POSSIBILITIES FOR PREVENTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT GENDER

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Abstract

The authors examine sociological and pedagogical interpretation of the term „unacceptable behaviour". The paper offers an analysis of a number of possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour in class. The aim of the research was to determine the extent of differences between boys and girls in relation to preventing the unacceptable behaviour. The research was based on the sample of 180 ninth grade students from elementary schools in East Sarajevo. The results of t-testing showed that examinees of different gender, statistically speaking, do not differ significantly in perceiving the possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour in class. Outcomes imply the importance of the role of teachers who should create conditions for better social integration of their students by means of a common set of rules and professional attitude to discipline.

Keywords: student, prevention, unacceptable behaviour, class.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sociology and other related sciences usually define deviance as a breach of a certain set of commonly accepted principles in one society since it can lead to consequences with a negative *sign*, both on the individual and collective levels. According to one definition, a deviant behaviour „stands out from the expected, which means commonly accepted set of cultural standards and institutional practises in every related social group or environment" (Obradović, 2014, p. 13). What follows is that social deviations are "specific types of social phenomena, a special kind of social relations that accompanies unfavourable social consequences and is comprised, on the one hand, of a willing and deliberate activities by an individual, a group, an institution or a community, and on the other hand, a social reaction of disapproval by other people" (Milosavljević, 2003, p. 136). For the purpose of this paper, it was necessary to provide a definition for juvenile delinquency as broad as possible, so that it would include all deviant juvenile behaviour or a breach

of any kind of social norms (Ibidem, 2003, p. 123). Frequent synonyms for juvenile delinquency are "reckless upbringing and neglect, antisocial behaviour, criminality of the young, but from a social-pathological point of view, every one of these terms has a specific meaning. In social legislation, a law term for such behaviour is a neglected child, meaning that all kinds of social norms are in breach" (Milosavljević, 2003, p. 122).

A term unacceptable behaviour is not uniquely specified, so others terms are used as well: behaviour disorder, unadjusted behaviour or social maladjustment, antisocial behaviour, neglect, dissocial behaviour etc. The usage of these terms maintains a different degree and a different manifestation mode of behaviours denoted as unacceptable. The term unacceptable behaviour refers to a set of behaviours that is out of line of widely accepted norms and, as such, sanctioned by either a moral or legal code of a social community.

The Croatian authors (Bouillet and Uzelac, 2007) define unacceptable behaviour as a result of a dynamic relation between students and factors ensuing from characteristics of both their broad and narrow social space which contribute to stability in behaviour during a longer period of time. Low relationship quality within the school environment is to a larger extent a consequence and not an agent in the development of behaviour disorder. Class climate is not a direct agent of disorders and difficulties but it is the most frequent place where the difficulties are manifested on a graver scale.

The most frequent types of unaccepted behaviour in class are: unjustified absence, recklessness, laziness, indiscipline (striking behaviour, lack of care, communication problems and breach of conventional norms of behaviour), consummation of narcotics, carrying side and fire arms, physical confrontation.

According to the research results (Trout, 2003), students with unacceptable behaviour finish school more rarely, have lower results in reading and arithmetic and continue education more rarely. Unacceptable behaviour among students considerably disrupts usual and desirable school climate and disables teaching process in general (Lane, Wehby and Barton-Arwood, 2005). Earlier research results (Kovačević, 2015) show differences in estimation of the possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour among the seventh, eighth and ninth graders. In adolescent period, students often demonstrate tension caused by unreal requests from teachers (numerous teaching situations frustrate students and contribute to the feeling of helplessness). However, excessive concessions to adolescents, insisting on their privileges, excessive glorification of their personality lead to egoism and arrogance of a young person, or to put it differently, make it impossible to realise normal socialisation of the young. Unacceptable behaviour is a product of the relations between students and their teachers in the teaching process.

An important feature of the student-teacher relationship, according to Stevan Krnjajić (2002), is the fact that it is a relationship of normative roles, a relationship where both sides behave in accordance to institutionally regulated rights and duties. In what way does a teaching process stimulate students' skills, help them overcome their inhibitions and fears, strengthen their self-confidence and feeling of responsibility? (Roeders, 2003).

Very often students of unacceptable behaviour find out that their only opportunity for development, success and a way *back onto the right path* lies exactly at school. A lack of tolerance among teachers (sanctions and punishments) hinders the satisfaction of educational and social needs among the students of unacceptable behaviour. The main task for both teachers and students is how to overcome this problem or mitigate it in any way? "The situation can be favourably influenced by teachers who respect students, have a humane relationship and understanding for them, as well as those pedagogically and professionally well prepared for the job they perform" (Djordjević, 2003, p. 702). The class climate can be significantly influenced by: positive attitudes towards the individuals that raise awareness of self-worth and psychological and pedagogical position; positive attitudes towards existing differences between the individuals which develop affiliation and the feeling of acceptance; favourable attitudes to learning which create more active roles for both students and teachers; and positive attitudes towards innovative procedures and discoveries which serve students' enthusiasm for learning and achieving success (Djordjević, 2003). Practice experience shows that *neglecting students' problems* often turns into serious disorders - running away from school, depression, lethargy, open or concealed spite and bullying behaviour expressed through disobedience, lack of compassion for other people's feelings, tendency to settle disputes in unacceptable way, low tolerance to frustration, as well as tendency to other risky behaviours. A sociological approach to this problem is based on a functional perspective and insights by Robert Merton and Albert Cohen who point out that "deviance does not ensue from pathological personality but culture and social structure" (Obradović, 2014, p. 17). Generally, unacceptable behaviour is often explained as a problem of socialization process which means that it should be solved on the level of entire social structure.

In this paper, we felt that it was important to examine whether there are any differences between the

examinees of different gender in relation to their perceiving the possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour in class.

2. PERCEPTION OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PREVENTING THE UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT GENDER

2.1. The Aim of the Research

The aim of the research was to determine the differences between examinees of different gender regarding their perception about preventing unaccepted behaviour in class.

2.2. Research Sample

The research was realised on the sample of 180 ninth grade students from elementary schools in East Sarajevo. The sample had characteristics of a group and natural sample.

2.3. Research Methods And Techniques

The following methods were used: a method of empirical non-experimental research, a theory analysis method, synthesis and descriptive method. The research also included scaling method.

2.4. Research Instruments

The Scale Estimate of possibilities for preventing unaccepted behaviour in class was independently construed. Factor analysis determined which factors are fundamental for variables mutual connection as well as their connection with other factors. A greater number of manifest variables were reduced to fewer latent factors that explain a greater part of perceived variables variance. Since correlation matrix with units in main diagonal was used for factor analysis, we used main components method (to single out factors with characteristic values – root, and determine a participation percentage of isolated factors in total variance). KMO value (0,86) is statistically significant on 0,01 level which means that it is possible to implement main components analysis. Guttmann-Keizer Criterion suggested three factors solution. Based on this criterion, the first component explains the biggest proportion of the total variance (the value of the smallest component is characteristic root greater than 1), and the result showed that three isolated factors explain maximal quantity of the total variance, meaning that three factors explain 12 manifest variables of the students' perception of the possibilities for preventing unaccepted behaviour in class. The value of characteristic root for every factor and the explanation of factor contribution explain 57,18% of the total variance (Table 1. Chart 1).

Table 1. *Factor Saturation Matrix*

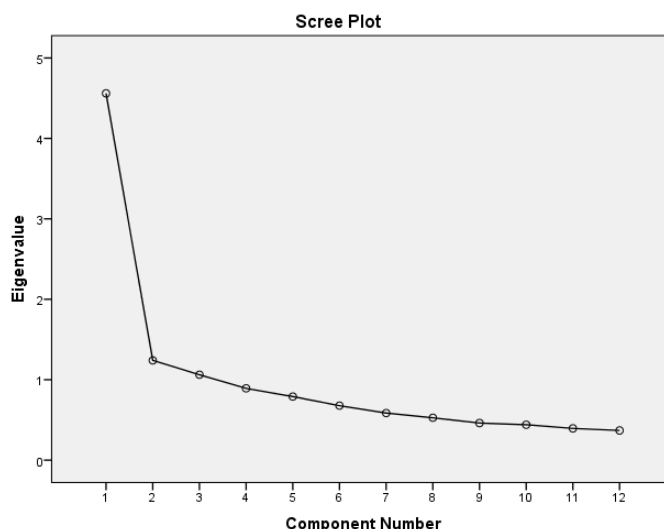|	Initial solution			Rotated solution
	Eigenvalue	% variance	Cumulative % variance	Eigenvalue
1	4,56	38,00	38,00	2,80
2	1,24	10,34	48,33	2,58
3	1,06	8,85	57,18	1,48

Chart 1.

Based on the results, it was concluded that the first factor explains the most of total variance (up to 38,00 %), the second factor explains 10,34 % of the total variance, and the third factor explains 8,85 % of the total variance. The latent structure of the manifest variables in the student perception of possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour in class is saturated the most with the first dominant factor, which is also visible in the matrix of saturation factors among the isolated components.

Table 2. *Manifest variables for the first isolated factor*

Items	r
A teacher should prompt students to settle their disputes in a peaceful manner.	0,73
A conversation between a teacher and a student can solve problems of class discipline.	0,71
All problems between students should be solved through conversation.	0,69
Students should be given opportunity to revalue their own actions.	0,68
Problematic students should be more involved in class activities.	0,65
A teacher and students together should set the rules for proper behaviour in class.	0,57

The first isolated factor was encouragement of nonviolent communication (student-student, student-teacher) in class.

Table 3. *Manifest variables for the second isolated factor*

Items	r
A teacher should show more understanding for problematic behaviour of the students.	0,62
A teacher should respect students' opinions.	0,47
A teacher should be more interested in the students' problems.	0,46

The second isolated factor was respect for students' rights.

Table 4. *Manifest variables for the third isolated factor*

Items	r
Students should be warned about the sanctions for problematic behaviour at the beginning of the school year.	0,59
A video surveillance provides better control and behaviour in class.	0,47
A teacher should use warnings to correct the problematic behaviour.	0,46

The third factor was implementation of the prevention method.

The factor concerning encouragement of nonviolent communication in class (student-student, student-teacher) correlates positively with the respecting for students' rights (r=0,68) and negatively with implementation of the prevention method (r= -0,69). Factors including the respect for students' rights and prevention method correlate negatively (r= -0,60).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

T-testing for negative samples was used in order to show whether the students of different gender have different opinions about preventing unacceptable behaviour in class.

Based on the t-testing results, it was determined that examinees of different gender, statistically speaking, do not differ significantly in perceiving the possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour in class, as well as in perceiving the encouragement of nonviolent communication, respect for students' rights and implementation of the prevention method (Table 5).

Table 5. *Gender differences in the perception of the possibilities for preventing unacceptable behaviour in class*

	sex	N	M	SD	F	p	T	Df	p	MD	St.er	95%	CI
												L	U
ENC	m	93	23,13	4,36	0,23	0,88	-1,03	178	0,31	-0,64	0,62	-1,87	0,59
	f	87	23,77	3,99									
RSR	m	93	11,67	2,25	0,33	0,56	-1,37	178	0,17	-0,45	0,33	-1,09	0,19
	f	87	12,11	2,13									
IPM	m	93	11,20	2,74	0,13	0,71	-0,32	178	0,74	-0,13	0,39	-0,90	0,65
	f	87	11,33	2,50									

Legend:

ENC: encouragement of nonviolent communication

RSR: respect for students' rights

IPM: implementation of the prevention method

Gathered results can be seen as consequences of turbulent social and political changes (understanding the male/female roles are also being changed). In our region, the importance of women in society, school, politics, and media is being increasingly emphasized, so that the relationship towards students of different gender compared to earlier period is also different. In class, teachers and peers demonstrate behaviour which students of different gender rate as a sign of respect for their knowledge, thinking abilities and confidence regardless of gender. This is an outcome of "cultural factors and ignoring of the possible influence it might have on young people in order not to acquire discrimination, obsession, racism or homophobia" (Lefevr, 2017, p. 116). Understanding a woman as a creature without any right to freedom of thought and conviction was long overcome and superseded by understanding that every person regardless of his/her gender has a right to freedom of speech. For this reason, female students do not experience class communication as an attack on their personality and hampering their freedom, while male students do not think that they should be more domineering in communication. Otherwise, many negative things would follow because, from the socio-pathological point of view, it was proven that "girls process emotional stress and attacks in their lives by internalisation of their feelings, reversing it towards themselves and causing self-affliction, depression, low self-esteem, unlike boys who externalise their interior experience projecting it onto the other people through anger, aggression, etc." (Ibidem, 2017, p. 212). It is important to emphasize a category of self-respect which develops throughout life, but in this case it is based on the "estimate of the level of satisfying development tasks, the estimate of school success and success in solving social problems, which is not only a reflection of one's personal estimate but also other people's reactions" (Munjiža, 2015, p. 70). One of the problems with low self-esteem is precisely antisocial behaviour.

4. CONCLUSION

Modern psychologists believe that students incapable of satisfying their inner needs develop aggression or withdraw altogether claiming that these represent enhanced forms of normal reactions. Limited social skills among the students of unaccepted behaviour influence a quality of their relationship with their peers and teachers. "Although teachers should react to students' behaviour the same as to the behaviour of every other person, still their reactions should be *toned down* or *cold* to a certain degree" (Kranjić, 2002, p. 30). Properly directed teaching process reduces, guides and relieves many negative social factors that lead young people into the world of unaccepted behaviour.

A teaching process directed at a student of unaccepted behaviour represents a possibility for preventing unacceptable behaviour. The primary aim of the teaching process directed at a student of unaccepted behaviour refers to guiding students to discovering their own talents and spheres of interest – guiding students to self-fulfilment. The teaching process presupposes a knowledge level diagnosis and serves as a detection of problems related to student behaviour. In accordance with *The Riyadh Guidelines,* and in order to prevent unacceptable student behaviour, "schools should pay attention to teaching basic values and respect for student personal and cultural identity; it is also necessary to work on providing a positive emotional support for the young and understanding for their cultural as well as other differences; to provide information and counselling in view of professional training and professional development, as well as to work on planning and implementing out-of-curriculum activities interesting for the young in cooperation with different organisations and associations from the community" (Miković, 2004, p. 322). Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize a two-way communication and establish other communication connections as well – circle, wheel, chain and other combinations.

Students are expected to make their own decisions independently and form fully aware and positive, as well as self-critical, image of himself/herself, to respect other people's opinions and to learn cooperatively with other students. Teacher's task is to help students overcome difficulties and develop skills that will encourage making quality relations within a community and boost their feeling of satisfaction. Self-realisation is achieved through curriculum as well as students' aspiration to basic human values. This problem seen in a wider social context includes a couple of levels of preventive action. According to Milosavljević, "this is the case of general prevention (creating better conditions for children development and raising life standard), specific prevention (activities and measures directed towards a risky group of children), and special prevention (that can be identified with social and criminal law protection of juvenile persons)" (Milosavljević, 2003, p. 128). Outcomes of these social mechanisms are prevention of unacceptable behaviour in student

age and a potential development of any other deviant form of actions. So, it can be concluded that a quality educational system is one of the preventive measures against the occurrence and recurrence of criminal forms of behaviour.

Prevention of unacceptable behaviour among students presumes a planned and organised didactical, methodical, pedagogical and psychological teacher training in order to be better equipped to work with students of unacceptable behaviour (teachers are expected to carefully plan and perform teaching process, determine learning outcomes and manage class, as well as to show enthusiasm and belief in their students) (Kovačević, 2015). Teaching skill for working with the students of unacceptable behaviour in class is a complex term that comprises many elements such as: ability to create favourable class climate, solve incident situations and motivate students, two-way communication, discipline management. Therefore, it is obligatory to enter the work with the students of unacceptable behaviour gradually, which means that teachers can create conditions for quality social interaction of students only through mutually defined rules and professionally and pedagogically maintained discipline.

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