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**PSYCHO-SOCIO-AFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN
THROUGH SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

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Abstract

Psycho-social-behavioral assessments have the role of establishing the gap between chronological age and mental age in various areas of development, help to design a personalized work program as a starting point for behavioral intervention, indicate inappropriate behaviors and guide parents and specialists in their process of communicating with the child. The SDS system is a complementary program to the compulsory school curriculum, and in addition to the activities provided in the compulsory curriculum, deadly activities can be supplemented with those aimed at the psycho-social-affective sphere and are an opportunity to educate proactive social behavior of children. The present research was conducted on a sample of 300 children aged 9-10 years from Arad County, and the aim was to find out their mental and social-affective level. In this sense, we opted for the Psycho-social Behavior Test, the Preaga test and a questionnaire of social and behavioral skills. After analyzing the answers, we found out that less than half of the tested subjects have a good ability to cooperate in a group that they are not communicative, and their level of creativity is low. The ability to pay attention is good only in the first minutes of activity after which it gradually decreases. A large number of children are not responsible for the tasks they have to perform and hyperactivity is often encountered at home and at school.

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1. Introduction

Understanding each area of development (physical, cognitive and social-emotional) contributes to the formulation of the child's "portrait", which is useful for assessing the immediate and permanent characteristics of the child's abilities and behavior. Like physical health, mental health is just as important at every stage of life, and we as adults need to make sure that we provide children with an emotional balance that will result in rational behavior that manifests itself as well as possible naturally in different situations. By mental health we mean the way we think, feel, act, communicate with those around us, but also how we relate to those around us. It reflects our ability to balance sadness and happiness (to enjoy the good things, to accept and approach the bad things, to have normal and comfortable relationships with those around us). Just as things can go wrong with the heart, lungs, or other organs, things can go wrong with our brains, affecting our emotional and mental state. (<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/health/mental-emotional-health/what-is-mental-health-.html>). U.N.I.C.E.F. underlines the fact that between 10-20% of children worldwide suffer from some kind of mental disorder and these are largely due to insufficient physical exercise (Baena-Morales et al., 2022, p. 1591). For example, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most common neuropsychiatric disorder during childhood, affecting about 5% of the pediatric population (Alamolhoda et al., 2021). The sedentary behavior adopted by children and especially by adolescents at the expense of psychomotor activities is associated with an increased risk of depressive symptoms at the age of 18 (Gonzales-Serrano et al., 2022). There are studies that show that there are connections between physical and mental exercise that a constant physical activity seems to influence the cognitive performance of even children with mental retardation (D'isanto & Di Tore, 2016, p. 1100).

It is important to take into account the development of emotional intelligence which is characterized by 4 skills (the ability to perceive emotions, evaluate them, regulate emotions and perceive certain feelings), and an athlete who has such intelligence is more likely to use psychological skills and techniques in both training and competition (Mitić et al., 2020). Imagination, creative thinking, but also the ability to select and systematize the information received, are skills that are formed in school, under the guidance and supervision of teachers who are responsible for their evolution.). It is known that all sports activities improve the physical level and mental health, but at the same time they also have an impact on social ties, relationships and social attitude (Cszupich, 2020, p. 2875). General well-being is adapted to the interaction of physiological, psychological and social factors that have a cause-and-effect relationship on health (Ardelean et al., 2022). Motivation has an important role, the intrinsic one being based on the individual's desire to engage in activities that rely upon the satisfaction of basic needs (Wikman et al., 2018). Educational institutions suggest that schools must be a space where health is promoted, protected and cultivated, contributing to the well-being and development of students' socio-emotional and cognitive skills (Júnio da Silva et al., 2022).

As Dopfner (2000, p. 11) points out, some children are more active than others, more agitated and impulsive, or may have difficulty concentrating on pregnancy. With age, the ability to concentrate and pay attention increases. From a psychological point of view, attention is a form of psychic life, the possibilities of concentrating attention varying greatly from one individual to another and being an expression of the whole personality. Around the age of 10-12, children begin to organize tasks more

mature and independent than in childhood. Memory and attention take on new dimensions at this age and their education is done by stimulating the child's interest in certain activities and by developing the desire to complete a certain activity. Thus, a series of qualities of knowledge are developed, such as: careful observation, attention, the unfolding of ideas, imagination. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize one's own emotions and those of others, to know what it means to feel good, to be happy, cheerful, sad, and angry. In addition, it involves knowing how to move from negative to positive emotions. It refers to the emotional awareness and emotional control skills that ensure a balance between the affective and the rational plane, able to provide a state of long-term mental comfort (Aliman, 2014, pp. 1-2).

Cszupich (2020, p. 2875) says that in recent years the level of importance of sport has increased, this being expressed through the increasing involvement of children and young people in various sports initiatives and clubs that create new opportunities to practice sports for both young people and adults. It is based on the idea that all sports activities improve physical fitness and mental health, but also have an impact on social relationships, relationships and social attitudes. The principles and mechanisms on which sport is based have an educational and motivating value, sport becoming a factor of social development. Sports in general "can be a means of great value because it is often seen as a facilitator of pleasure and fun in both girls and boys" (Rodriguez Macias et al., 2021), the physical education teacher being put in front of a difficult challenge to make the children enjoy sports. The promotion and development of physical and sports activities and the importance of emphasizing its true educational value, is certainly one of the signs of innovation in today's society, this issue can be introduced in many social, cultural and educational contexts able to meet the needs of our society (D'isanto & Di Tore, 2016, p. 1100).

The "school after school" system (SC) has emerged and developed from various educational and family needs and has proven over time to be beneficial in many ways. This system offers students an extra opportunity to socialize, to interact in various ways, to learn to manage different situations and last but not least to spend their time in a pleasant way, by participating in sports activities, games and competitions that strengthen their health, develop them harmoniously and give them emulation and personal and group satisfaction.

The School after school system, through the activities it carries out in a community, contributes to the development of the child on all these levels, being a good opportunity to act in order to take advantage of the opened windows of personal development at the age of 9-10 years old. Perseverance, patience, courage, initiative, subordination of individual interests to collective ones, modesty, observance of the rules established in the group must be the main objectives depending on which dynamic games will be selected, establishing the requirements for their performance. At the age under discussion (9- 10 years old), the main means used by teachers in the educational act and accepted by children, is the game, being their main way to communicate, experiment and learn (Cohen, 2012, p. 17). Extracurricular activities give children opportunities to interact with teachers and peers in different activities that are not part of the school program but that are of interest to children and can also support the development of self-regulation and control of their own impulses (Vandell et al., 2021).

2. Problem Statement

The discipline of Physical Education is recognized for its contribution to the education of children on multiple levels. In Romania, the number of hours of physical education provided in the school curriculum (2 hours / week) is not enough for the optimal development of children from a physical, mental and social-affective point of view. We consider that it is necessary to introduce some psychodynamic activities (through the S.D.S. program), in which, with the help of appropriate methods and means, the teacher will be able to transmit to the children a series of information and knowledge to help them develop harmoniously physically and mentally and to integrate as easily as possible into a society that is constantly changing.

3. Research Questions

The questions that this research aims to answer are:

- i. What is the level of mental and social-affective development of children aged 9-10 in Arad County;
- ii. Is this appropriate for long-term harmonious development?
- iii. What can be the requirements, objectives, contents, forms of organization of an ameliorating intervention, through a program of psycho-dynamic activities in the School after school system, at this age, for the fruiting of some windows of personal development of children?

4. Purpose of the Xstudy

The purpose of the study is to determine, by means of measurement and evaluation/determination, the psychological and socio-affective level of the students aged 9-10 from the county of Arad as scientific basis for planning psycho-motional activities in the After School Programme for redeeming the development windows that are open at this age.

5. Research Methods

For an efficient planning of the after school activities, I considered necessary to determine, by means of standardized and valid instruments, the psychological and socio-affective level of the students aged 9-10. The subjects of the research were 300 students from 5 schools from the county of Arad: 29 boys and 32 girls from “Mihai Eminescu” Secondary School, 25 boys and 28 girls from “Nicolae Balcescu” Secondary School, 33 boys and 33 girls from “Aron Cotrus” Secondary School, 55 boys and 52 girls from “Dimitrie Tichindeal” National College, 9 boys and 10 girls from “Caius Iacob” Secondary School. I have to mention here that the parents signed the consent for their children to take part in the research. The assessment was done in the previously mentioned schools in February 2021- January 2022.

The Praga Test/ The Test of Distributive Attention was used for studying the distribution and fluctuation of attention and determining the level of the development of the sense of observation. It was delivered to 300 students, the subjects of the research. For rendering the results the score for each part of the test was calculated emphasizing the lowering or increasing possibility of the sense of observation. The final score was also calculated according to the total number of the right answers (Mihețiu, 2022, p. 63).

The survey of social and behavioral skills was delivered to the 300 students. It contains 55 questions with three possible answers: never, sometimes, and often. The purpose of this survey is to measure how often the student expresses some social abilities and which is the dominant behavior. The answer was given by ticking the right answer: 0-never, 1- sometimes, 2- often. The questions of the survey for analyzing the social abilities were in such a way structured to emphasize four features of the subjects: cooperative, assertive, responsible, and self-possessed.

The adapted test of psycho-social behavior targets the evaluation of social qualities and personality features which I used to determine the psychosocial profile of the students' behavior. It was applied on 36 students out of 300, who have chosen the After School Programme. The test was adapted according to the original test by Zlate and Zlate (1982) in which the psycho-individual features are represented graphically, offering a precise and clear image of the evolution of different psychic functions (pp. 72-73).

I have operationalized this test by the use of a question that has been adapted to their level of understanding has been written in capital letters: "How very much, a lot, so and so, a little and very little is involved each student during the classes?", that revealed the personality features developed by the students during the sports classes. With the use of Likert scale (see Table 1) that has been adapted to the students' level of understanding so that to offer fair answers, each student expressing his appreciation level for the six personality features for each of his classmates.

The analysis of the answers for each subject in particular was done according to the arithmetic mean regarding the value of appreciation over the six personality features. The key of the profile has been done as follows:

- i. The features that are over three are considered positive ones;
- ii. The features that are straight at number three are not taken into account because they mean that the opinions of the subjects are divergent;
- iii. The features that are below three are considered negative ones.

Table 1. Adapting of Likert scale

Nr. Crt.	Academical presentation	Presentation for the students' comprehension	Shortcut in the tabel	Score
1.	To a very large extent	Very much	to which it corresponds letter A	5
2.	To a large extent	A lot	to which it corresponds letter B	4
3.	To some extent	So and so	to which it corresponds letter C	3
4.	To a small extent	A little	to which it corresponds letter D	2
5.	To a very small extent	Very little	towhich it corresponds letter E	1

The psycho-social behavioral test aims the evaluation of social qualities and personality features with the help of which I determined the psychosocial profile of the students' behavior.

6. Findings

1) Analysis and interpretation of the results of the Praga test:

From a number of 300 tests it was found that 129 students (43%) have developed a decreasing distributive attention, most of the right answers being associated with the first stage, after that, the number began to decrease constantly until the last stage or among the stages II, III, IV a balance or a slight fluctuation of the right answers could be noticed.

According to the number of the right answers found in the first stage, there was a minimal number of 6 correct answers and a maximum number of 17. To those 129 students who have shown a decreasing level of the distributive attention during testing in the stages II, III and IV, the number of the correct answers lowered consequently (or with slight fluctuations) with 2-8 answers/stage, some of the subjects getting to register a minimum of 2 points in the last stage. From this step I have reached the conclusion that, after the first stage, they started to feel tired and their distributive attention has already been affected.

The other subjects that have been tested, meaning 57% had an oscillating path of the four stages, part of them maintaining an average steady in finding the required numbers with insignificant differences of 1-5 answers/stage (progressive or regressive) and at a number of only 3 students I have registered a progress in gathering correct answers from the first stage until the fourth.

For the final result of this test for each of the subjects I have gathered the number of all the correct answers from the four stages (see table 2).

Table 2. Registering the number of tests according to the number of answers/test and the percentage related to it

Percentage (%)	100	90	80	75	70	60	50	40	30	25	20	10	0
Number of answers/test	89	63	58	55	52	48	45	41	38	36	34	30	10
Number of test	0	0	3	14	13	21	27	35	55	44	49	37	2

2) Analysis and interpretation of results of the survey regarding social and behavioral skills:

In the first stage of the interpretation, for each question the answers given by the parents have been gathered and a percentage analysis has been done. Regarding the level of cooperation among students and the people around them, one can notice that less than half of them have the same behavior, most of them do not respond promptly or efficiently to the task they have at home or in other communities. In this regard, we can give some examples from the parents' appreciations:

- i. 48.33% of the students spend their free time reasonable, a great percentage of them (44,36%) being unable to manage their time this way;
- ii. Only a small percentage 29.33% of the students often help with chores without being asked. The great majority (56.66%) do this only sometimes, because, we suppose, and that the responsibilities were not given precisely and constantly. They should be given tasks/chores to accomplish according to their age level. As long as the children are given tasks regularly, they will get used to them and, in the end, will get involved in these chores without being asked.
- iii. 21% praise their friends or siblings. This behavior can be noticed by the members of those families that have brothers or sisters or by the teachers. The percentage of those who praise their friends is small, the majority (54.66%) do this sometimes only and 24.33%, never do this.

The recognition and appreciation of the positive aspects of the people around us are some aspects that can be nurtured from an early age by specific means of sports.

The courage of expressing their personal opinion in order to achieve personal benefits has been remarked to a great number of students. The following aspects have been noticed:

- i. a percentage of 47.33% of the subjects often join a group without being asked, curiosity and the need of interaction with people around them being typical for the childhood age, 16% of the subjects don't do the first step for joining a group, but wait until they are invited to do that or spend their time alone.
- ii. 35.33% of the students have the tendency to start a conversation rather than wait for others to talk first. These are the students who usually launch dialogues, propose activities and games.
- iii. a small percentage (14.66%) accept most of the times their friends' proposals for playing while the majority of them (75%) do this sometimes only.
- iv. the fact that more than half of the subjects (51.33%) often have self-confidence in different social situations like parties or going out together is a positive thing. They are willing to take part in interactive activities, to develop and to acquire new things and knowledge. Still, there is a percentage of 16% that avoid to take part in collective activities, one of the reasons being the lack of self-confidence, as they think they cannot do the activities as good as their peers.

The degree of responsibility that the children of this age can have is deduced from their reactions to different situations like the following ones:

- i. 38% -often ask for information or help from a shop keeper;
- ii. 35%- often take a stance regarding some rules at home that seem to be unfair;
- iii. 47, 66%- often refuse politely the exaggerated demands of other people.

The percentages described above show us the fact that less than half of the subjects questioned have a strong and responsible position when they have to face different situations in the family or the community. Their instinct doubled by the education received in the family and their own capacity of filtering the information, determines them to refuse with strong reasons some people, requests or activities.

Safety and self-control are some characteristics of those children who can master their interior impulses and control their facts in different situations within a group.

It has been observed that a percentage of 40% of the children react properly when they are hit or pushed by other children and 45.66% often end calmly the misunderstandings with the members of the family, 68% of them succeed in mastering their anger when they argue with other children.

There is still a percentage of 13.60% that cannot master their feelings and avoid conflicts.

7. Conclusions

The analysis and interpretation of the results of this study reveal the following conclusions:

- i. the level of psycho-social behavior of the children aged 9-10 can be established by the assessment of social and personality features using the test of psycho-social behavior. Thus, it was established that there are multiple plans to follow at school in order to improve the

psycho-social behavior at this age. The arguments sustaining this conclusion are the following: less than half of the subjects tested (27.77%) have a certain capacity of cooperation within a group (10 subjects out of 36) and that 47.22% of them are not communicative and do not cooperate with the others during sports activities, the results signaling a medium aggression to 25% of the subjects and 50% of them show an authoritarian behavior towards their colleagues, popularity among students being obvious, 15 subjects (41.66%) being seen as role-models; it was established that the level of creativity is not very high (44.44%) having not enough experience for acting creatively in different game-situations.

- ii. The results registered at the Praga test emphasize the fact that the students have shown a good capacity of distributive attention during the first stage of the test and after that, during the second until the fourth stage tiredness/fatigue began to show up, their distributive attention being thus affected. The psycho-motional activities that have been properly selected can determine the improvement of the concentration capacity and keeping attention for a longer period of time.
- iii. The level of social abilities of the students aged 9-10 is poor and has to be improved because some of them do not cooperate within the family or friends and are not responsible for the tasks they have to accomplish. I have also found out that there is a percentage of 8.66% of the children that have shown an introvert behavior unlike those with an outgoing behavior (12.66%) according to the situation, and hyperactivity is often met at home and at school. The diversity of motional activities during the After School Programme, the use of thematic games, teamwork, receiving tasks to accomplish, can be some of the methodological solutions that contribute to the psycho-affective and social development of the students at this age.

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