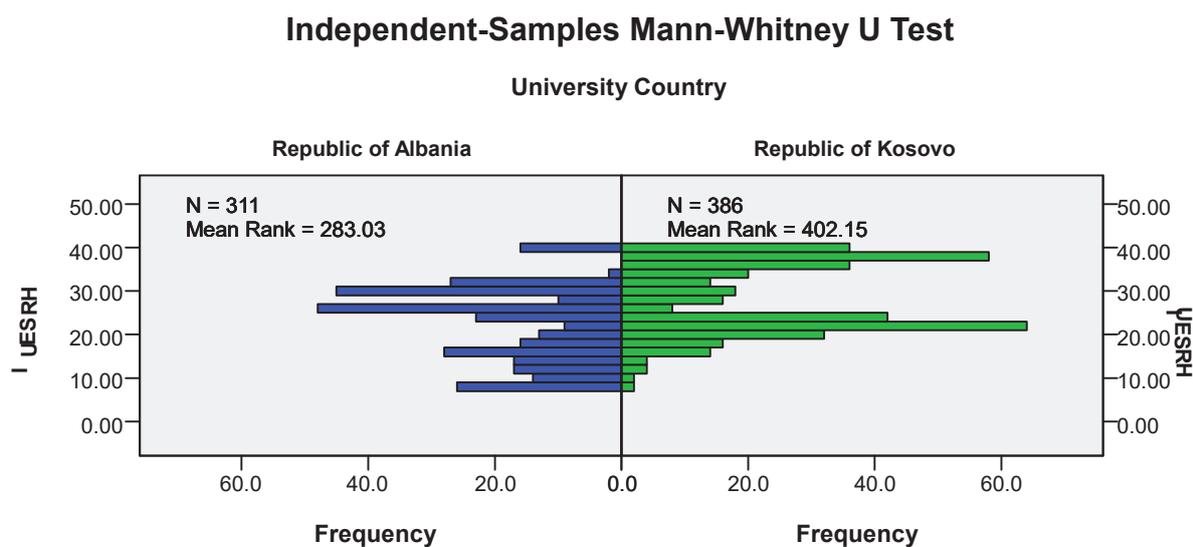
Total N	697
Mann-Whitney U	80,539.000
Wilcoxon W	155,230.000
Test Statistic	80,539.000
Standard Error	2,640.195
Standardized Test Statistic	7.771
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.000

Conclusions

As the study highlighted, under the effect of technology development, it seems that the tendency to be exposed to new reading habits is growing significantly. This tendency is more visible among students who attend universities in Kosovo and less among students who attend universities in Albania.

The data of this study showed that students in Kosovo have more access to the internet, and are better equipped with devices that facilitate the quality of electronic reading, such as laptops and tablets, compared to students in Albania who use usually phones even to prepare for exams, which does not seem to motivate them enough to spend many hours on electronic reading. The conclusion that students of different countries have different preferences in managing academic reading is supported also by Mirza et al. (2021), St Clair-Thompson et al. (2018), Rosli et al. (2017),

Huang et al. (2016).

On the other hand, the use of university platforms seems to develop reading habits. Even in this case, the study showed that the universities of the Republic of Kosovo, through the development of electronic platforms, have a greater influence on the reading habits of students, compared to the universities of Albania.

The study also showed that the impact of the university's electronic system on reading habits (IUESRH) is also higher in the case of the universities of Kosovo, compared to the universities of Albania. Also, the impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes (IELRHLO), differs from the universities of Albania and those of Kosovo, with an advantage over Kosovo universities.

Briefly, the hypotheses testing is shown as follows:

Table 13.

No	Hypothesis	Status
H1	Based on internet access, the opportunity to use adequate devices, and adequate university platforms, there is a difference in using electronic reading habits between students from universities of the Republic of Kosovo and those of the Republic of Albania.	Confirmed
H2	The impact of the electronic literature on reading habits and learning outcomes (IELRHLO) differs from the universities of Albania and Kosovo.	Confirmed
H3	The impact of the university electronic system on reading habits (IUESRH) differs from the universities of Albania and Kosovo.	Confirmed

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, some important recommendations should be considered.

Since, as a result of the development of technology, the change in reading habits from hard copy to electronic one is inevitable, so universities should take measures to facilitate this process for their students. This can be done through:

1. Providing good and functional platforms that allow students access to electronic materials from lecturers.

2. Internet coverage of good quality for students.

3. Provision of donations or favorable practices for equipping students with electronic equipment to be used during the years of university or postgraduate education, such as laptops and tablets.

This would increase the possibility of students having better access to electronic materials, improving their reading habits, and encouraging them from spending more hours preparing for exams and to have better academic outcomes.

A collaboration between the universities of Kosovo and those of Albania should be encouraged with the aim of sharing the best practices. Through this collaboration universities can help each other to face the challenges, helping students to fit with the new requirements in a society of information that is changing in a frenetic way.

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An Overview Review of Understanding the Need for Adolescents Sexual and Reproductive Health Interventions

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Abstract

Adolescents are the most vulnerable group, who are denied to access information and guidance related to sexual and reproductive health needs because of the social taboos that lead them to encumbrances. This review study helps to understand the different perspectives of sexual and reproductive health based on cultural, sociological, physiological, and economical aspects. The paper explains sexuality from the theoretical perspectives. Adolescence is the transitional stage where physiological, biological, and psychological changes occur, at the same time proper knowledge about sexual and reproductive health should be provided with importance of sexual and reproductive health interventions. It intricates the availability and effectiveness of adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH). The methodology is a systematic review with PRISMA guidelines sourced from various databases of PubMed databases, Research Gate, Science Direct, BMC Public Health, Web of Science, SAGE, Scopus, WHO library, and other websites relevant to this study. The recent literature highlighted the importance of sexual and reproductive health interventions among adolescents. The study has concluded with the findings impact of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) intervention programmes and to develop an increase in effective ASRH programmes, which will help the adolescents to know the importance of sexual hygiene and reproductive hygiene.

Keywords: *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health; HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus); AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome); STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases); Contraceptives; Adolescent Sex Intervention Programme.*

According to UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), sexual and reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system. It implies that people can have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capability to reproduce, and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. It is necessary and important for every individual to maintain their sexual and

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reproductive health. Access to information should be accurate, safe, effective, affordable, and acceptable methods of contraception should be of their choice, United Nations Population Fund (2016). The global data of the world population states that 18% i.e. (1.2 billion) of the world population comprise of adolescents, every fifth person is denoted as an adolescent, pertaining with it 88% of the population are adolescents in developing countries, Ismail et al. (2015). According to the study by *Mohamad Iqbal,* he defines the term "adolescence is a span of fears". It is understood that there is age segregation for adolescent groups between age groups 10 and 19 for girls and age groups between 12 and 18 for boys, and it is in India where there is 243 million largest adolescent population. The influential effects of adolescent status include liberalism, modernization, capitalism, individualization, westernization, materialism, modern technologies, and so on, Iqbal et al. (2021).

Every individual should be aware that they have rights and choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Certainly, when an individual feels that their Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) needs are not met, they will be deprived of their rights to make important choices about their own body and proceed with future awareness of their family welfare and future generations. This SRH and rights issue is inextricably linked to gender equality. The refusal of these rights leads to poverty and gender inequality, United Nations Population Fund (2016). It is the stage of emotions of excitement, worries, and difficulties. When adolescents are aware that they are growing from childhood towards adulthood, the awareness of sexual and reproductive health should be precise and knowledgeable with appropriate information because it is the stage for adolescents' major life change where they sense or understand sexuality as stressful, exciting, frightening, or difficult emotions to handle by themselves, Action for the Rights of Children (2009).

Apart from the economic, social, medical, and educational development in this 21st century, adolescents and young people face more risk in terms of reproductive health than others. Through developments such as urbanization, the breakdown of traditional social and economic structures, and the increased mobility of the world's population. A few studies explain that adolescents are much more sexually active, and the ratio increases from mid-to-late adolescence, Action for the Rights of Children (2009).

Some of the problems faced by adolescents across the world include early pregnancy and parenthood; issues in accessing contraception and safe abortion; high-risk rates of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, Morris et al. (2015). "Sexuality" is the concept that comprises the total make-up of an individual's physical preferences, attitude towards it, values, and experiences. Sexuality incepts as its first challenge for healthy life growth and development during the adolescent stage. Societies response to reproductive health and the needs of adolescents should be based on positive and proper information, that should help them to understand the level of maturity needed to make responsible decisions in sexual life, Jain et al. (2014).

Adolescents are very particular about their needs from healthcare providers. They focus on their privacy about sexual identity that is adolescents make decisions based on the ideal information and think it is best for their reproductive and sexual health. The WHO identifies various elements that make adolescents seek health care, they are as follows: confidentiality, providing valuable information and services, acceptance of adolescents, the need to acquire sexual education to be respected, and their opinions, and views to be considered important. Adolescents are vulnerable since they are linked to physical, emotional, and social changes, the increase in poor knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, health rights, and their principles has an impact on their behavioural changes. Awareness, knowledge, and attitude towards accessing the SRH information in the appropriate situation should come into consideration. It is understood that SRH also impacts the next generation of adolescents, so it is important to know about the positive knowledge of SRH at the stage of adolescence, Dibaba et al. (2020).

Dimensions of understanding sexual and reproductive health among adolescents

Fatusi (2016) Adolescents' sexual and reproductive health rights needs are high in low- and middle-income countries, where access to SRH information is extremely

difficult. On the other hand, the studies showed that there is a significant risk of sexual health among adolescents in slums compared to other settlements. It is also expressed that the issues of sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS are more compared to knowing about contraception, abortion and its consequences, and gender-based violence. Adolescents face health consequences because of environmental insecurities, poor sanitation, and poor personal hygiene, as well as a space to encounter Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Adolescents' relationship evolution is based on unequal decision-making among male and female partners, where females have less control over their sexual desires and lives. Adolescent sexual partners had lower levels of awareness about healthy sexual behaviours and they lacked preparation to engage in sexual intercourse Dibaba et al. (2020). Another study also reported that in Gordon town, Northwest Ethiopia, the utilisation of voluntary counselling and family planning of adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age prone to early marriage were under risk perception.

According to the district-level Household Survey (DLHS)-3, the report states that in India there is a higher level of pregnancies in rural areas (19.7%) as compared with urban areas (8.6%) among the age group (15–19 years), which indicates health disparities among that geographical area, Gupta et al. (2015). As per the study, young women, especially adolescent girls, from low-and-middle-income countries are exposed to poor sexual and reproductive health. Only fewer women in Asia and Africa between the ages of 20 and 24 marry at a young age, usually, before the age of 18, their sexual health would be at risk as well as indulging their children at risk of disability and death. Notably, sexual activity at a young age is increasing in the majority of low- and middle-income countries, Meherali et al. (2021). The behavioural changes among adolescents occur after the diagnosis of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), only after they get infected their acquisition of using condoms and safety precautionary methods are followed, Robinson et al. (2002). Some traditional practices are cruel to adolescent girls' health, The FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) practice is very obvious and common among girls under the age of

18 years. Over 200 million young girls suffer from the compulsive practice of FGM. It is a global problem mostly prominent among 30 countries in Africa and a few countries in Asia and the Middle East. The most targeted group for FGM today is adolescent girls. It causes immediate health consequences such as shock, infections, haemorrhage, bleeding, severe pain, strain in passing urine and faeces, and death, as well as chronic health. The social consequences such as menstrual problems, pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, orgasmic dysfunction, sexual and mental trauma, infections, and inconvenience towards intercourse and sexual involvement, Salam et al. (2016). To avoid teenage pregnancy and risky sexual behaviour, the sexual health awareness of adolescents' communication with parents may help to regulate sexual behaviour. Still, adolescent sexual health is a global priority, and more emphasis should be placed on research into the impact on unwanted pregnancies and the prevalence of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to develop this knowledge among adolescents, Robinson et al. (2002).

The ideology of sexual health and a different spectrum of understanding in physical, social, emotional, and relationship acquisition becomes a healthy aspect of sexual development. This is due to the cognitive urges in sexual behavioural development.

Positive sexual behaviour is associated with sex communication and contraception is associated with sexual satisfaction and commitment towards the partners. Sexual health is one of the influencing factors which helps adolescents to understand and organise the ideas of behavioural expressions of sexuality, that provides a way to include and exclude their specific behavioural choices. Relationships, like those of some adolescents, begin with initial behaviours such as holding hands, hugging, kissing, and oral sex before progressing to the intimacy of vaginal sex, Hensel et al. (2013). Adolescents initially maintain sexual abstinence, but later when they enter into relationships expressing sexual desires, and sexuality. Unintended teenage pregnancy is one of society's and individuals' concerns about adolescents. The importance of a precise understanding of sexual health is emphasized in the

study. There are many ethical, personal, economic, and social reasons related to the acquisition of sexual practices and birth control or pregnancy avoidance. Ideological and religious beliefs, familial and cultural patterns, biological urges, and peer group pressures are the impact of the modern power of mass media which is attributed to the behaviour patterns of adolescents, Huengsberg et al. (2002). The fleeting changes in sexual maturity led to insecure and unsure complexity among adolescents, making them feel exaggerated towards their capabilities and capacities connected to unstable feelings toward their partners. When these emotions are not handled or treated properly, they face hurdles in explaining sexual and reproductive health and the importance of sex education, Iqbal et al. (2021).

Distortion of sexual and reproductive health among adolescents

Adolescence is defined as being the stage between puberty and transforming into adulthood and being independent, Mehta et al. (2020). Studies have stated that adolescents who are involved in sexual intercourse at early ages have decreased awareness related to contraception and its uses. Many studies show that adolescents' sexual behaviour results in early pregnancy or teen pregnancy or leads to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), which affect the overall reproductive health of adolescents Office of Population Affairs (2019). To manage it, access to reproductive health care needs and education, as well as ingrained gender norms, which affect the health of all gender, the stage of transition from childhood to adulthood is completely about physical maturity, which occurs due to the earlier onset of sexual thoughts, sexual attention, and experimentation, Mehta et al. (2020).

Adolescents countenance rape, unwanted pregnancies, sexual abuse, and defilement challenges. Sexual advances made by older men demonstrate unsafe sexual behaviour and sexual health, Atuyambe et al. (2015). According to studies, 46% of US high school students have engaged in sexual intercourse, and a survey reveals that one in every four female adolescents aged 14 to 19 years has been involved and has common STIs such as Human Papillomavirus

(HPV), Herpes, Chlamydia, Simplex Virus, or Trichomoniasis. Teen pregnancy is one of the negative livelihood outcomes leading to school dropout, unemployment, and early parenthood, Lee et al. (2014). Adolescents from low-to-middle-income countries (LMICs) suffer from reckless sexual and reproductive health outcomes like early or unintended pregnancies, sexual violence, unsafe abortions, STIs, and HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection caused by sexual activity. The greatest challenge for young adolescents is the risk of childbearing, Denno et al. (2015). Poverty, stress from discrimination and racism, and lack of access to health care during an expected situation are also recognised as barriers to learn about healthy sexual behaviours, Evans et al. (2020).

In many countries, abortion is considered as an offensive act, but when access to it is limited, the gynaecological ramification of "Back Street" abortion takes place, where young men are affected by the direct health outturns of having early sex, sexual infections, or the changes in pregnancy unpropitious causal sequelae to chronic sexual diseases, Cowan (2002). The Soviet Union states experienced striking epidemic rises in the spread of syphilis, gonorrhoea, and other sexually transmitted infections in recent years, and these health crises were higher in incidence as evidenced by contemporary data, just as they are in Western European countries. This data elucidates that the new diagnosis of sexually causative HIV infections was raised by 20% in-between 1995 and 2000, Bingham (2002).

Risky sexual behaviours and reproductive health issues can result in anomalous or impaired foetal growth in children under the age of 18, Denno et al. (2015). Adolescent girls and young women from a population of 357 million make up one-third of the vulnerable group who are exposed to curable STIs. These STIs are known to be long-term reproductive health causative agents, affecting fertility, pregnancy, and cervical cancer. Socioeconomic factors create multiple syndemics among adolescents related to interpersonal violence, mental health disorders, poverty, trouble in education, economic opportunity, and substance use. Menarche (the first mensural cycle) should be focused based on the reproductive health

expectations of girls and young women. It is necessary to spread awareness among boys, young men and other gender to know the sensitivity of this issue, Mehta et al. (2020). Adolescents from slums are more vulnerable to the prevalence of HIV than their peers and among sexually active young people. Studies proved that urban dwellers indicate inequalities in health disparities among the general population and slum dwellers, Tuhebwe et al. (2021).

Adolescent sexual health is still a topic of taboo where adolescent sexuality is considered a proscribed topic in most societies where it is disregarded for the risky sexual health behaviour related to contraceptives, unprotected sex, etc. Studies state that, mostly in slum regions, the rate of illiteracy is higher where the ignorance towards sexual health behaviour is misguided, and ignored by the family and by peers. Adolescents in slum areas do not receive proper education and information about sexual and reproductive health. It is still a prohibited topic among the people living in slums, Tamboli et al. (2015). Certain programmes focus on family-level influencing factors that aid in understanding safe sex practices from a cultural perspective, with outcomes based on biological, behavioural, and psychological health behaviours, Evans et al. (2020). Other vulnerable groups affected by stratified socioeconomic status include sex workers, adolescent dropouts, orphans, and the disabled, Denno et al. (2015). As the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents is required for their development needs and livelihood, it is important to understand the need for positive education on sexual health and reproductive health among adolescents with the necessary quality adequacy of sexual health information services needs to be necessary, Tuhebwe et al. (2021).

Socio-theoretical Perspectives on Sex and Sexuality: Theory of Structural Functionalism

The functionalists focused more on the concept of sexuality related to controlling sexual behaviour and getting too attached to marital responsibilities, spouse-sexual desires, and family stability. Functionalists believe that "family is known as the esteemed part of society and also as the scrupulous

to maintain it." The theoretical approach expresses its support for social arrangements and family preservation. According to Talcott Parsons (1955), control or regulation of sexual behaviour and sexual activity is stated as an important task in the family. Traditional society encourages sexual desires and activities towards getting into marital customs and discourages them outside of it. Functionalists' reflection on sexual activity is too profound the depth of understanding and bonding between the spouses, which results in legalised procreation within a stable and legally recognised relationship that is marriage. The foundation relationship teaches that a recognised relationship helps to build non-problematic living for the offspring to follow suitable socialisation. In this context, an adolescent's sexual health behaviour is completely unconstitutional where they do not fall into the legalised family adaptability and responsibility. On the other hand, this theory is more convincing for youths but not for adolescents. It is for the unprogressively conservative society where adolescents are suffocated not to express their positive interests in understanding sexual desires and sexual activity, which leads to inevitable opinions about sexual and reproductive health and disrupts their understanding of the positive importance of knowing sex and sexuality, Conerly (2021).

Conflict Theory

Sexuality is a state of power differentials, and the dominating groups perform to expand their worldview compared to other groups as well as their economic interests. The sexual conflict concept is closely connected towards the understanding of sexual selection and sex-specific. It is a common term for understanding sexual selection and an alternative evolution of traits conflict that is sexual conflicts, Kokko et al. (2014). According to Talcott Parsons (1955), there are two constituent groups opposing marriage equality. One is the dogma or ideological understanding of marriage; another is the importance of economic stability. When an individual is denied the fundamental needs of food, social security benefits, and medical insurance due to financial instability, their sexual interest declines. An adolescent with a young parent (Teen pregnancy) may face a major level of

denial from family, friends, peer groups etc. When legal denials are expressed due to their sexual orientation and interests like lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or questioning, it is a conflict which lies under marriage inequality Solmonese (2008). Due to the impact of family practices and customs, where their basic, social security and medical expectancies are not met, which leads to a struggle for teen couples to survive. This later becomes a conflicted relationship where their social and financial resources are unmet, Conerly (2021).

Theory of symbolic interactionism

The interactionists expressed an understanding of sexuality with sexual orientation. Society deflated femininity in the United States (US) (American Psychological Association 2008). According to Cooley's in "looking glass self," Society helps an individual to self-evaluate or self-introspect their interests in knowing sex and sexuality. When it comes to an adolescent, their mental health may be affected after a sexual relationship, which goes to two major extents: one complies remorseful after the sexual act, and the other expecting for pleasure frequently, which ends up in massive health abnormalities. The libido sex drive of an adolescent stage creates possible problematic behaviour that embarrasses the adolescent when he or she is not completely aware of the knowledge of sexual behaviour and healthy sex. (Conerly, 2021).

Queer Theory

It is a transdisciplinary approach to the study of sexuality where the studies were done in western society segregating the gender into particular roles and exploring the mannerism which was taught to understand sexual orientation. Jagose (1996) focused queer theory where the irrelevance between sexual orientation, gender identity, and anatomical sex was found. This theory enlights the malleable and supposition of sexuality which appeals for freedom, change and negotiation, that reflects on the culture of people within. When it comes to adolescent sexuality, they face inequality among gender. Some notions are based on their involvement in sexuality, and some express their sexual desires with gender meanings and gender differences. Therefore, the theorists employ this theory to explain the questions raised by society's experiences and perceptions on gender, sex and sexuality, where sexuality builds up the awareness of inequalities proficient by people out of the dominant groups. (Conerly, 2021).

Methods

The systematic review analyses were done with a comprehensive analysis of articles from PubMed databases, Research Gate, Science Direct, BMC Public Health, Web of Science, SAGE, Scopus, WHO library, and other relevant websites that publish articles on adolescent sexual and reproductive health were focused and reviewed. Recently published articles were referred to bring out the importance of sexual and reproductive health interventions among adolescents. Also, the health consequences and importance of healthy sexual behaviour expressed the adolescents' sex-related risky sexual behaviours. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analysis Reporting (PRISMA) guidelines were followed for this review study.

Figure 1.
Review flow-chart with PRISMA model

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Interventions

Identification

Total studies identified from keywords: 133
PubMed (n =23)
Research Gate (n =21)
Science Direct (n =16)
BMC Public Health (n =13)
Web of Science (n =15)
Google Scholars (n = 14)
WHO Library (n =18)
Others (n =13)

Studies removed before screening:
Duplicate records removed
(n = 13)
Studies removed for only reproductive health-focused studies
(n = 33)
Studies removed emphasising STIs/STD (n = 39)

Screening

Title and abstracts screened through inclusion criteria
(n = 48)

Studies excluded
Studies from teenage to adolescent age category (n = 09)
Studies related to HIV adolescent patients and other patients rehabilitation (n = 11)
Studies related to youth analysis
(n = 10)

Studies after completely screened
(n = 18)

Studies excluded
Less than 10 years (>2002-2021) of follow up period
(n = 4)

Included

Studies included in the review
(n = 14)

The search strategy was related to the acquisition of knowledge and awareness of adolescent sexual and reproductive health intervention programmes. The total explored research papers under this topic were 133 from various publications of which 119 papers were excluded due to insufficient search results. Few abstracts and titles that do not satisfy the inclusive criteria were not included in this study. This study disclosed only 14 papers that conciliate with all-inclusive criteria (Table-1).

Table 1.

Acquisition of knowledge and awareness of adolescent sexual and reproductive health intervention programmes (n=14)

S.No	Study	Author and Year	Study Design	Country	Setting	Target Population	Interventions	Outcomes
1	"Nature of, and responses to key sexual and reproductive health challenges for adolescents in urban slums in sub-Saharan Africa: a scoping review"	Wado et al (2020)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Community based-Slum areas	Adolescents/ Teenagers (ages 10-19 years)	Empowerment of adolescent girls' Economic stability.	Developing and building adolescent girls' economic and social assets.
2	"Adolescence: a time of risk-taking"	AJ Robinson, K Rogstad (2002)	Quasi Controlled Trail (QCT)	United Kingdom-Western Europe	Community based-Developing countries	Adolescents (ages 13-19 years)	Accessibility of knowing information on sex and teenage pregnancy, Promotion of parent-child communication.	Knowledge about unwanted pregnancies and prevalence of disease transmission-HIV and STIs.
3	"Adolescent reproductive health interventions"	F M Cowan (2002)	Quasi Controlled Trail (QCT)	United States	Community and school-based-Developing countries	Teenagers, Adolescents, and youths (ages 10-24 years)	The structural factors impact, prevail of infections which caused through environmental influences, Prevention and risks of physical, cultural, social, community, organizational, economic, legal or policy.	Measuring the behavioural interventions, attitudes, and change skills such as knowing STIs rates or abortion category.
4	"Teenage pregnancy"- "A single petticoat"	M Huengsberg, K W Radcliff (2002)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	United Kingdom-Developed countries	Community and school-based-Developing countries	Children to adolescent	Teaching social skills to adolescents, and sex education programmes, to avoid unintended or unwanted pregnancy absence leading to adolescent childbearing.	Understanding the consequences of health-related problems from infants born to teenage mothers and also the factors which include family background of the mothers, and ethnicity is possible through sex education.

Table 1. - *continum*
Acquisition of knowledge and awareness of adolescent sexual and reproductive health intervention programmes (n=14)

S.No	Study	Author and Year	Study Design	Country	Setting	Target Population	Interventions	Outcomes
5	"Europe and central Asia-Services for sexually transmitted infections in Europe and Central Asia"	J S Bingham (2002)	Quasi Controlled Trail (QCT)	European countries-Central Asia, the United Kingdom	Community-based	Young STIs and HIV patients	The necessity for medications as there is the highest diagnosis of STIs, HIV infections	Development of National Sexual health strategy implementation into abroad concern.
6	"Improving Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Systematic Review of Potential Interventions"	R.A. Salam et al (2016)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Low-Middle Income Countries-Africa, Asia	Community and school-based-Low-Income countries	Adolescents (15-19 years)	Access to contraceptives through pharmacies focused on education and counselling, parent education distribution of condoms, skills developments and multicomponent interventions.	Effective interventions to develop the knowledge of accessing information about Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive health at the school and community level.
7	"Association of Sexual Health Interventions with Sexual Health Outcomes in Black Adolescents a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis"	R. Evans et al (2020)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	United States	Community and school-based	Black adolescents	Training conducted on Sexual communications and condom uses skill training given.	Effectiveness in which the improvement in condom use, abstinence, sexual health knowledge, sexual health interventions and self-efficacy are to be considered.
8	"Review Interventions and Strategies to Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes among Adolescents Living in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis"	S. Meherali et al (2021)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Low-Middle Income Countries	Community-based	Adolescents (10-19 years)	Multicomponent interventions focused on non-drug interventions and the impacts on maternal health.	Moderation in understanding sexually risky behaviours.
9	"Review article Effective Strategies to Provide Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and to Increase Demand and Community Support"	D.M. Denno et al (2015)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Community-based	Adolescents (10-19 years)	Distribution of free condoms, reduction of teen pregnancy rate, increasing likelihood.	Efforts on focussing policy-making approach to frame and build legislative policies and programmes.

Table 1. - *continum*

Acquisition of knowledge and awareness of adolescent sexual and reproductive health intervention programmes (n=14)

S.No	Study	Author and Year	Study Design	Country	Setting	Target Population	Interventions	Outcomes
10	"Grand challenges in adolescent sexual and reproductive health"	Supriya Dinesh Mehta and Janeet Seeley (2020)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Community-based	Adolescents (10-19 years)	Acceptability of Sexual and reproductive health training at the community level approaches to translating the sources.	Awareness about online sources based on Sexually transmitted infections testing, ordering online contraception's Knowledge about abortifacient pills.
11	"The extent to which the design of available reproductive health interventions fit the reproductive health needs of adolescents living in urban poor settings of Kisenyi, Kampala, Uganda"	Tuhebwe et al (2021)	Quasi Controlled Trail (QCT)	Urban settlements (Slums) Low-Middle Income Countries-Kisenyi, Kampala, Uganda	Community-based	Adolescents (15-19 years)	Arrangements regarding service delivery, affordability for general medical services, and the help of youth-friendly community health workers were increased.	Needs for reproductive health and scope for understanding sexual health, social needs, sanitation and hygiene.
12	"Unmet need of sex education among adolescents in urban slum area: an interventional study"	Kshitij et al (2015)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Urban slums in India	Community-based	Adolescents (15-19 years)	Improper requirements on accessing the knowledge about Reproductive health education.	Step to eradicate unintended teen pregnancy and its future impact.
13	"The Level of Knowledge and Awareness About Sex and Reproductive Health Among Adolescents in Kashmir"	Mohmad Iqbal (2021)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Kashmir valley	School-based	Adolescents of standard (8th, 9th, 10th)	contraception's	Needs and importance to include sex education in school syllabus.
14	"Inequity in Awareness and Utilization of Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Services in Union Territory, Chandigarh, North India"	Gupta, et al (2015)	Randomised Controlled Trail (RCT)	Chandigarh-India	School-based	Adolescents (10-19 years)	Awareness about Adolescents' sexual and reproductive health services and utilization of it.	Improvisation in generating more Adolescents sexual and reproductive health services and awareness programmes for adolescents in Urban, Rural and slums.

Discussion

This systematically analysed review focuses on the important outcomes of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health intervention programmes, where the reviews were collected from various background like community-based, school-based etc. There are various aspects to be particularised and discussed, each reviewed study has given its concept. The average focused group were adolescents of age (10-19 years) approximately. According to the *"World Report by Priya Shetty"* have identified that HIV epidemic was acknowledged in Sub-Saharan Africa, where a global level of 67% was identified at that area, and it is also understood that the HIV prevalence among slum populations is much higher than the non-slum population at South Africa and other African countries. It is understood that due to the risky behaviour of women from slums get easy exposed to STIs infections that is before infections, early sex disturbances, improper or no condom use, more sexual activities with multiple partners etc. It is to the knowledge that lack of education, migration and food insecurity was also the reason to get into unwanted health crises, Thomas et al. (2011).

Premarital sex increased in 19 countries between 1994 and 2004 that were involved in sexual activity before age 18. Due to disconnection, access to knowledge about family planning and other natural methods is restricted. The knowledge about the usage of contraceptives and other safe sex behaviour did not effectively reach people. At the same time, the consequences of early pregnancy and early childbearing lead to health disturbances and distractions affecting societal responsibilities, Blanc et al. (2009). Sexual and reproductive health needs should be provided for the people who are vulnerable and most marginalised to obtain health services through the "TARUNYA project", implemented for the Adolescent Reproductive Rights and Health (ARRH) programme supported by the government of Jharkhand. The young girls in the community got benefitted and it reached older, illiterate, unmarried, adolescent girls. It emphasized the health, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour of young adolescent girls, Chandra-Mouli et al. (2015). The *"Community Embedded Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents in Latin America (CERCA)"* project was to deliver clinical and educational interventions for the best adolescent sexual and reproductive health development policy. Regional data gave clarity that most sexually active adolescents do not use consistent modern methods of contraception or do not know about unwanted or unintended pregnancy with STIs. It is also mentioned that the health status of children and adolescent mothers narrow down to risk factors of neonatal mortality, low birth weight and pre-term birth. In the CERCA countries, abortion remained restricted and mostly in other countries of Latin America. The choices of individual behaviours are moulded through social, economic, and cultural factors where the individual behaves accordingly to it, apart from personal the family and community approach also emphasise them; they are the constituents for monitoring one's personal and sexual health behaviour, prominence on the importance of gender equality to be valued, Cordova Pozo et al. (2015).

The concept of "GBV-gender-based violence" was highlighted with reference to sexual and physical violence, early marriages, and female genital mutilation, Dibaba et al. (2020). The effects of infections spread among young men and women, prolonged where it attempted to develop an awareness about STIs and HIV was more and also the consequences of termination of pregnancy and teenage pregnancy were expressed but it fails to bring out the in-depth understanding of these diseases like the severity of the disease, causative bacteria or virus etc. Robinson et al. (2002). The need for adolescents' sex education the importance of abstinence programmes and the use of contraception has been focussed also concentrated on the constituents which are the important determinants for HIV/STIs spread due to economic deprivation, social disruption, mobility, sexual inequalities were engrossed but it didn't have any comprehensive explanation for the constituents which is meant as a reason, Cowan (2002). The author is enthralled with the interventions towards delayed sexual intercourse and the consequences of early intercourse or control of unintended pregnancy among adolescents at the same time the improvement in the use of contraception. It explains about the

knowledge framing out the behavioural understanding of an individual, also the reasons for safe sexual practices which engraved due to the constituents like personal, economic, social, ethical, religious, urges of biological changes, family and cultural practices. Peer group pressures all these reflects the importance to develop sexual education for adolescents but the research on the objective has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of other studies where the intense of safe sexual practices, the understanding of biological changes in adolescents which is a sensitive and important point to be concentrated which is precise, Huengsberg et al. (2002). The study enlighted about the treatment procedures for STIs or HIV patients and about the medical services provided for adolescents worldwide, regarding the free public services like free condom distribution in Low-Middle-Income countries (LMICs), and slum areas, the author argued and raised a question that the accessibility of medical clinics where the genitourinary clinics are available and they perform best in or tool the infections. Perhaps, this is the main aspect lacking at LMICs so the health status of the adolescents will be down as well as an infection spread will also not be controllable, the research data has tended to focus on giving awareness about specialist's clinics like genitourinary clinics instead of only spreading knowledge about STIs or HIV, Bingham et al. (2002).

Female Genital Mutation (FGM) is a cruel procedure to restrict and control young adolescent girls engaging in sexual activities but the researchers have not treated FGM in much detail about the ways of FGM surgery or procedures which is painful and harmful to reproductive health, Salam et al. (2016). The behavioural change of positive psychological outcomes due to the upgrade of sexual health knowledge, sexual health self-efficacy and sexual health interventions.

Among black adolescents, most studies on the field of adolescent sexual and reproductive health-focused only on the types of diseases, or the unsafe sexual behaviours leading to risk but here the author has taken black adolescents as particularising which forecasts the racial discrimination in the aspects of sexual health, Evans et al. (2020). The school and the community-based analysis of Adolescent

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (ASRHR) intervention programmes help in developing Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) toward ASRHR. Focused on the development of maternal health or non-drug interventions, The increase in using of contraceptive methods and safe post-abortion family planning methods for the young are highlighted, Meherali et al. (2021). The important of sexual rights and also the responsibility of an individual to know about their health rights especially *Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights* (SRHR) and *Sexual and Reproductive Health Services* (SRHS), certain interventions programmes are difficult to drag the information from adolescents, so it's good to have adolescent friendly-SRHR-development programmes, at the same time cost-effective too, Denno et al. (2015) Adolescent *Sexual Health Rights* (SHR) is not only for a particular gender it is important for all genders. Adolescents need more educational and sexual health services to access the appropriate information on the sexual service providers.

Adolescents especially girls face difficulties to handle Menarche, where the importance of personal, sexual and reproductive hygiene starts, it's understood that certain adolescents lack an understanding the sexual identity, their preferences and sexual orientations, which later leads to trajectories in their developments, Mehta et al. (2020). Usually, a myth is framed that urban adolescents are more knowledgeable about ASRH compared to rural, but there are studies which show in urban settings economically backward adolescents too face challenges in accessing the service needs of ASRH. The information adolescents get and learn should be guided positively and duly which should not mislead them as well as their sexual health. Certain social needs like parental guidance, housing, livelihood, and sanitation are needed to help in extending the inclusion of ASRH in health policies, Tuhebwe et al. (2021). Importance to develop the intervention in slums since both urban and rural slum adolescents face challenges in knowing the transmission modes of HIV/AIDs, In addition, more than one and a half of adolescents were confused and were not aware of condoms and the mode of disease transmission, based on the study by *Indian Council of Medical Research* (ICMR), the puberty and knowledge about features of

puberty, development of genital and nightfall was lacking among adolescents at slum, Tamboli et al.(2015)

The services related to adolescent sexual health incorporated certain services which include the preventive, curative, promotive and counselling schemes in it. Adolescent girls are not informed of the physical changes and emotional changes that happen due to maturity. Certain controversial questions among adolescents as masturbation is a sinful activity which leads to health deformities, *The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS* (UNAIDS) states that at least once in their lifetime, some adolescents will engage in physical relations with same-sex, Iqbal (2021). The relevance among, rural, urban and slum adolescents with school going and dropouts, based on the geographical differences is the changes in awareness about SRH. It identified that child health and reproductive inequities were higher in Chandigarh 4.5% at rural compared to urban as 2.2% and slum as 0.5% areas. Utilization of other treatments like nutritional counselling, iron folic acid, Tetanus Toxoid (TT) immunization and deworming treatment was provided, Gupta et al. (2015). The additional skills adolescents gain from sexuality and sexual education help them in the development of general life skills, like listening, communication, decision making, learning and negotiation on the execution of it and finding out the proper channel for help and guidance such as parents, caretakers/caregivers, and professionals also the community, family and welfare service teams, Ismail et al. (2015).

Research gap

Mostly the studies were related to low-middle-income countries and it was specifically based on the impact of economic needs affecting sexual health. But the psycho-social aspects of sexual health studies were very few. Sexually transmitted diseases or sexually transmitted infections (STDs/STIs) awareness studies are very less among the adolescent group. Specific age category studies of adolescent sexual health are less among slum and college studies. Community interventional and institutional intervention programmes for adolescent sexual health studies should be focused.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The study suggested various aspects to improve the standard and effectiveness of *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health* (ASRH). Exploration of sexual satisfaction, sexual identity, orientation, sexual practices, and risky sexual behaviour should be emphasised in further studies. The impact of discrimination and alienation of knowing and accessing sexual health care services was a lacking point so focus on social aspects of knowledge accessing related to ASRH is necessary. Need to have a cost-effective module which can be added as a syllabus in school-based or community-based programmes. *Sexual and Reproductive Health* (SRH) education will decrease the adolescent pregnancy rate in low-income as well as high-income countries, where the process of counselling, sex education, contraceptive availability and accessibility have been summarized. The importance of sexual health after post-abortion for young girls could be focused on or concentrated on more. An increase in the study of LGBTQIA sexual health is needed to fix global sexual health and reproductive health needs and services among adolescents. Due to cruel customs and practices "Genophobia or Erotophobia" results in a "fear of sex" or "fear of sexual intimacy." Improvement and development in the adolescent health welfare scheme approach are needed at the global level. A more effective and productive ASRH intervention programme is needed. Modules related to the anatomical changes, psychosocial development of adolescents, and the cultural and religious taboos impact acquiring information or knowledge about ASRH should be studied to bring out the complication of improper adaptation of information. The need for disabled adolescents' sexual health intervention should also be encouraged. Interventions should also include parents teaching and guiding their children with positive SRH information at the right stage and at right time with the proper guidance of parents should be a piece of useful information for their children. All the information accessibility and availability should be possibly approachable in all languages. There is a need to study on nutritional status of adolescents reflecting on their SRH, and intervention programmes for it.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this review extends the importance of Adolescent's Sexual and Reproductive Health. It aimed to promote and improve the accessibility and acquisition of SRH services by adolescents in various geographical areas like slums, urban, and rural. The study explained the objectives that can be reached for all adolescents which should be cost-effective programme implementation as well as easy learning with the availability of all languages. This is to reach the adolescents more effective and modules for the adolescents that should impact the healthy life which avoids unwanted deprivation at society to know and learn sexual health and well-being.

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Attitudes of Parents of Children With Special Needs Towards Inclusive Education

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

Inclusive education is very important for all children especially for those with special needs. In the Republic of Kosovo, the inclusion it is an approach in progress. This study aimed to explore the attitudes of parents of children with special needs towards inclusive education. The current findings of inclusiveness, challenges, risks, benefits and achievements of inclusive education in the Kosovo education system were also analysed. Through a semi-structured interview, ten parents whose children attend regular classes in various schools in pre-university education in Kosovo were interviewed. The results of the research indicate that parents of children with special needs have similar attitudes towards inclusion. In their opinion, it should occur, but they are worried about the challenges that appear. Inclusion is seen as a good opportunity, capacity building, equality, socialization and part of the overall development of the child. Parents recommend improvements in infrastructure conditions and human resources for successful inclusion.

Keywords: education, inclusion, parents, children, attitudes.

When we read about the development or education of the child, it is inevitable not to come across the notion of "parents" or "family", especially when it comes to the impact of influencing factors on the child's development. This shows the role and importance of parents or family in different stages of the child's development. Even though nowadays, the modern family is busy and unavailable the involvement of parents in the child's education is important in every aspect and in this sense, it is important for their academic success (Jeynes, 2011).The birth of a baby is one of the most interesting moments in a person's life. Parents, in this case, are the ones who conceive their

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future, they are the ones who have their expectations, and these expectations can be "suffocated" (diminished) when the child is born with injuries of various natures, it causes a stressful experience (Gupta & Buwade, 2013), while expectations and hopes can fade (Kandel & Merrick, 2007).

Parents develop their own expectations for the child in every area of life (Devolli, Kryeziu, & Bujupi, 2023). Expectations, which are beliefs related to the child's future, are more oriented towards the child's education and are based on experience and information provided by the school, the media and informal networks for parents (Russell, 2003). This is where the conflicts of parents with the social system in general and with the educational system, namely the school, begin. In fact, as Lake and Billingsley (2000) suggest, one of the central causes of conflict between school staff and parents is the discrepancy between their views of the child and their needs, and this influence is most powerful when school staff describe the child from the deficit perspective, considering him more as a problem, than as an individual (Lake & Billingsley, 2000). In this study, the term "children with special needs" includes all children who have special educational needs, all those who in any way have difficult access to educational institutions, in the process of learning or in their education in general as a result of different diversities, but with special emphasis on children or students who are at different degrees of mental retardation, with vision impairment (completely or partially blind), hearing impairment(a partial or a total inability to hear), with communication difficulties (do not speak at all or have other communication problems), emotional and behavioural difficulties. Therefore, the focus in our study is on parents of children who are included within the phrase: "special needs" (Zabeli, 2022).

The inclusion of children with special needs in the inclusive education system is a permanent challenge in almost every society. Inclusive education means a radical change in the way we think about education" (Doménech & Moliner, 2014). Inclusion is considered by many researchers as a difficult concept to be defined, considering that it is a complex concept (Lindsay, 2007; Mitchell, 2014), a multidimensional concept (Sarrazin, 2016) and that, despite many studies, there is a constant need for clearly defined research and new types of research are needed (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). Inclusive education finds its philosophical education roots in ideas about human rights, social justice and equity (Zabeli, Perolli Shehu, & Gjelaj, 2020). Researchers Booth and Ainscow (2016) consider that "inclusion in education includes valuing all students and staff equally, increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools, restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality, reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorized as having special educational needs, learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely, viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome, acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality, improving schools for staff as well as for students, emphasizing the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement, fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities, recognizing that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society" (Booth & Ainscow, 2016, p. 3).
There is a lot of research on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion, but there is less research on the attitudes of parents of children with special needs. The attitudes of all factors towards inclusion are important, but the attitudes of parents also play a significant role in the education of children with special needs (Malakar & Saikia, 2017) and that for the implementation of inclusive education, parents can be strong partners in the school, community and beyond (Paseka & Schwab, 2020).

This study is important for parents and the community in general who cope with special needs children as well as researchers who deal with this field of study. The study is focused on the attitudes of parents of children with special needs towards inclusive education, obtained as a result of a qualitative research, carried out through semi-structured

interviews, supported by scientific literature and argued by researchers in this field.

The Context of the Study

The education system in Kosovo from the 50s to the last decade of the 20th century has been influenced by the education system of the former Yugoslavia, it is characterized by the socialist-communist system and as such a centralized education system has functioned - controlled by the state, as in other socialist countries in the region, a situation which has been followed for about 5 decades. Schools primarily served political regimes, and pedagogy – particularly objectives, content, and method – was unified and often externally controlled. Teaching also in the region focused on delivering selected and often ideologically flavoured knowledge, with little or no space for the learner's own interpretations, initiatives, or critical thinking (Sahlberg & Boce, 2010). After 1990 the Albanian population established an education system, known as the independent system and education of the Albanian population was delivered at private homes by Albanian teachers. The education system was also affected by the war in 1999, during which a majority of the population was displaced (Venäläinen & Gashi, 2015) whereas, after 2000, radical changes have been made in the education system in all segments of education in Kosovo.

Special education in Kosovo has gone through two basic phases. The first phase (1950-1999) is characterized by the education of children exclusively in special schools and in special classes and this period started after the Second World War in the 50s of the 20th century and continued until the end of the 20th century. This period is characterized by typical segregation, with isolated special schools, with teachers with regular teacher education qualification but without specific qualification to teach students with special needs. The second phase started in 2000 with changes in the entire education system and therefore with a different approach to special education. Under the auspices of international associations, a new phase of thinking about inclusive education begins. In fact, until this time, the notion "inclusive" has been a totally unknown term in Albanian terminology in Kosovo. Not only as a notion, but also as a practice, at first it seemed too

illusory, as something that could possibly happen in other countries but not in Kosovo (Zabeli, Perolli Shehu, & Gjelaj, 2020). International projects have also contributed to the development of the second phase and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) they have drafted laws, strategies and administrative instructions that regulate the issue of special respectively inclusive education. Parallel to the drafting of the laws, changes have also been made in school practice. Thus, special schools have been transformed into Resource Centers (former special schools), while special/attached classes into resource classes. The resource centers, in addition to working with children with special needs (from preschool to 12th grade), have been established to provide assistance to educational institutions, families and individuals in need, its motto is: every student should be given opportunity for maximum utilization of learning potential (MEST, 2014). Resource Centres have three main functions: i. To provide support to other schools; ii. To create teaching/learning materials for use by regular schools with special needs students; iii. To provide training for regular school teachers. Within these services, the Resource Centres offer pedagogical services such as: support for regular schools with traveling teachers, internal evaluation service, Braille printing machine, training for regular school teachers, early intervention services for blind children and sensory rooms (Zabeli, 2022). Meanwhile, attached classes are classes that function in a regular school and children with special needs learn there. These classrooms are expected to be transformed into resource rooms/classes in the future, and most of the children will be transferred to regular classes (Zabeli, 2022).

Currently, as in the resource centres as well as in the attached classes, the number of students has started to decrease because the process of inclusiveness in regular classes has begun. To implement this new approach, core groups have been formed from the staff of the center and their task is to build support services for students with special educational needs in regular schools and their teachers. Traveling teachers have also been hired. They are teacher assistants who support students with special educational needs and their teachers in regular schools. Evaluation

teams at municipal levels are also planned to be operationalized. They are composed of professionals who will make a professional evaluation of children with special educational needs, will make the decision for education with special needs, will propose where the child will be placed and provide recommendations for the educational support that the child should have (MESTI, 2016).

In our country, the assessment instruments for children with special needs have been developed, designed to respond to all types of children's disabilities (MEST, 2019). A series of activities have also been organized in the professional development of people who work with special needs children, thus qualifying Level 5 Special Needs Assistants and employing them according to the needs of schools (MEST, 2018). In addition to fifth-level studies, Kosovar teachers follow BA studies, Primary Education, as well as master studies in Inclusive Education Program offered in the Republic of Kosovo (University of Prishtina, 2019).
The assessment of children with special needs is done by the evaluation team, which is established by the municipality where this team operates. This team consists of permanent members: psychologist, pedagogue/special pedagogue, social worker, support teacher and other members as needed (MEST, 2017). On the other hand, in addition to legislation, pedagogical documents that support inclusive education and some good inclusive practices, there is a lack of research to prove the positive or negative sides of inclusion. Apart from some reports from state institutions or NGOs, there is not any real research about inclusion in general or any research that deals with aspects of parents' attitudes, beliefs or perceptions about inclusion.

Literature Review

Children's education is essential and a preoccupation for every society around the world, while the education of children with special needs, in addition to being essential and a preoccupation, also represents a challenge for the education system in all countries of the world, whether they are underdeveloped, developing or developed countries. The debates are still current today regarding the question: should the child with special needs be educated in special institutions or in regular institutions. In this sense, research shows and gives positive answers (although not all) for the education of children in inclusive environments because exclusion and isolation are no longer considered justifiable solutions. Therefore, the reconstruction of the educational system is going in the direction of systematization, accommodation of all students without distinction, even though this is not considered an easy mission (Boyle & Topping, 2012) and that barriers to the inclusion of students with special needs are often mentioned as a result of inadequate training and teachers' attitudes, classes with a large number of students, equipment and unsatisfactory staff support, etc. (Gupta & Buwade, 2013).

Families can face crises if they are not clear about the issue of the child's impairment and needs. In their research, Graungaard and Skov (2006) report the great need and importance of diagnosing children because it affects their better coping with life, and the researchers report that in this regard, parents had a lot of dissatisfaction and criticism towards health experts (Graungaard & Skov, 2006). Researchers, Kandel and Merrick (2007) report that for the balance between recognition of disabilities and efforts to compensate for these disabilities, four characteristics of the acceptance process are necessary (Kandel & Merrick, 2007), such as: "A realistic view of the child, with appreciation of the complications created in the family; the parent is not overwhelmed by feelings of self-pity and guilt; The parent engages in a logical search for possible services and does not seek a "magical solution" (Graungaard & Skov, 2006, p. 1083).

In the implementation of inclusive education and its success for all children without distinction, a considerable number of factors are important: administrators teachers, students, curricula, (Stainback, Stainback, & Stefanich, 1996), teaching materials, assessment methods (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprathaban, 2016), but the research shows that families also played an important role. Parents as a social group can act in favour of inclusion or support segregated educational environments (Vlachou, Karadimou, & Koutsogeorgou, 2016). The success of inclusion is mainly depends upon the attitude of parents towards it (Bhuyan & Joshi, 2022).

Earlier studies on attitudes of parents (of children with mild disabilities and children with severe disabilities) show that where supportive the inclusion practices is satisfied with the benefits for their child (Myles & Simpson, 1989; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989). Studies of later years also show positive attitudes towards inclusion and support the concept of mainstreaming, support their children's chance to participate in typical classes (Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Kokaridas, Vlachaki, Zournatzi, & Patsiaouras, 2008; Gupta & Buwade, 2013; Algood, Harris, & Hong, 2013). The researchers therefore report positive attitudes of parents towards inclusion. Children/students with special needs benefit and are satisfied with these achievements when inclusion is supported by all relevant factors and additional resources are used.

On the other hand, some researchers report that parents do not have enough information about inclusion and do not understand it properly. Ceylan and Aral (2016) report that mothers of children with special needs are not able to explain the meaning of inclusion, similarly as the research of Kargin et al. (2003) indicating that parents' knowledge and skills regarding inclusion are limited (Ceylan & Aral, 2016; Kargın, Acarlar, & Sucuoğlu, 2003). The findings of the research of Kokaridas et al. (2008) show that parents are concerned about the social acceptance of their children by children without special needs. It is also reported that the level of education of the parents and the type of disability of the child do not influence the attitudes of the parents towards inclusion (Kokaridas, Vlachaki, Zournatzi, & Patsiaouras, 2008). Regarding parents' attitudes towards inclusive education, researchers Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2011) report the following:

- Five studies turned out to be positive and five other studies – neutral
- Parents of children with special needs hold more neutral attitudes than parents of children without special needs
- Parents of children with special needs express concerns about the emotional development of their children, about individual teaching and adequate services in regular schools
- Parents of children without special needs/ without disabilities showed more positive attitudes towards inclusive education

- Parents claimed that inclusive education has risks for both groups of children
- Parents' attitudes are related to several variables such as: economic situation, type of impairment/disability, educational level and experience with inclusion
- Parents were less positive about the inclusion of children with behavioural and cognitive problems
- No study showed what influences parental attitudes about the social participation of students with special needs (Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011).

In addition to the research of Boer, Pijl and Minnaret (2011), other later researches also report positive attitudes towards the benefits of inclusion. The importance of attitudes about other factor's reported the other research (Saloviita, 2020). Attitudes comprise a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioural dimension. Furthermore, sociologists emphasize that the development and enactment of attitudes should be understood in terms of the interrelatedness of the individual and its social environment (Kielblock & Woodcock, 2023). Research on parents' positive attitudes towards inclusive education show the benefits and advantages of children with special needs in inclusive environments. Researchers Sharma and Trory (2019) report 3 benefits of inclusion: "1. Inclusion is socially advantageous for their children; 2. Inclusion helps prepare their children for the real world; 3. Inclusion helps their children develop self-help skills. Furthermore, the majority of the parents (90%) agreed that their children will develop increased self-esteem in an inclusive setting and that they will have good role models to follow in an inclusive classroom. 70% of the parents agreed that their child would develop academic skills more rapidly in an inclusive setting and that their children have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developed children" (Sharma & Trory, 2019, p. 883). The study of Bhuyan and Joshi (2022) reported that the parents have a positive attitude towards inclusion of children with disability in general is slight positive attitude, just above average. Therefore, there is a need to spread the awareness regarding inclusive education. Awareness programmed, media, posters, conferences, meetings, training etc. should conduct on it (Bhuyan & Joshi, 2022). Research of Campos et al. (2020)

showed that the inclusion can be useful, in the first place, to increase the awareness and sensitization of the parents of children with typical development, as these parents have an essential role in the messages they transmit to their children and that knowingly or not, transmit to other members of the school community (Campos, et al., 2020). Also, the study of Sharafudeen et al. (2022) showed a positive attitude towards the aspects of inclusion namely academic improvement, social adaptation and cooperation between teachers (Sharafudeen, Bollapalli, Thalathoti, & Bollikonda, 2022).

In Kosovo, there is some research about teachers' attitudes about the inclusion of children with special needs for preschool level, primary and lower secondary school level and university level (Zabeli, Perolli Shehu, & Gjelaj, 2020; Zabeli, Perolli-Shehu, & Anderssen, 2021) but there is no research about parents' attitude. This increases the importance of this research and gives us the opportunity to compare similar research in other countries.

Methodology

The Aim of the Study

The aim of this research is to identify the attitudes of parents of children with special needs towards inclusion as well as indicate the risks, barriers, expectations and benefits of inclusive education.

Research Questions

To achieve the aim of the research, three research questions are posed:
1. What are the attitudes of parents of special needs children towards inclusive education?
2. What do parents think about the risks, barriers and difficulties of implementing inclusive education?
3. What are the expectations on inclusive education and its benefits?

Study Design, Sample, and Data Analysis

In this study, the qualitative research design was used because it is thought that the phenomenon is better researched (Merriam, 2009). The study is focused on the essence and structure of the experience (phenomenon), on the description of the experience from the perspective of people with experience in that matter and at the same time researching the ways in which the interviewees (in this case the parents) have experience and the attitudes about the phenomena are expressed in different ways (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). Through the qualitative design, contextual factors and the uniqueness of the problem are taken into account (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). For this reason, this study focuses more on the knowledge of deeper meanings and the development of theory and not on hypothesis testing (Devetak, Glažar, & Vogrinc, 2010). This study is based on the experiences of 10 parents of children with special needs who are involved in inclusive classrooms/schools. Parents involved in the research were selected through purposive sampling. All parents have children with special needs included in regular classes. The semi-structured interview was used to obtain the results of this research. The power of purposive sampling lies in the selection of a sample rich in information that will help us in the case study. Information-rich samples about the study are those from which more in-depth and concrete information is learned that gives us deeper knowledge and understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Staller, 2021). In this case, the interviewed parents are parents of children with special needs and have experience in inclusive education based on the inclusion or non-inclusion of their children in regular schools. Table 1 shows in more detail the qualifications, gender, children's needs, children's inclusion etc.

Table 1.

The structure of the interviewees

No.	Gender	Qualification	Parent of child with special needs (type of impairment)	The child with special needs included in regular classroom/ school)	Code
1	F	Middle School	Down Syndrome	Included	P1
2	M	BA degree	Hearing impairment	Included	P2
3	F	Middle School	Intellectual impairment	Included	P3
4	M	BA degree	Multiple impairments	Included	P4
5	F	MA degree	Intellectual impairment	Included	P5
6	F	Phd Cand	Vision impairment	Included	P6
7	F	BA degree	Physical disability	Included	P7
8	F	BA degree	Down Syndrome	Included	P8
9	M	BA degree	Multiple impairments	Included	P9
10	M	Ma degree	Physical impairment	Included	P10
Total	10				

The semi-structured interview was used as the main instrument in this research. A semi-structured interview is an instrument for collecting data that emerges from the interaction of two individuals. Interaction occurs from questions and answers received during research that are focused on a certain topic, in this case a social interaction related to the stated research topic (Dolczewski, 2022). We are determined to use semi-structured interviews in order to have direct communication with parents and to receive information in an interactive dialogue. Through semi-structured interviews, we are interested in learning about the attitudes of parents of children with special needs about inclusion. For more, the participants included in the research were selected with experiences that are directly related to the topic of the research, that is, participants who have something to say about the issue or the same topic. Also, we wanted to generate ideas to avoid standardized questionnaires which often do not provide accurate answers as can be obtained from semi-structured interviews (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

The questions for the semi-structured interview were designed to synthesize the attitudes of the participants related to the situation and context of the educational system. The interviews were in depth and semi-structured: developing questions, setting up the interview, taking place one-to-one and lasting 45 minutes to one hour (Glesne, 2011). All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed word for word (Springer, 2010).

The interviewees were free in expressing their attitudes and ideas, their data from the interview were extracted as new information (Belina, 2022). They participated of their own free will, we informed them about all the procedures that will be followed to carry out the semi-structured interview. During the exploration of the research, a variety of attitudes were obtained from the interviewees which are not focused only on one issue. The semi-structured interview consists of 10 questions. The data obtained from the interview were transcribed, coding them as T-1; T-2; (Teacher 1-10). Interviewees for ethical issues were assured of being kept anonymous (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022). The text from the open-ended items on the questionnaire was thematically coded manually (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability in qualitative studies has been explained very well in the study on research by Vogrinc and Saqipi (2020), if the results are consistent with the results of other researchers, the study is considered reliable. To ensure reliability in this research, the questions, themes and sub-themes were prepared by reviewing the literature and relying on the opinions of experts in this field (Vogrinc & Saqipi, 2020). The research process was planned and explained in detail, the data collection process, the research instrument, information about the validity and reliability of the research, and the analysis of the results were well-planned. The interviews were transcribed to preserve the content and data obtained. Parents' attitudes were presented in the results section of this research. The results of the research present the consistency of the researched literature with the results found by this research. The participants in the research were encouraged and allowed for long and detailed answers to highlight their credibility. To make sure about the reliability, we have taken care in the logical understanding of what the participants express. During the research, member checking was done. This approach has enabled the participants to have their say in the research process and their comments have been considered valuable to confirm the accuracy of the research findings. This was accomplished by sharing with them transcripts, summaries and the entire research report. Participants reviewed the information to verify any inconsistencies, inaccuracies or missing data. This process has helped to create credibility and build mutual trust (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Ethics

In order to maintain the ethics of the research, the parents participating in the research were given an official invitation, in this invitation the reason for their participation in this research was described in detail. The invited parents agreed to participate in this research. They were free to choose to participate without any pressure or coercion. Participants were guaranteed of confidentiality as well as assured that during the publication part their data will be coded to maintain participants' privacy. The researchers and parents signed the agreement to voluntarily and with full confidentiality participate in the research, and to publish the data from the research.

Data Analysis

The data collected through semi-structured interviews were analysed according to content analysis, comparing the basic issues from the literature with the attitudes of parents to ascertain similarities or differences between them as well as coding the relevant data so that they can be found again for further studies; all have been considered important, each one has been read carefully and evidenced accurately. From the content analysis, the themes were coded and analyzed according to the basic issues found. Content analysis was applied with the aim of focusing on the presence of words or concepts extracted by the participants with the aim of extracting the meanings and relationships they have with one another. We have considered it as a flexible approach to accurately analyse reflective data related to attitudes about a certain issue, in our case, about attitudes of inclusion (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

The research data were grouped into 4 themes and 4 subthemes, determined by the research questions and literature review (see Table 2). The information of this study is strictly confidential and ensures full anonymity of the participants in this study. This study also includes our experience in the inclusion of children with special needs, as compilers of many documents, scientific articles, and organizers of various trainings with parents and teachers. These experiences, together with the preliminary research of various researchers and the data collected from the interviews correlate the reliability of the data from this research.

Findings

The study aims to investigate the attitudes of parents of children with special needs for inclusive education in the education system in Kosovo, which is in transition and has ongoing challenges especially in inclusive education. The research aims to highlight the attitudes of parents of children with special needs about inclusive education, how

much they know, how they know and how much they believe this, the barriers they overcome, expectations and benefits from inclusive education. Research data from interviews provide a narrative description of parents' attitudes. The themes in this research were determined by research questions and literature review as well as the responses from parents i.e., the frequency of issues raised by them. Citations in this study are adapted from the most relevant information. Table 2 shows the coding, themes and content analysis.

Table 2.

Themes and content analysis

Category	Themes	Description
Parents' beliefs about the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classrooms/schools	Inclusion – its meaning according to parents	*The Principle of Inclusion* *Curricular framework* *Core curriculum* *Legislation in force* *With the new curriculum, the student is at the center.* *Inclusion is the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools* *Parents lack information about inclusive education.*
Risks and barriers to the inclusion of children with special needs	Risks and barriers	*Rural areas face more challenges.* *The major problem is children who have not been diagnosed.* *Parents deny their children's disability.* *Lack of training for parents* *There are many challenges, school infrastructure.* *Teaching assistants* *Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion* *Inappropriate curricula for inclusion* *Improper communication* *Transparency* *Accountability*
Expectations of parents of children with special needs for academic and social achievements	Expectations - Attitudes	*Increasing schools' capacity in relation to inclusive education* *Students should all be included, without distinction based on the difficulties they have.* *Change is visible in inclusive schools.* *The child with special needs feels accepted and learns with others.* *Socialization among children* *Satisfactory academic achievement*
The benefits of inclusion for children with special needs	Expectations and benefits	*Socialization of children, the feeling that they are equal to others.* *They get positive things from other children.* *More opportunities for students with special need to appear in common environments with their peers.* *Raising awareness of inclusive practices* *Building inclusive societies and reaching education for all without distinction* *Collaboration of all stakeholders in the education system and beyond* *Inclusion meets all the needs of all students*

Inclusion - how do parents understand it?

The attitudes and knowledge of parents of children with special needs about inclusion, the participants involved in the research focused on the rights of children to be included in regular schools, participating in all activities without distinction. Parents claimed that their children should be included since they have knowledge of inclusiveness and the rights guaranteed by law to all children without distinction. In the study of Paseka and Schwab (2020) parents also affirmed that inclusion should happen and parents are a strong partner of inclusiveness. The interviewed parents stated that:

- *"Their children have the right to be included in the learning process and all*

activities that take place in a regular classroom and they are equal to all other children" – P-6

- *"Inclusion ... means inclusion of children with special needs with other children in a common classroom" – P-3*
- *"Inclusion of children with special needs in activities, physical exercises, courses, etc." – P-1*
- *"All students must go to school together and stay together in class" – P-7*
- *"It means that all children with special needs should be valued alike so that they don't feel bad" P-4*
- *"Every student must feel that he/she is always equal within the school" – P-9*

"For" or "Against" Attitudes?

In the study of Zondi and Gwala (2023) parents claim that every child deserves to attend any form of education and that in all schools there should be inclusiveness. In this research, parents' attitudes are generally in favor of inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools for many reasons:

- *"...I am for it because here good manners are learned. In special school, he shouted, whistled, rebelled, while in the inclusive classroom he has reduced these behaviors". – P-2*
- *"... in favor of it for the reason that in the special school he imitated bad behavior, while in the inclusive classroom he acquires good manners from other students and feels equal to others" – P-3*
- *"Develops interactivity with others and positive behaviors" – P-1*
- *"In grades 1 to 5, it was better. Now in lower secondary school (grade 6), I don't think it is good (there are too many teachers) and I think maybe special school is better" – P-5*
- *"When children are included, there is no separation between them" – P-9*
- *"for' regarding primary school but my concern is how will inclusive education work after the fifth grade" – P-7*
- *"As a parent who has had such an experience, I have full faith in this process" – P-8*
- *... "my child has felt the friendly and supportive environment both from the teachers and from the other children, I am for inclusion" – P-10*

Risks and Barriers

Impairment and special needs, in general, are viewed as a permanent condition, and there is a difficulty in believing in rehabilitation and change (Fuchs, 2021). The process of implementing inclusion is not an easy task. It is accompanied by various difficulties and barriers. All the parents think that there is support from teachers as well as from students in this process:

- *"Based on personal experience, I do not think that inclusion has risks, on the contrary, it has benefits for children for many reasons, firstly socialization, secondly when the child imitates the behavior of other children and receives positive things" – P-6*
- *... "the teacher knows all the children, she/he knows in which activities the child can be involved, in cooperation with the parent's barriers are overcome" – P-8*
- *"I think that the only barrier is that children with special needs in a classroom with others always fall behind or need help" – P-7*
- *"The lack of a teaching assistant is the main risk and barrier" – P-9*
- *"I live in a rural area, we have no information about children with special needs, my child has not been diagnosed yet" – P-10*

Difficulties

The participants included in the research present a series of difficulties related to the work of the teacher. They state that teachers do not have much information about inclusive education and that they do not allocate enough time to deal with children with special needs. The role of the teacher is great and the greater the satisfaction with the teacher, the more positive are the parents' attitudes towards involvement (Simón, Martínez-Rico, Mc William, & Cañadas, 2023).

Lack of support:

- *"Teachers do not devote much time to students with special needs. Difficulty in engaging in activities outside the classroom because the child needs care and the school does not offer such support" – P-1*
- *"Teachers do not have much information about the individual education plan*

(IEP)" – P-3 and P-4
- *"There are less difficulties since the presence of the teaching assistant in the classroom" – P-2*
- *... "lack of training for parents in order to be able to work with children after school" – P-5*
- *"If there was a teaching assistant, the work would be much easier" – P-6*
- *"Inadequate teaching materials" – P-7*
- *"The teacher is ready to guide me, but during the lesson there are many students in one class, this makes it difficult for the teacher to deal with my child" – P-8*
- *"We do not have proper communication with teachers" – P-10*

Expectations and Benefits

Many of the research presented in the literature review report on expectations and benefits of inclusion. The attitudes of the parents in this research are also similar: Expectations
- *"Development of communication, development of independent skills, development of social skills; participate in class groups, to be treated equally by all" – P- 1*
- *"At least to be able to read, write, learn numbers, not to be bullied by other students even when he/she misbehaves, to learn good manners" – P-2*
- *"Acquire basic knowledge (reading - writing), social skills" – P 3*
- *"To be supported by other students, to be involved in additional activities, to become independent for her own needs" – P-6*
- *"Increasing schools' capacity in relation to inclusive education" – P-5*
- *"My child has created an appropriate social circle, plays and has many friends" – P-7*
- *"Change is visible in inclusive schools; progress has been made since my child started attending this school 7 years ago" – P-8*
- *... "Satisfactory academic achievement" – P-9*
- *..."Children do not judge their special needs peers" – P-10*

Benefits

- *"He has developed a richer vocabulary, he has developed good manners, he respects the rules of the classroom and does not bully others, he has developed life skills, independent orientation, he can distinguish elementary things and there is also progress in the academic aspect" – P-1*
- *"My child has progressed emotionally and socially, feels equal to others, has a richer vocabulary and has gained some knowledge" – P-3*
- *"He has learned to take care of himself and has acquired new knowledge, and more importantly, he now takes his own initiative" – P-4*
- *"There is some progress" – P-2*
- *... "the feeling that they are equal" – P-6*
- *... "equal opportunities with their peers" – P-8*
- *"My child learns by interacting with others" – P-7*
- *"Raising awareness of inclusive practices" – P-9*
- *"Building inclusive societies and reaching education for all without distinction" – P-5*
- *"Inclusion meets all the needs of all students" – P-10*

Discussion

This paper investigated parents' attitudes towards inclusive education, it is worth noting that parents accept the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools. This is similar to other research, parents assume that inclusive education promotes successful learning of students with special needs and brings greater results (Paseka & Schwab, 2020).
In this present study, parents had positive attitudes towards inclusive education claiming that it should happen because it brings numerous benefits in various social, educational and developmental aspects. Positive attitudes towards inclusive education can also be found in the study of Doménech and Moliner (2014) which shows that parents wanted their children to attend regular classes for a social closeness of children. In this study some of the parents preferred special classes (Doménech & Moliner, 2014).
The defining characteristic of inclusiveness

is meeting the needs of children, and the challenge is how to do this in a way that does not present negative effects in this process (Aas, 2022). One of the main attitudes of parents in our research is that the school should meet the conditions of children with special needs, there must be teaching assistants for children with special needs; the infrastructural conditions in schools should also be improved in the future for inclusiveness to have positive effects. The implementation of inclusive education is challenging since it is a complex process and it is necessary to hire teaching assistants and specialized educational personnel; stereotypes for children with special needs and a shortage of funding for infrastructure represent ongoing risks in inclusiveness (Pappas, Papoutsi, & Drigas, 2018). Similar attitudes were also held by the parents in this research.

The answers to the research questions were found in this study. The main concerns of the parents of special needs students were the following: they can be distinguished from other students; teachers can make class distinctions; children can copy others. Researchers Sharma et al. (2022), reported the attitudes of parents stating that special needs children in inclusive classes expressed poor social skills and low engagement in the educational process (Sharma, Woodcock, May, & Subban, 2022).

The difficulties regarding inclusiveness in our country are as follows: teachers do not devote much time to children with special needs due to the large number of children in the classroom, teachers do not have much knowledge about the Individual Education Plan, lack of training for parents, inappropriate teaching materials, inappropriate communication, etc. The results of other studies show the opposite such as: teacher-tailored instruction in the learning process, child-friendly materials, flexible classrooms, variety, and assistive technology for children with special needs (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprathaban, 2016). The results of our study show the following benefits of inclusive education: socialization, improved academic skills, cooperation with peers, feeling equal, development of independent skills, etc. These findings are similar to other research that lists the benefits of inclusion in many positive ways for all children (Sharma & Trory, 2019).

Practices have shown that the inclusiveness of children with special needs in regular schools provides motivation for the development of society under equal conditions for all children. Parents of children with special needs always hold the same attitude, similar results were also found in previous researches (Jigyel, Millera, Mavropouloub, & Berman, 2020).

Conclusion

Many factors affect the implementation of inclusive education and different stakeholders participate in this process. Our research has focused on the attitudes of parents of children with special needs towards inclusive education. The results of this research show us that inclusive education is a challenge in itself seeing the attitudes of parents of children with special needs, the benefits, challenges, difficulties, risks, advantages, etc., which schools must face in implementing inclusiveness.

The attitudes of parents of children with special needs for inclusive education are based on the right of each child to education without distinction, laws, equality, the need and desire for inclusiveness, regardless of the challenges and barriers that appear in this process.

Parents do not have proper knowledge about inclusive education, but they see it as a right for their children which no one can deny. Parents are the main partners in the implementation of inclusiveness. Relying on the partnership with parents, the school should be more active in involving parents in school practices, this can influence changes in the attitudes of parents of children with special needs for inclusive education and influence parents to help this process.

The findings of the present research have shown that parents are in favour of inclusiveness, but they think that in this process there are many shortcomings and difficulties starting from the curriculum, legislation in force, diagnosis of children, school infrastructure, teaching assistants, transparency, accountability, socialization, fulfilment of children's needs, etc. this shows that there is a clear need for continuous improvement in inclusive education. Various studies show that the implementation of inclusive education requires the willingness of all stakeholders to get

involved in this process (Paseka & Schwab, 2020). The involvement of parents is essential for effective practice of inclusive education as well as for educating special needs children. Moreover, being part of the process, parents of children with special needs gain knowledge about good and bad practices for the school, as a result their attitudes towards inclusion will change gradually but not in a short time.

The research showed the importance of parents' attitudes in general, but also the importance of their involvement in the process of inclusive education, in particular. This finding is evident in all the researches reviewed (Campos et al., 2020; Kielblock & Woodcock, 2023).

Recommendations

The attitudes of parents about inclusion are as important as the attitudes of other factors (teachers, school principals, leaders, policy makers, etc.). Therefore, this research will serve to raise the awareness of all factors about the benefits of inclusive education. Also, in the national context, no research has been found about the attitudes of parents about inclusive education, therefore this research will serve as the initiation of other research about the involvement of parents in this process and for more; it will be valid as a basis for comparisons in research others in the local and international context.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is based on the attitudes of parents of children with special needs towards inclusive education. It should be emphasized that inclusive education in Kosovo is a new approach and parents do not have much knowledge about inclusiveness. In the future, it is intended to conduct more in-depth studies on this issue by including more parents of children with special needs in a quantitative study, comparing the results and testing the hypotheses. If other research instruments were used, other research results could be obtained.

Future studies will aim to contribute to the achievement of the goals set by all Member States of the United Nations in 2015. Considering the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are a call to action by all developed and developing countries in a global partnership, (1) good health and well-being, (2) quality education, and (3) reducing inequalities will be the main SDGs on which the study will focus.

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Attitudes and Opinions of Sports Coaches on the Presence and Interference of Politics in Sports

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

The goal of this research is to determine the attitudes and opinions of sports coaches about the presence and interference of politics in sports. The descriptive research method was selected for the problem selected from the quantitative approach. Through 11 questions of the survey, which was built specifically for this research, interesting and expected results were achieved. The survey questionnaire consisted of 3 questions related to socio-status characteristics and 11 questions related to determining the attitudes of sports coaches about the presence and interference of politics in sports. The questionnaire is closed type. Statistical processing of data was done with the program SPSS statistics 25 for the Windows. For the purposes of the research, data was collected and processed on a sample of 125 respondents, male, aged 24 to 62, sports coaches from18 different sports, who perform their duties in 52 different sports clubs in Prizren. Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that politics is present and interferes in sports. It is inevitable to say thatthe future of sports and athletes depends and will depend on political will.

Keywords: *Sport, sports coaches, sports clubs, politics, politicians.*

Sport and politics are two big phenomena and human activities that have as many differences as there are other similar segments, we would say that they are the dominant phenomena of modern society. As such, they manifest in various necessary ways and have various functions. As much as they have differences, they have as many similarities. From the social and sociological aspect, how connected and mutually conditioned the two social components are. Sport is inherently political as it reflects the authoritative allocation of values (Dahl, 1957). Why do we say that, because the future of athletes depends on the future of political will? When we say how much it

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enables or gives hope for development, it encourages opportunities, that young people can engage in sports disciplines during their development. On the other hand, politics depends on sports institutions in creating the mood of young people, so that their cadres get general and social legality. (Memic, 2005). Sport represents a politically usable resource, including a character-building socializing agent, a vehicle for propaganda, the opportunity for prestige, a tool to deliver social change, and the opiate of the masses, diverting or distracting the energies of the population (Allison, 1986; Sage & Eitzen, 2013). We know that sport, by its structure, is a very complicated and complex kinesiological activity in which success depends on the influence of a large number of anthropological characters and abilities. Sport is an integral part of the social needs of the individual, it is a universal means of understanding and cooperation between people, with the aim of physical and spiritual education (Ibri, 2023). Sport is any physical and mental activity that a person performs according to an established set of rules, in order to compete with an opponent or an opposing team, with the application of a prescribed scoring system on the basis of which the winner is determined. Sport is a global phenomenon by nature, its language is universal, it unites people all over the planet, regardless of skin color, age and gender" (Jackson and Haigh, 2008). Sport represents one of the most advanced cases of globalisation, probably because there are less cultural and political obstacles to the development of trade and international power in sports than in other areas (Allison, 1986). Sports are all forms of physical and mental activity that, through unorganized or organized participation, aim to express or improve physical and mental fitness or achieve results in competitions of all levels. Sport is available to everyone regardless of age, physical ability, disability, national or ethnic affiliation, race or religion, gender, language, social origin, political affiliation, property status and other personal characteristics (Ibri, 2023). Sport and sports activity play a large role and represent a very significant factor in daily life and work of man. They become a need and complement changes in life which in this period of development of technology and science are increasing and make life faster, enabling on

the one hand, technical progress, and taking away, on the other hand, what basically constitutes a movement for a healthy life. Sport and sports activity, as an important component of sports and sports activities represent: factors of strengthening people's health; an important el ement for rest and recreation; and a basic tool for raising the working and defense conditions sobnosti citizens (Anastasovski, 2003). Through sport, people get to know each other more quickly, then develop their physical and moral qualities, because sport, as it is known, refines people. Athletes are mostly cosmopolitans, borders bother them. Through sports, they preserve thecultural heritage of the people and country they belong to. Therefore, sport has a collective role. (Mataja, 1984).

Sport is an effective means of politics, nowadays it is used as a powerful instrument for sanctioning, as well as a powerful tool for establishing communication between people, nations and states. While in ancient times, especially in ancient Greece, sports games were a powerful means of achieving peace. (Yalouris, 1986). Whether politics refers to the state, the system, or society more generally, it is "the constrained use of social power" where actors use a variety of tactics to promote their interests and to manipulate, manoeuvre and modify the preferences of others. To act politically requires control over a range of resources, including expertise, money, organizational capacity, and moral authority (Houlihan, 2003). Politics and sports are two very complex and multifaceted phenomena. (Anastasovski, 2003). Numerous scientists from the field of social sciences, claim that issues related to the study of sports can be considered as phenomena determined primarily by social factors and the consequences associated with them that result from playing sports (Coakley and Dunning, 2003; Houlihan, 2003; Coakley, 2007; Tomlinson, 2007; Giulianotti, 2008). Seen as a whole, the phenomenon of sport is extremely multifaceted, i.e. we can deal with it from a kinesiology point of view, but at the same time we can observe it as a wider social and humanistic phenomenon (Mataja, 1984). When talking about politics, as the term of this paper, the level of complexity of the discussion is similar to that of sports. We can offer as many definitions of politics as there are different forms of government

and their views on what politics is, which again, logically, leads us to the problem of the search for consensus on which aspects of social life should be understood as political (McLean, 1996).

Politics can generally be defined as "the art and science of governing". Politics is accordingly understood as: The mechanism of the struggle for power that includes the study of concepts of power, interests, conflicts, values and ethics, issues of the common good and all phenomena resulting from the implementation of such concepts, such as ideology, nationalism and the electoral process. (McLean 1996). The understanding of politics as a tool of government is most vividly described by the definition of politics as a struggle for power, which in democratic systems should take place within legally defined boundaries (Bibic, 1997). At the same time, their goal is the realization of the public interest and the solution of community problems, which are why the government adopts and implements it in the first place. all these activities (Howlet et al., 2009; Hill, 2003; Fink-Hafner, 2007). It should be noted that the interference of politics (in developed democracies) in sport is usually unobtrusive or at least imperceptible due to the very nature of sport (Mester, 1995). On the other hand, in totalitarian regimes, sport is an important aspect of the ideological operation of the system, which offers an opportunity to solve certain problems or represents a mobilization force in favor of supporting the system (Girginov, 2004). Sports and politics and their mutual connection are indisputable facts. Everyone who pays even superficial attention to social phenomena is aware of this connection. The interest of politics is its inclusion in the field of sports (especially top competitive sports), and the interest of sport is the inclusion of politics in the benefit of sports. We could safely assume that this influence exists and that it is in the context of the connection with the ever-present global idea of sports (e.g. in the works of Allison (2006), Anastasovski (2003), Robertson (2007), Giulianotti (2008) and Houlihan (2010)), and it is potentially large and desirable. The objectives of this paper are to determine the attitudes of sports coaches regarding the intervention of politics in sports.

Subject and Goal of Research

The problem of this research is the meaning presence and interference of politics in sports. The subject of this research is the attitudes and opinions of sports coaches about the importance of the presence and interference of politics in sports. The aim of the research is to determine the attitudes of sports coaches about the presence and interference of politics in sports. In order to better achieve the general goal, the following and partial goals were set:

- Determine whether politics helps and contributes to the development of sports?
- Determine whether politics is present and interferencein sports?
- Determine whether politics helps and contributes to the development of sports?
- Determine whether sport can do without politics?
- Determine whether politics is present in sports clubs?
- Determine whether sports clubs have their own political orientations and preferences?
- Determine if sports clubs ask for help or favors from politicians?
- Determine whether sports clubs have a politician in their club?
- Determine whether if any of the politicians asked for any favors from coaches?
- Determine whether sport is an instrument of politics?
- Determine whether believe that the future of sports and athletes depends on political will.
- Based on the general and partial goals of this research, and on the basis of previous research, general and individual hypotheses can be justified.
- The general hypothesis is:
- H0: Sports coaches' attitudes about the presence and interference of politics in sports are positive.
- Individual hypotheses are as follows:
- H1: Sports coaches believe that politics helps and contributes to the development of sports,
- H2: Sports coaches believe that sport can do without politics
- H3: Sports coaches believe that politics is present in sports clubs
- H4: Sports coaches believe that clubs have their own political orientations and

preferences
- H5: Sports coaches believe that clubs ask for help or favors from politicians
- H6: Sports coaches believe that sports clubs have a politician in their club
- H7: Sports coaches believe that politicians seek favors from them
- H8: Sports coaches believe that sport is an instrument of politics
- H9: Sports coaches believe that politicians are noticed at sports events
- H10: Sports coaches believe that the future of sports and athletes depends on political will.

Methods

The research was conducted with the coaches of sports clubs operating in Prizren, obtaining consent advance of the sport klubs in which the research was conducted. The descriptive research method was selected for the problem selected from the quantitative approach. Respondents were previously acquainted with the the aim and method of research, where the survey of examination was presented in detail. All respondents joined the research voluntarily. Before the implementation of the research, the questionnaire multiplying and the respondents were informed that the research will be conducted at the scheduled time. The research was conducted individually with each respondent in the suitable environments of sport clubs where they were engaged sports coaches. The questionnaire was anonymous.

Sample of Respondents

For the purposes of the research, data was collected and processed on a sample of 125 respondents, male, aged 24 to 62, sports coaches from 18 different sports, who perform their duties in 52 different sports clubs in Prizren.

Measuring Instruments

In this research, a survey was used, which was built exclusively for the needs of this research. The instrument on the basis of which this research was carried out was reduced to two groups of questions, where the first group of questions refers to personal data (education, age and work experience) and the second group of questions refer to the current subject of research, attitudes and opinions of sports coaches on the interference of politics in sports. The survey questionnaire consisted of 3 questions related to socio-status characteristics and 11 questions related to determining the attitudes of sports coaches about the presence and interference of politics in sports. The questionnaire is closed type. Statistical processing of data was done with the program SPSS statistics 25 for the Windows.

Results and Discussion

A total of 125 respondents, participated in the research. All respondents were male and are currently employed in 52 sports clubs in Prizren. Sport coaches with the highest degree of education (master's degree) are 6, with university degrees are 27, and with secondary school, are 19 coaches. Based on this, we can conclude that in this research there are more educated coaches and they participate with 61.6%, while coaches with high school education participate with 38.4%. The first task of this research was to determine what attitudes the respondents have if politics is present and there is interference in sport. The results of the research are given in table 1.

Table 1.
Analysis of respondents' answers on whether politics is present and interferes in sports?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	106	84.80%
	No	12	9.60%
	I have no opinion	7	5.60%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents, 106 or 84.8% of the total sample, answered that politics is present and interferes in sports, 12 respondents or 9.6% answered that politics is not present and there is no interference in sports, while 7 respondents or 5.6% of them answered that they had no opinion about it.

Therefore, based on the received answers to the question, it can be concluded that the fact that politics is present and interferes in sports when it should be outside of sports is disappointing. Question two, referred to the statement of respondents (sports coaches) on whether the policy helps and contributes to the development of sports. The results of the research are given in table 2.

Table 2.

Analysis of respondents' answers, does politics help and contribute to the development of sports?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	92	73.60%
	No	24	19.20%
	I have no opinion	9	7.20%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 2, we can say that most of the respondents, 92 or 73.6% of the total sample, answered that politics helps and contributes to the development of sports, 24 respondents or 19.2% answered that politics does not help and does not contribute to the development of sports, while 9 respondents or 7.2 % of them answered that they have no opinion about whether politics helps and contributes to the development of sports. Therefore, based on the received answers to the question, it can be concluded that although politics is present in sports, it helps and contributes to the development of sports, of course for their own interests. Question three, referred to the respondent's (coach's) statement on whether sport can do without politics. The results of the research are given in table 3.

Table 3.

Analysis of respondents' answers about whether sport can do without politics?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	85	68.10%
	No	24	19.20%
	I have no opinion	16	12.70%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 3, it can be seen that the majority of respondents, 85 or 68.1% of the total sample, answered that sport can do without politics, 24 respondents or 19.2% answered that sport cannot do without politics, while 16 respondents or 12.7% answered that they have no opinion on whether sport can do without politics.

Therefore, based on the received answers to the question, it can be concluded that, although politics is present in sport, and it helps and contributes to the development of sport, sport can do without politics. Question four, referred to the statement of respondents (sports coaches) about whether politics is present in sports clubs. The results of the research are given in table 4.

Table 4.
Analysis of respondents' answers, is politics present in sports clubs?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	86	68.80%
	No	32	25.60%
	I have no opinion	7	5.60%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 4, we can say that most of the respondents, 86 or 68.8% of the total sample, answered that politics is present in sports clubs, 32 respondents or 25.6% answered that there is no politics in sports clubs, while 7 respondents or 5.6% of them answered that they have no opinion about whether politics is present in sports clubs.

Therefore, based on the received answers to the question, it can be concluded that the fact that politics in clubs is very present, when such a thing should not happen. Question five, referred to the statements of respondents about whether the clubs have different political orientations. The results of the research are given in table 5.

Table 5.
Analysis of respondents' answers about whether the clubs have their own political orientations and preferences?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	78	62.40%
	No	36	28.80%
	I have no opinion	11	8.80%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 5, it can be seen that the majority of respondents, 78 or 62.4% of the total sample, answered that clubs have their own political affiliations, 36 respondents or 28.8% answered that clubs do not have their own political affiliations, while 11 respondents or 8.8% answered that they have no opinion about whether the clubs have their own political orientations. Therefore, based on the answers to the question, it can be stated that politics is very present in the clubs and that the clubs have their own political orientations, although this should not be the case. Question sixth, referred to the statement of respondents about whether clubs seek help or favors from politicians. The results of the research are given in table 6.

Table 6.
Analysis of respondents' on whether clubs seek help or favors from politicians?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	102	81.60%
	No	19	15.20%
	I have no opinion	4	3.20%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 6, we can say that most of the respondents, 102 or 81.6% of the total sample, answered that clubs ask for help or favors from politicians, 19 respondents or 15.2% answered that clubs do not ask for help or favors from politicians, while only 4 respondents or 3.2% of them answered that they do not have an opinion on whether the clubs ask for help or favors from politicians. So, based on the answers to the question, it can be stated that the clubs sometimes turn to political charms for help. Question seventh, referred to the statement of respondents about whether clubs have any politicians in their club. The results of the research are given in table 7.

Table 7.
Analysis of respondents' answers about whether the clubs have any of the politicians in their club?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	26	20.80%
	No	81	64.80%
	I have no opinion	18	14.40%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 7, it can be seen that the majority of respondents, 81 or 64.8% of the total sample, answered that the clubs do not have any politicians in their club, 26 respondents or 20.8% answered that the clubs have one of the politicians in their club, while 18 respondents or 14.4% of they answered that they do not have an opinion on whether the clubs have any of the politicians in their club. Based on the answers received, it can be stated that the clubs do not officially have any politicians in their ranks, and this is a consequence of the club's fear of being punished by international bodies, but unofficially respondents claim that political charms are present and have a great influence in the club. Question eight, referred to the statement of the respondents about whether any of the politicians demanded a favor from the clubs. The results of the research are given in table 8.

Table 8.
Analysis of the interviewer's answers about whether any of the politicians demanded any favor from the club?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	42	33.60%
	No	67	53.70%
	I have no opinion	16	12.70%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 8, we can say that most of the respondents, 67 or 53.7% of the total sample, answered that the politicians no sought a favor from the club, 42 respondents or 33.6% answered that there were cases when the politicians sought a favor from clubs, while 16 respondents or 12.7% of them answered that they had no opinion on the matter (they do not remember) that there were cases when some of the politicians demanded a favor from the clubs. So, based on the answers, it can be stated that there are cases when some of the politicians ask for favor from the clubs. Question nine, referred to the statement of respondents about whether sports coaches consider sport to be an instrument of politics. The results of the research given in table 9.

Table 9.
Analysis of respondents' on whether coaches consider sport to be an instrument of politics?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Valid Percent
	Yes	112	89.70%
	No	9	7.10%
	I have no opinion	4	3.20%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 9, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 112 or 89.7% of the total sample, answered that sport is an instrument of politics, 9 respondents or 7.1% answered that sport is not an instrument of politics, while only 4 respondents or 3.2% of them answered that they have no opinion on whether sport is an instrument of policy. Therefore, based on the received answers, it can be stated that sport is an instrument in the hands of politicians and politicians. Question ten, referred to the statement of respondents about whether politicians are noticed at sports events. The results of the research are given in table 10.

Table 10.
Analysis of respondents' answers about whether politicians attend sports events?

Valid	Answers	Frequency	Valid Percent
	Yes	98	64.80%
	No	14	20.80%
	I have no opinion	9	14.40%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 10, we can say that most of the respondents, 98 or 78.4% of the total sample, answered that politicians notice sports events, 17 respondents or 13.5% answered that politicians do not notice sports events, while 10 respondents or 8.1% answered that they have no opinion whether politicians notice sports events. Therefore, based on the received answers to the question, it can be stated that sport it is a significant element of people's social life, and an effective tool of politics, it is used as a powerful instrument of influence, and as a powerful tool for establishing communication between people. Question eleventh, referred to the statement of respondents (sports coaches) about whether the future of sports and athletes depends on political will. The results of the research are given in table 10.

Table 11.
Analysis of respondents' answers about whether the future of sports and athletes depends on political will.

Valid		Frequency	Valid Percent
	Yes	103	82.40%
	No	16	12.80%
	I have no opinion	7	4.80%
	Total	125	100.00%

Based on the obtained results, which are shown in table 11, we can say that most of the respondents, 103 or 82.4% of the total sample, answered that the future of sports and athletes depends on political will. Respondents 16 of them or 12.8% answered that the future of sports and athletes not depends on political will, while 6 respondents or 4.8% answered that they have no opinion whether the future of sports and athletes depends on political will. Therefore, based on the received answers, it can be stated that sport it is a significant element of people's social life, and an effective tool of politics.

Conclusion

The main goal of the research was to determine the coaches' views on the presence and interference of politics in sports. Based on the analysis of the results obtained through the responses of the respondents (sports coaches), in the table 1, it can be concluded that the that the general hypothesis HO, has been confirmed. Majority of respondents 73.6% of the total sample ohad a positive attitude about the presences and interference of politics in sports, and only 26.4 have a different opinion. Even hypothesis H1, which reads: sports coaches believe that politics helps and contributes to the development of sports, it can be said that it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 2, it can be seen that most respondents 84.8% of the total sample, answered that politics helps and contributes to the development of sports, and only 15.2% have a different opinion. Hypothesis H2 which reads: sports coaches believe that sport can do without politics, it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 3, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 68.1% of the total sample) answered that sport can do without politics, and only 31.9% have a different opinion. Hypothesis H3, which reads: sports coaches believe that politics is present in sports clubs, it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 4, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 68.1% of the total sample, and only 31.9% have a different opinion. Hypothesis H4, which reads: coaches believe that sports clubs have their own political orientations, it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 5, it can be seen that

the majority of respondents 62.4% of the total sample, answered that clubs have their own political affiliations, and only 37.6% have a different opinion. Hypothesis H5, which reads: coaches believe that sports clubs seek help or favors from politicians, it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 6, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 81.6% of the total sample, answered that clubs ask for help or favors from politicians, and only 18.4% have a different opinion. Therefore, on the basis of the received answers, it can be stated that the clubs sometimes turn to political charms for help. Hypothesis H6, which reads: coaches believe that sports clubs have a politician in their club, it's not proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 7, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 64.8% of the total sample, answered that sports clubs do not have a politician in their club, and only 35.2% have a different opinion. Based on the answers received, it can be stated that the clubs do not officially have any politicians in their ranks, and this is a consequence of the club's fear of being punished by international bodies, while unofficially respondents claim that politicians are present and have great influence in the club. Hypothesis H7, which reads: coaches believe that politicians seek favors from them clubs regarding sports, it's not proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 8, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 53.7% of the total sample, answered that none of the politicians sought a favor from from them clubs, in relation to sports, and 46.3% have a different opinion. Hypothesis H8, which reads: sports coaches believe that sport is an instrument of politics, it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 9, it can be seen that the vast majority of respondents 89.7% of the total sample, answered that sport is an instrument of politics, and only 10.3% have a different opinion. Therefore, based on the received answers to the question, it can be stated that sport is an instrument of politics and that sport cannot do without politics, this has been proven by many other researchers. Hypothesis H9 which reads: sports coaches believe that politicians are noticed at sports events it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 10, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 78.4% of the total sample, answered that politicians are noticed at sports events, and only 321.6%

have a different opinion. Hypothesis H10, which reads: sports coaches believe that the future of sports and athletes depends on political will, it's proved. Based on the results obtained, in the table 11, it can be seen that the majority of respondents 82.4% of the total sample, answered that the future of sports and athletes depends on political will. and only 17.6%, have a different opinion. Therefore, based on the results of the research, we can say that sport, is a significant element of people's social life and an effective tool of politics, is used as a powerful instrument of influence and as a powerful tool for establishing communication between people and nations, the future of sports and athletes certainly depends and will depend on political. These conclusions are also in accordance with other researchers, such as: (Dahl, 1957; Mataja, 1984; Allison, 1986; Mester, 1995; McLean 1996; Anastasovski, 2003; Hulihan, 2003; Girginov, 2004; Memiq, 2005; Allison 2006; Robertson (2007), Giulianotti, 2008; Jackson and Haigh, 2008; Houlihan 2010; Sage & Eitzen, 2013), and many others, who prove that sport is a tool powerful of influence on the broad masses, a tool used to reflect the image and to increase the influence and authority of politics on the people. The interest of politics is its inclusion in the field of sports, and the interest of sports is the inclusion of politics in the benefit of sports. Sport there is also other purposes humanian and socials, offers pleasure, interest, adrenaline, health, friendship, etc., therefore it is loved by masses of people.

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Unconscious Bullying in the Workplace: A Qualitative Exploration

Original scientific paper

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Abstract

Bullying is an intimidating behavior that can be internalized as a learned behavior. The Study aimed to create thoughtfulness among employees about how and what makes an individual become a bully or engage in bullying with no awareness. The Study explored the view of an employee to understand how unconscious behavior can influence one's actions and behavior toward bullying. This Study practiced a Focus Group Discussion and conducted the discussion virtually on a sample of 31 employees of the Service and Non-Service sectors. The researcher discussed with 11 participants in one group and 20 in another on two different days. This discussion helped to provide awareness about unconsciousness in bullying behavior at the workplace. This discussion helped to gather views of working people from various sectors. It illustrated that focus groups could enhance awareness and empower one's thoughts and beliefs. An important finding can be that the group identified the challenges of Unconscious bullying, like lack of self-awareness, marginal ethical and moral guidance, and eminence. In conclusion, it is observed from the discussion and responses from employees that there is a need to have healthy communication abilities in stating their feelings assertively.

Keywords: Bullying, Harassment, Unconscious, Assertive, intimidating, and threatening behavior.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that can be physical, verbal, non-verbal, emotional, or psychological, and manifests various relationship patterns (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Occupational bullying is the repeated unreasonable action of one person towards another that threatens another's safety and well-being (The University of Colorado, 2015). An office is a place where a group of employees works. Essentially, it is an environment that deals with the psychological aspects of a company's organization and its employees' well-being. Individual job characteristics

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of an employee are the task itself is the key to motivation. Unconscious bullying occurs when an individual is not aware that their behavior is unacceptable. Therefore, it cannot be considered deliberate but needs management awareness (Fraser. R, 2020).

Hackman and Oldham (1980) state that job motivation is affected by skill variety, job identity, job significance, autonomy, and feedback. Each employee experiences high motivation and job satisfaction due to the core job characteristics. Employees require or desire growth and self-esteem, i.e., self-actualization, as one of their characteristics (Shelstad Jeff, 2012). The significance of the task and the identity of the task/role cause employees to use strength and power that hurt frail people. Subtle bullying among employees, such as manipulation, exclusion, spreading of rumors, intimidation, mistreatment, blame games, and so forth would be experienced in the work environment (Rajalakshmi & Gomathi, 2015).

Studies show that bullying was associated with decreased cortex thickness in the medial, lateral, and temporal pre-frontals mediating the relationship between bullying behavior in childhood and anti-social behavior. The rise in the cortisol level, especially in the hippocampus, helps in short-term and long-term memory processes, making learning difficult for children. The result also shows reduced sleep quality due to disturbing thoughts and reflections. This lack of sleep occurs due to the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis produced by Stress. Sleep-deprived bullying perpetrators and victims tend to have more negative emotional states like fatigue, tension, anxiety, depression, and negligence when performing tasks, especially during study time (Okhotan et al., 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to create understanding among employees about how and what makes an individual become a bully or engage in bullying activities without awareness and self-consciousness.

Objectives

1. To differentiate the terms Bullying and Harassment to the group members

2. To provide awareness of bullying and its unconscious behavior
3. To empower group members to unravel the organization's appropriate behavior

Theoretical Framework

Aggression and Passive-aggression can be two styles of interpersonal communication that influence an employee to bully. Through the psychodynamic perspective (Sigmund Freud), humans naturally possess two basic instincts Eros (life instincts) that drive survival instincts and Thanatos (death instincts) that drive aggression as behavior. Freud says Anxiety is a state of tension that motivates humans to perform and finish a task. Individuals use defense mechanisms to cope with or protect their ego (THE WORLD OF REALITY) (Corey G, 2017). Some of the defense mechanisms used by employees are projection, passive aggression, acting out, isolation, devaluation, autistic fantasies, denial, displacement, dissociation, splitting, rationalization, and somatization (Barabasz, 2016).

Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Psychological experiment on Aggression, correction, and learned behavior can reflect on corporate bullying (P Hollis, 2019). Behaviorists believe that punishment is the way to the growth of the employee and the organization. Though there is a substantial emotional and physical disturbance created due to bullying, the bullier believes that there is an escalation in mental and self-esteem (George, 2011). The individual who witnesses the aggressive behavior of bullies is likely to repeat the behavior, which yields a positive outcome. Thus, when no consequences or negative impacts affect the aggressor or bullies, the bullying behavior is continuous, and bystanders or victims learn to accept the aggression and bullying behavior as a normal lifestyle (P Hollis, 2019). Bullying becomes normalized as long as no intervention is enforced to the hierarchy that withheld power.

Bullying often starts in childhood when adults or parents oppress the younger ones' opinions or feelings, adversely impacting mental health. During a child's formative years, social interest motivates behavior. Alfred Adler states, "A human being does not exist for himself alone. He is

not apart from others". Social identity within peer relationships is crucial to maintain and improve positive psychological health. One who feels the 'need to belong' becomes more well-adjusted than one who does not. Henceforth, there must be a balance between belonging, self-identity, and superiority. People engage in bullying or aggressive or manipulative behavior to satisfy their desire for power and protect themselves from an inferiority complex from a peer (Henderson et al., 2018). Adler talked about inferiority and superiority feelings. Children in their school face difficulty in adjusting. More attention must be given to entitlement and encouraging the children's creativity and initiatives. Children who lack this would strive for superiority rather than cooperation with peers. As a result, there is a chance of an inferiority complex (fed the social disconnection). The perception of inferiority fuels what Adler called the "superiority complex," which protects against feelings of inferiority yet contributes to a flight from reality and, ultimately, social deviation (McCluskey, 2021).

An oscillation between self-hatred and grandiosity clinically characterizes this inferiority and superiority. In addition, the rhetoric and bullying prevalent in current society demonstrate the destructive nature of the inferiority and superiority complex. To overcome inferiority, Adler used the terms lifestyle, life goal, fantasy goal, and guiding fiction interchangeably (McCluskey, 2021). Providing detailed feedback on the children's creativity or action and behavior, teaching empathy, and favoring authoritative parenting (rather than submissive or authoritarian parenting) with crucial elements of nurturing, responsiveness, and generating genuine support to children. Controlling children by expressing excellent and bad actions and consequences; creating mutual rules – explain and discuss the reasoning.

Furthermore, it has become evident that there is more to a psychosocial work environment than descriptive job characteristics and that the social ties that connect different employees to their jobs are essential. Exchanging information between individuals to facilitate their actions is considered a Social Capital Theory in an organization. An organization can benefit from capital because it can benefit itself and its members. A high level of social capital

can prevent and develop a bullying buffer. To one extent, it prevents negative or ambiguous actions from being viewed as bullying or as a buffer that facilitates effective conflict resolution. To another extent, exclusion of members of the group/ team/ department/ organization who do not conform to rigid group norms may increase the risk of bullying (Pihl et al., 2017).

In Dominance theory, a variable enables an individual to access resources and gain power in each developmental stage like toys in childhood, sex in adolescence, and power and prestige in their adulthood soon (Faye Mishna, 2012). According to this theory, the central motivating factor is power and dominance, which makes the bully intimidate and humiliate others. According to mechanisms such as oppression, discrimination, and injustice, groups formed from the social hierarchy. They possess positive social values and thus show their power on less powerful groups in that hierarchy. Their social hierarchy group determines a person's social status. Additionally, if the bully leads a clique of admiring followers, these followers may experience heightened power within the classroom due to their position within a group that a robust, respected individual leads (Evans & Smokowski, 2016).

During a working day at the workplace, conflicts will inevitably arise. Conflict, however, is very different from Bullying or Harassment. The term Bullying refers to an unwanted, recurring aggressive behavior that causes psychological and physical harm, creating a power imbalance between the bully and the victim or victims. In contrast, Harassment is unwelcomed intimidating, hostile, or abusive behavior. Harassment usually would be more personal around one or few people than to everyone. Like Bullying, Harassment also creates a power imbalance and creates exceptionally uncomfortable situations in the workplace (Nursiti et al., 2023; Pantry P, 2020).

Method

Focus group discussions are used to gain people's knowledge, perspectives, and attitudes about issues and seek enlightenment for the behavior (Mondal et al., 2019). The FGD in a built environment is a helpful way to gather people from similar backgrounds

or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. In the process of gaining qualitative information, FGD acts as a fundamental part of assessing public perception (Omar, 2018).

Sample

The study practiced Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and gathered working employees' views, opinions, and understanding of Bullying and its unconscious aspects with the necessary transformations to be espoused at the workplace or exerted by individuals themselves. The sample of 31 gathered on MS Teams were employees who have more than 4 years of work experience in the service and non-service sectors. The researcher conducted the FGD in two sets with 11 participants in one group and 20 participants in another group for 1 hour on two different days. Researcher Utilize email invitations, flyers posted in IWN and other Common group areas, and internal communication platforms to reach potential participants. Ensure recruitment materials clearly explain the study's purpose, confidentiality, and compensation

The researcher used a self-constructed and semi-structured questionnaire to generate discussion among the employees from service sector and non-service sector employees. The semi-structured questionnaire includes demographic details

in *Table 4*. The data was analyzed employing thematic analysis. The semi-structured interview schedule for the employees was developed by the researcher and subjected to expert validation. Open-ended questions were used to identify the challenges faced by employees at the workplace in understanding bullying, its unconscious aspects, and factors that may help the workplace to be safe and secure.

Discussion

The records from the discussion served the purpose of differentiating the terms Bullying and Harassment and providing awareness of Unconscious aspects of bullying. From the records of FGD, three themes were derived Awareness, challenges or de-mystifying of bullying, and changes required for a safe and secure workplace for employees.

The first theme, derived from Table 1 (Awareness/Empowerment), encompasses three aspects. The first facet addresses the emotional impact of bullying on victims, including intimidation, lack of credit for work, ridicule, disrespect, and power imbalances. These experiences can trigger unconscious emotions like anger, pity, guilt, and resentment, potentially conflicting with objectivity (Cilliers Frans, 2012; Gidi et al., 2023; Goldyne, 2007; Sheila White, 2007).

Table 1.
Themes and aspects derived from Awareness/empowerment on bullying

Awareness/Empowerment on Bullying		
Emotional	**Stress Inducing**	**Situational**
Hurting emotions and feeling	Crossing limit	Anger
Not receiving Credits for the work	Not receiving Credits for the work	Frustration
Abusive or intimidating behavior	Grabbing opportunities and credits	Pressure from top-level
Ridiculing other's feelings and views	Granted feelings	Discrimination
Power and position	Taking control	Fun on others
Lack of respect	Spreading Rumors	
	Blame game	

From Table 1, The second aspect pertains to the stress induced by bullying behaviors. Withholding credit for work can lead to both emotional and stress-related consequences. Unaccountability, blame-shifting, disregarding feelings, spreading rumors, and seizing opportunities all contribute to a pressure-filled environment that can lead to employee dissatisfaction, increased anxiety, absenteeism, or a preference for remote work to avoid conflict (Aarestad et al., 2021; Gillen et al., 2017).

The third aspect focuses on situational errors stemming from anger, hierarchical pressure displacement, and discrimination based on gender, education level, or socioeconomic status (Table 1). Lighthearted behavior or sarcasm among colleagues can sometimes overstep boundaries, creating an uncomfortable situation for the target. This form of passive bullying, disguised as fun or humor, can be particularly toxic (Ahmed et al., 2021; Ho et al., 2022; Lian et al., 2021; Ramya & Kulkarni, 2011; Sheila White, 2007).

Theme 2: Challenges in De-mystifying Bullying

The second theme, central to the FGD's objective, addressed the unconscious aspects of bullying (Table 2). Personality development fundamentally rests on individual responsibility According to (Bargh & Morsella, 2008), behavioral impulses originate unconsciously before being consciously claimed and experienced. This subconscious activity shapes personality and decision-making ("The Influence of Subconscious Mind on Human Behavior," 2014).

Table 2.
Challenges/ de-mystifying of bullying

Challenges/ Demystifying of Bullying Behavior	
Lack of Self-awareness	reinforcement
Unaware of the situation and setting	learned Behavior from experiences
Pleasure principle	Sarcasm, Joking
Influences from a young age	Low Self-esteem
Control/ Power factor	Not feeling accountable
Too many advice	Gender Socialization
Micromanagement	Hyperactivity
lack of moral or ethical guidance	Displacement of actions
Name and fame	

`The FGD analysis (Table 2) revealed that individuals may lack self-awareness and situational awareness, allowing long-held biases and cognitions to influence unconscious judgments (Tslpursky. G, 2020). From a psychodynamic perspective, bullying can stem from the id (personality structure) or eros (life instincts), driven by pleasure-seeking, desire for fame and power, displacement of actions and behaviors (Barabasz, 2016; Cilliers Frans, 2012; Sheila White, 2007).

Socio-cognitive learning theory suggests that bullying behavior can be learned and reinforced through childhood experiences, observing others' behavior, and mimicking observed bullying practices. Additionally, individuals may unconsciously cultivate dominant behavior through excessive advice-giving and micromanagement, fueled by a desire for superiority (Adler, as cited in (McCluskey, 2021)). This "superiority complex" can lead to disconnection and aggression (McCluskey, 2021). Hyperactivity, low self-esteem, lack

of moral or ethical guidance, and reduced accountability can also contribute to diminished self-awareness and negatively impact personality.

Gender socialization, an extreme form of prejudice rooted in societal expectations, can also generate unconscious bias. While some may experience a subtle sense of bias, most people lack the critical self-reflection necessary to identify unconscious biases (Goldyne, 2007). Unchallenged cognitive processes lead to responses influenced by bias or conditioned behavior. As (Jones. D, 2019) states, "Bias is a pre-existing or primed knowledge and beliefs brought to bear on immediate situations and contexts."

Theme 3: Changes Required for a Safe and Secure Workplace

The third theme (Table 3) identified necessary changes for fostering a safe and secure work environment. The study highlighted the effectiveness of workplace Unconscious Bias Training (UBT) in raising awareness of potentially harmful biases and minimizing their impact on interactions (Atewologun. D et al., 2018). While UBT cannot eliminate unconscious bias, it can reduce its influence on everyday interactions and decision-making. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) serves as a tool for detecting the strength of automatic associations between mental representations (Harvard (OEDIB), 2011; Tonya R. Moon, 2011). The subjects' relationships with different coping reactions could help differentiate between the belief in a just world that is personal and the belief in a just world that is general. According to research on a just world, the more subjects believed in a just world, the less likely they were to describe themselves as victims of discrimination (Dalbert, 1999).

Table 3.
Changes required for a safe and secure workplace

Change required for a safe and secure workplace	
Awareness program on Bullying behaviors	Standing up for oneself
Being Assertive	voicing out when witnessed rather than being a bystander
Accountability for their actions	Practicing Empathy and Gratitude
Mindful about other's reactions and responses	self-introspection, Self-reflection
Controlled behavior	Keen observation into self and other's feelings
Face-to-face communication	Taking self-time
Expressing feelings	Seeking Honest and open feedback

Changes required for a safe and secure workplace

From the discussion Table 3, Drawing on data from Discussion Table 3, employees identified various coping strategies that contribute to personal empowerment and confidence. These strategies include assertiveness, accountability, face-to-face communication, emotional expression, and self-advocacy (Arnetz et al., 2019; Moreira et al., 2019; Rivara & Le Menestrel, 2016; Shorey & Wong, 2021; Silva et al., 2017).

Mindful about responses and reactions from others, controlled behavior, practicing empathy and gratitude, self-introspection, self-reflection, keen observation, having self-time, and seeking open and honest feedback are other changes raised in the discussion from the employees in FGD. This helps employee also develop their level of happiness and improve their standard of living. (Arnetz et al., 2019; Chen & Zhu, 2022; García-Vázquez, Parra-Pérez, et al., 2020; García-Vázquez, Valdés-Cuervo, et al., 2020; van Noorden et al., 2015).

Conclusion

The entire discussion served the purpose of inculcating the idea that bullying can exist unconsciously in every individual. This discussion also shows that employees cannot communicate their distress or discomfort to their colleagues who unconsciously bullied them, stating that changes like healthy social skills are required for an individual to make the workplace safe and secure. Assertiveness and emotional stability can make employees stand up for themselves and be accountable for their actions without getting carried away by emotions. Assertiveness can also create awareness of the situation and others' feelings and guide individuals to stand up for their rights without violating or breaching others' rights. Approaches that help to identify Unconscious Bullying. In the future, there is scope to study the Impression of Assertiveness and Social Skill training on bullies and victims of bullying, the Influence of Positive Psychology (Mindfulness, Gratitude exercises, and Empathy exercises) for bullies, the Impact of Formal Feedback training {constructive feedback or SBI (Situation Behavior and impact)} for employees in leadership managerial roles.

Appendix
The following questions are used to generate Group Discussion

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Socio-Demographic Information of Employee

Age

Gender

Educational Qualification

Workplace Setting (Service sector or non-service Sector)

Experience

Questions for FGD

What is bullying according to you?

Is there a difference between Bullying and Harassment?

If yes, what is the Difference?

Are you aware that Bullying is also an offense or inappropriate behavior, like Harassment?

What makes a person or employee a superior get engaged in bullying even after having an awareness of bullying being offensive?

Do you think certain behavior can be unconscious?

In that sense does bullying can be unconscious?

Can you share any instances where you witnessed unconscious bullying at your workplace?

How far does a bully have awareness of his or her actions are offensive?

How can this be changed?

Author's Note

This study explores the existence of unconscious bullying in the workplace through a qualitative approach. We conducted two virtual focus groups with a total of 31 employees from various departments from various companies. The participants included a mix of junior, mid-level, and senior staff. The focus group discussions aimed to generate rich and in-depth discussions about employee experiences with potentially bullying behaviors and how anyone can be a bully unconsciously. The insights and perspectives gathered from these discussions formed the basis for this paper. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the participants who generously shared their time and experiences and to Dr. Vasudha T for help in arranging the discussion.

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