SPECIJALNA EDUKACIJA I REHABILITACIJA

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Sadržaj

Contents

Psychometric study of a measurement scale for teaching social skills to students with special educational needs

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Introduction. Teaching social skills to students with special educational needs is essential for their personal development and integration into society. *Objectives.* The purpose of this study was to validate a measurement instrument for the elements involved in teaching and learning social skills in students with special educational needs. *Methods.* Two studies were conducted to accomplish this objective. We first performed exploratory research on half of the sample consisting of 166 Greek teachers working in primary and secondary special and general education schools in the Western Macedonia region. Then, we conducted a confirmatory study on a sample of 185 Greek teachers who were also working in primary and secondary special and general education schools in the same region. All education professionals work with students with mild special educational needs. The instrument used was an "ad hoc" questionnaire consisting of 17 items of a 5-point Likert scale, to which different analyses were applied to verify its validity and reliability. *Results.* An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) showed a total of 3 factors corresponding to the "Preparedness of Teachers in Teaching Social Skills", the "Elements of Influence on Teachers' Suitability in Teaching Social Skills", and the "Elements that play an important role in Teaching Social Skills". Subsequently, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out, through which the results derived from the AFE were ratified. *Conclusion.* The findings reveal an instrument that is adequate in validity and reliability, in accordance with the literature, demonstrating that the model is consistent and coherent with the initial theoretical assumptions.

Keywords: validation of scale, teachers' preparedness, teaching social skills, EFA, CFA

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Introduction

In recent decades, various research studies and clinical applications have proven the intense interest that is now manifested in the social skills of children and adolescents (Pham et al., 2019). Acknowledging the limitations and challenges of measuring and assessing social skills in individuals with special educational needs (SEN) is crucial. These limitations include the heterogeneous nature of the disorder, individual differences in social abilities and challenges, and the influence of external factors such as environment and support systems on social skill development. Teaching social skills to students with special educational needs is essential for their personal development and integration into society. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2022), people with mild intellectual disabilities are characterized by a general social immaturity that extends primarily to social interactions, conversations, language, and communication. It is often difficult to understand social stimuli from peers, just as it is difficult to regulate emotions and behavior. They are clearly unaware of the danger they face in social situations and are very likely to be manipulated by someone because of their dysfunctional social crisis. Different methods and strategies can be used to help students with special educational needs acquire and improve their social skills, such as cooperative learning activities, peer tutoring, and social skills groups. Cooperative learning activities provide opportunities for students with special educational needs, including those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), to work together in small groups, promoting social interaction and collaborative skills. Peer tutoring involves pairing students with special educational needs with peers who can provide support and guidance in academic and social tasks, fostering positive relationships and skill development. Social skills groups create a structured environment for individuals to practice and learn social skills in a supportive setting facilitated by trained professionals. Enhancing social skills teaching to students with special educational needs requires a multidisciplinary approach, ongoing assessment, and a commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Tailoring instruction to meet each student's unique needs and providing consistent support is essential for their success in developing social skills. Research on the problem of social skills for students with special educational needs has highlighted the challenges they face in developing and maintaining positive peer relationships, understanding social cues, and engaging in appropriate social behaviors (Marsh et al., 2017). This research has also identified the significant impact that social skills deficits can have on their academic performance, overall well-being, and future success. Furthermore, it has shed light on the importance of addressing these social skills deficits through targeted interventions and support in inclusive educational settings.

More precisely, the evaluation of existing instruments for assessing social skills in students with special educational needs is vital for ensuring accurate

and effective assessment practices. Examples of instrument construction that are similar include the Autism Spectrum Screening Questionnaire (ASSQ; Ehlers et al., 1999), the Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS; Constantino & Gruber, 2005), and the Teacher Observation of Classroom Adaptation-Checklist (TOCA-C; Koth et al., 2009). Given the wide range of instruments available, it is important for practitioners to carefully consider the psychometric properties of these measures, including reliability and validity. Furthermore, practitioners should assess the transparency of the psychometric properties, such as content validity, fairness, and substantive validity. This analysis is necessary to ensure that the instruments used are appropriate for evaluating social skills in students with special educational needs. In conclusion, when assessing social skills in students with special educational needs, practitioners should exercise caution and thoroughly evaluate the psychometric properties of existing measurement instruments to ensure accurate and reliable assessment.

Merrell and Gimpel (2014) justify the focus on social skills both in identifying several important aspects of social skills and in understanding the contribution of socio-emotional development to individuals and society. They also note the difficulty of establishing a universal definition of social skills since the term is applied to various scientific fields (e.g., psychology, sociology, pedagogy, psychiatry) and includes other concepts (e.g., personality, mental potential, perception, communication, interaction with the environment, etc.) (Merrell & Gimpel, 2014). Nevertheless, in an attempt to delineate the content of social skills, Radley and Dart (2022) defined social skills as the behaviors that are most reinforced and socially acceptable in social settings, considering the context in which they occur. Thus, social and cultural variables are crucial in defining the norms and expectations of social skills. To this end, the ability to successfully complete a social task requires a certain class of behaviors, characterized as social skills (e.g., communication, play, work together) (McDaniel et al., 2017). According to Sørlie et al. (2021), social skills improve from childhood to adolescence. An effective method for teaching proper social and communication skills as well as improving social self-efficacy is social skills training by human trainers. Human social skills training constitutes a significant way of acquiring social interaction norms (Tanaka et al., 2016; 2023). Also, Barwick (2011) notes that social skills are characterized by culturally defined behaviors that are acquired over time, on the one hand, and are in direct interaction with external social factors, such as the status and characteristics of each group, social position, individual characteristics and their reinforcement to the individual from the social environment. Social skills prove to be extremely useful in an organized society, as people are confronted daily with social situations that they have to manage, such as situations of interpersonal problem-solving that require the demonstration of specific social skills. According to Spence (2003), there is always the possibility of a person's inability to respond to

a particular situation in the most socially appropriate way, as various cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors can influence it. Schools, teachers, parents, and peers have significant problems when working with children and teens who lack social skills (Gresham, 2016; Merrell & Gimpel, 2014). Among these children are those with mild educational needs who face multiple difficulties and problems in terms of social skills (Adair et al., 2015; Hebbeler & Spiker, 2016; Kontu & Pirttimaa, 2016). Mild educational disabilities, as stated by ICD11 (World Health Organization, 2022), include limitations in present functioning within the context of community environments typical of the individual's age peers and culture, cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as differences in communication, sensory, motor, and behavioral factors.

Wiley and Sipersteint (2015) list groups of mild educational needs as high-frequency disabilities since these are more common than other disabilities (e.g., multiple disabilities). Children with special educational needs present a range of difficulties of cognitive, academic, social, and personal type (Garrote et al., 2017), also regarding specific teaching topics (Pérez-Valverde et al., 2021). The problems of social skills that they show are varied, such as problems of social interaction and relationships with peers. It is common for these people to experience rejection from their peers. Equally common are the problems they face in their relationships with teachers, as well as school adjustment problems. Particularly noticeable is a series of behavioral problems that are sometimes internalized (internalizing) and sometimes externalized (externalizing) (Peterson et al., 2016; Salavera et al., 2019). Such behaviors not only hinder children's academic performance but usually cause general problems in the school environment, as they usually lack bargaining skills and collaboration. Thus, teaching social skills to children with special educational needs through several methods (Tohara, 2021) constitutes a challenge both for the teachers themselves and for the educational system in general (Kasari et al., 2016). Theoretical and methodological aspects of social skills for students with special educational needs provide a foundation for understanding the underlying principles and strategies that can be used to support the social development of these students in inclusive educational settings. These aspects encompass theories and research on social skills acquisition, the impact of peer relationships on social development, and evidence-based interventions that have proven effective in promoting positive social outcomes for students with special educational needs. Practical application in inclusive educational settings involves translating these theoretical and methodological aspects into actionable strategies and interventions that can be implemented within the classroom.

Methods

Sample

The instruments included in the sample were likely chosen based on their relevance to the research question or topic being investigated (Glod et al., 2015). Moreover, investigators have considered the measures selected in previous studies or the common use of tools by a particular research group when deciding which instruments to include in their sample. In addition, the researchers have chosen the instruments based on their psychometric properties and validity in assessing social skills in individuals with SEN.

In order to validate the research tool concerning the construction of a measurement scale for teaching social skills to students with special educational needs, two quantitative studies were conducted. More specifically, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on a sample of 166 Greek teachers working in primary and secondary special and general education schools in the Western Macedonia region, and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted on a sample of 185 Greek teachers with the same characteristics. Thus, the factor analysis model was formed using EFA and ratified through a relevant CFA (Kourkounasiou & Skordilis, 2014; Schneider et al., 2020).

In assessing social skills in individuals with special educational needs, it was important for researchers to consistently report the psychometric properties of the measurement tools used in their study. It is crucial to consider contextual factors, such as educational authorities, local service delivery needs, and population fit (gender, age, etc.), to determine whether an academic instrument is suitable for a specific administrative context. These factors may vary depending on the research study or evaluation being conducted. However, it can be inferred that the sample type would likely consist of individuals with special educational needs, as the sources mention studies (Shattuck et al., 2012) and assessments conducted on individuals with SEN or disabilities. The choice of the framework will be based on the specific characteristics of the sample population, such as age, language skills, and gender. The researchers conducting the study or evaluation were required to select the most suitable academic instrument based on the specific characteristics of the sample population. In addition, it is crucial to consider the usability of an academic instrument.

Researchers informed the participants about the instruments' purpose and their contribution to the study. Clear communication with participants, including teachers, was essential to ensure their understanding and willingness to participate. They were provided with clear and concise explanations about the purpose of filling in the instrument and how their input would contribute to research or evaluation. Finally, the researchers obtained the necessary approvals and permissions from schools before conducting the research.

Sample of Study 1

The EFA study sample consisted of 166 teachers working in schools attended by students with mild special educational needs. The sample was collected using non-probabilistic sampling methods. More specifically, convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used, as the research tool was distributed directly to the teachers and forwarded by the school administrations to the subjects. The demographic and professional characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. Specifically, the researchers employed a combination of methods, such as school visits, interviews, and questionnaires, to collect data from the participants. It is important to note that the sample was chosen purposefully for a specific purpose, indicating that the researchers selected participants who could provide valuable insights and data. The researcher and two research assistants visited the schools to gather data from the participants. It was vital for researchers to carefully consider the characteristics of the sample population, such as age and gender, when selecting the most appropriate instrument. Researchers had a clear understanding of the methodology behind selecting instruments and creating samples, which ensured transparency and rigor in current research.

Table 1

Study 1 Sample Characteristics

		N	%
Gender	Male	84	50.60%
	Female	82	49.40%
Age	≤ 25	4	2.40%
	26-33	23	13.90%
	34-41	58	34.90%
	42-49	42	25.30%
	≥ 50	39	23.50%
	≤ 10	46	27.70%
Years of service	11-20	73	44.00%
	21-30	26	15.70%
	≥ 50	21	12.70%
Working structure	Special education	84	50.60%
	General education	140	84.3
Education	University graduate	158	95.20%
	Training studies	83	50.00%
	Master's degree	78	47.00%
	PhD	10	6.00%
Students with Special Educational Needs	Yes	116	69.90%
	No	50	30.10%

		N	%
Type of Special Educational Needs	Special Learning Disabilities	119	71.70%
	Speech and Communication Disorders	45	38.80%
	Emotional Disorders and Behavioral Problems	35	21.10%
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	71	42.80%
	Mild Mental Disability	32	19.30%
	Autism Spectrum Disorders	22	13.30%

Sample of Study 2

The sample of 185 teachers used for the CFA was also collected using convenience and snowball sampling. The demographic and professional characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Study 2 Sample Characteristics

		N	%
Gender	Male	85	45.90%
	Female	100	54.10%
Age	≤ 25	9	4.90%
	26-33	30	16.20%
	34-41	55	29.70%
	42-49	48	25.90%
	≥ 50	43	23.20%
	≤ 10	54	29.20%
Years of service	11-20	65	35.10%
	21-30	43	23.20%
	≥ 50	23	12.40%
Working structure	Special education	79	42.70%
	General education	170	91.90%
Education	University graduate	176	95.10%
	Training studies	102	55.10%
	Master's degree	91	49.20%
	PhD	17	9.20%

		N	%
Students with Special Educational Needs	Yes	123	66.50%
	No	62	33.50%
Type of Special Educational Needs	Special Learning Disabilities	132	71.40%
	Speech & Communication Disorders	49	26.50%
	Emotional Disorders & Behavioral Problems	41	22.20%
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	83	44.90%
	Mild Mental Disability	44	23.80%
	Autism Spectrum Disorders	34	18.40%

Instrument

Intentional question selection allows researchers and educators to have more control over the assessment process, ensuring that it serves their instructional goals and the unique needs of their students. This approach can lead to more effective teaching and learning outcomes by providing targeted and relevant assessments. In research studies, it is common to choose factors that are relevant and reflect the construct being measured. In the case of measuring teachers' ability to teach social skills, researchers may have selected factors such as teacher training in social skills, classroom strategies used to promote social skills, student outcomes related to social skills, and teacher self-assessment of their own ability in teaching social skills. The selection of these factors is likely to be guided by existing literature and theories on effective teaching of social skills, as well as consultation with experts in the field. By using a questionnaire that includes factors such as teacher-related factors, school-related factors, and contextual variables, researchers can gather data on various aspects that contribute to a teacher's ability to teach social skills. The research tool of the present study was created "ad hoc", and it includes 17 items of concern. The basis for the selected questions was the teacher's ability to teach social skills. They were asked to rate the importance of social skills for students with special educational needs, the challenges they face in developing these skills, and the effectiveness of current interventions in addressing these challenges (Table 3):

1. Teacher's ability to teach social skills (4 items).
2. Factors that can affect the teacher's competence in teaching social skills (7 items).
3. Factors that play an important role in teaching social skills (6 items).

All data aim to capture the teachers' perceptions on the aforementioned issues. More specifically, the degree of agreement of the respondents with the developing proposals is reflected, and, therefore, the answers are attributed to a 5-point ascending Likert scale ranging from 1= totally disagree to 5= totally disagree.

Table 3

Research Tool Items

Teacher's ability to teach social skills
Note to what extent you agree with each of the following statements:
1. I feel familiar with the content of the concept of "social skills".
2. I am able to identify and recognize the social difficulties of my students.
3. I feel capable of teaching social skills effectively.
4. I would like to improve my ability to teach social skills.

Factors that can affect the teacher's competence in teaching social skills
Note to what extent you agree that each of the following factors can affect the teacher's competence in teaching social skills.
1. Studies.
2. Teaching Experience.
3. Collaboration with other teachers.
4. Collaboration with mental health professionals.
5. Attendance of training programs.
6. Study of scientific material (books, articles, etc.).
7. Personal opinion regarding the role of the teacher in teaching social skills.

Factors that play an important role in teaching social skills
Note to what extent you agree with each of the following statements:
1. The role of the school in the psychosocial development of students is important.
2. Teachers have a primary role in teaching social skills.
3. The family has the sole responsibility for teaching social skills.
4. Mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists) have the greatest responsibility for teaching social skills.
5. Teaching social skills becomes more effective when it is carried out exclusively by the class teacher.
6. Teaching social skills proves more effective when done collaboratively by classroom teachers and mental health professionals.

Research procedure

A sample of teachers from inclusive educational settings was selected for the research. These teachers were provided with the research tool, which consisted of 17 items related to the social skills of students with special educational needs. They were asked to rate the importance of social skills for these students, the challenges they face in developing these skills, and the effectiveness of current interventions. The findings

from the research demonstrated that teachers recognized the significance of social skills for students with special educational needs. They also acknowledged the challenges these students face in developing these skills and expressed a need for more effective interventions. The results of the research highlight the crucial role that teachers play in supporting students with special educational needs, particularly in developing their social skills. This underscores the importance of providing teachers with adequate training and resources to effectively support students with SEN in developing their social skills.

Data analysis

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied to construct factors concerning the adequacy of teachers in teaching social skills to children with special educational needs and elements that show an important role in teaching social skills. The main function of EFA is to gather an extended number of hierarchical variables in a perceptible entity that studies concepts based on an average or cumulative scale (Taherdoost et al., 2022).

For this purpose, Pearson correlation matrices were used alongside the "optimum implementation of parallel analysis" (Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011) in order to determine the number of factors. The "Maximum robust likelihood" method was used for the extraction of common factors, with the use of the "Robust Oblimin" rotation criterion (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2019), while the factors' internal consistency was investigated through the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The software used was that of the statistical package SPSS (v26).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is used to determine whether an EFA model results, which show a redefined relationship framework between the research items variables, are, in practice, confirmed through the structural equations model (Kourkounasiou & Skordilis, 2014).

In this sense, structural equations models were carried out with the use of SPSS Amos, and the fit of the model was assessed by using the following statistics: the χ^2/degrees of freedom test (Schober & Vetter, 2020), the comparative fit index (CFI), the incremental fit index (IFI), the normed fit index (NFI), the Tuker-Lewis index (TLI) (Byrne, 1994; 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999), the root mean square residual (RMR)), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and the expected cross-validation index (ECVI).

Results

Study 1: Exploratory factor analysis

Moving on to the results concerning the Exploratory Factor Analysis, it initially appears that it yields three factors, which explain 67.64% of the total variance. The factor loadings were obtained through the Exploratory Robust

Maximum Likelihood (RML) method. The procedure for determining the number of dimensions was that of the Optimal implementation of Parallel Analysis (PA) (Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011). The technique of factor analysis allows encoding a set of variables into a smaller number of aggregate factors based on their linear correlation (Brown, 2015). Applying the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) technique presupposes satisfactory sampling adequacy. In the present study, this was examined by using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (KMO). The index takes values from 0 to 1, and the closer to the unit is, the greater the adequacy of sampling, with a minimum acceptable value of .80. In this case, the Kaizer-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index, which informs about the appropriateness of using the Factor Analysis technique, is considered satisfactory as it is equal to .900. At the same time, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was performed, by using the χ^2 statistic, with the results of this leading to the rejection that the correlation matrix of the research data is the unitary matrix (p <.001) and therefore the data are suitable for the application of Exploratory Factor Analysis (Table 4). Regarding the composition of the factors resulting from the Exploratory Factor Analysis, it is initially noted that one element concerning the importance of the family environment for teaching social skills is excluded from the corresponding process as it presented a factor loading of less than .3.

Regarding the structure of the resulting factors, it is observed that the first of them, "Preparedness of Teachers in Teaching Social Skills", contains 8 items concerning the following:

1. The teachers' degree of familiarity with the content of the concept of "social skills".
2. Ability to identify and recognize students' social difficulties.
3. Ability to teach social skills effectively.
4. Intention to improve skills in teaching social skills.
5. Importance of adequate studies in teaching social skills.
6. Importance of teaching experience in teaching social skills.
7. Importance of working with other teachers in teaching social skills.
8. Importance of personal views on the role of the teacher in teaching social skills.

The second factor, "Elements of Influence on Teachers' Suitability in Teaching Social Skills", includes 3 items that relate to teachers' perceptions about the following subjects:

1. Importance of working with mental health professionals in teaching social skills.
2. Importance of attending training programs in teaching social skills.
3. Importance of studying scientific material in teaching social skills.

Finally, the third factor of the study, "Elements that Play an Important Role in Teaching Social Skills", consists of 5 items concerning the following subjects:

1. Importance of the school's role in students' psychosocial development.
2. Importance of the role of teachers in teaching social skills.
3. Importance of the role of mental health professionals in teaching social skills.
4. Importance of the role of classroom teachers in the effectiveness of teaching social skills.
5. Importance of the role of collaboration between classroom teachers and mental health professionals in the effectiveness of social skills teaching.

Table 4

Rotated Loading Matrix

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Item1	.876		
Item2	.739		
Item3	.885		
Item4	.366		
Item5	.781		
Item6	.749		
Item7	.455		
Item8	.497		
Item9		.637	
Item10		.856	
Item11		.497	
Item12			.738
Item13			.727
Item14			.579
Item15			.766
Item16			.787

At the same time, it appears that all factors, as well as the research tool as a total, present satisfactory internal consistency, as the corresponding Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are greater than the minimum acceptable limit of .6 (Table 5).

Table 5

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the EFA factors

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Preparedness of Teachers in Teaching Social Skills	.883
Elements of Influence on Teachers' Suitability in Teaching Social Skills	.698
Elements that Play an Important Role in Teaching	.697
Social Skills Total instrument	.841

Study 2: Confirmatory factor analysis

Presenting the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, it is initially emphasized that 4 items had to be eliminated because they were similar to more than one factor. The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis process are presented in Figure 1:

Figure 1

Confirmatory Factor Analysis
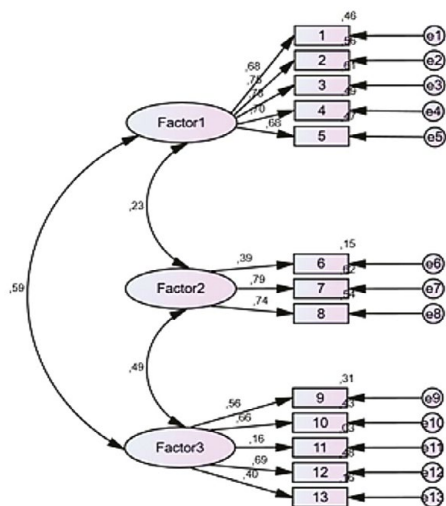
CFA Factor Loadings

Based on the presented results, it appears that the first factor includes 5 items concerning the "Preparedness of Teachers in Teaching Social Skills", the second factor includes 3 items concerning the "Elements of Influence on Teachers' Suitability in Teaching Social Skills", and the third factor includes

5 elements concerning the "Elements that Play an Important Role in Teaching Social Skills". The results of the diagnostic tests initially show a good fit of the data on the structural equation model, and the χ^2/DF ratio is lower than the limit of 3.84 and equal to 1.477. The results obtained through the RMSEA ratio are similar, which is lower than .05, signaling the good fit of the structural equations model. At the same time, the values of the comparative fit (CFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, and TLI) are significantly higher than .900 (Table 6), signaling the certainty of the good fit of the structural equations model.

Table 6

Model Fit Indices

χ^2	df	p	χ^2/df	CFI	IFI	NFI	NNFI(TLI)	RMSEA	ECVI
73.835	50	.016	1.477	.968	.969	.91	.95	.021	.869

Finally, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of all factors and total instrument are reduced for the CFA results, but in this case, they are also greater than the minimum acceptable limit of .6, signaling satisfactory internal consistency (Table 7).

Table 7

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the CFA factors

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Preparedness of Teachers in Teaching Social Skills	.855
Elements of Influence on Teachers' Suitability in Teaching Social Skills	.651
Elements that Play an Important Role in Teaching	.638
Social Skills Total instrument	.805

Discussion

Based on the above, the teachers believe that they play a key role in the social and emotional well-being of students, making it imperative to take a holistic approach to education (Payton et al., 2008). A holistic approach is not limited to cognitive teaching but aims to enhance the cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual development of students (Djambazova-Popordanoska, 2016). Therefore, general and special education teachers are challenged to create learning environments that support and promote both academic and social success (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008). As the majority of teachers acknowledge their lack of knowledge in teaching social skills, many of them argue that mental health professionals within the school context should play

a key role in children's socio-emotional development (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015). In addition to the above, some teachers believe that teaching social skills is not the school's responsibility. Dutton Tillery et al. (2010) treat student behavior as a feature of the developmental phase in which they find themselves and not as targets for intervention. Therefore, they believe that social behavior patterns should be learned at home, and it is the family's duty to ensure the acquisition and ownership of these behaviors (Vaughn et al., 2004).

Assessments of a child's social adequacy and social skills in applying the above methods are provided by various sources of information, such as parents, teachers, peers, outside observers, and the children themselves. Each type of information provision has its advantages and disadvantages, which is why, most of the time, the evaluation of a child's social skills is chosen to be done with the participation of multiple sources of information. In this way, multifaceted conclusions are drawn, and a complete picture of the child's social behavior is provided in all social contexts (Renk & Phares, 2004). Similarly, issues of reliability, validity, and effectiveness are inherent in each of the above evaluation methods, which is why researchers suggest collecting information from different sources, social contexts, and methods in order to form an accurate description of students' strengths and weaknesses. The combination of appropriate assessment methods will lead to the selection of the most effective intervention to address the specific target behavior that has been set, resulting in the gradual removal of the child's social deficits.

Conclusion

According to the research study, the instrument used focused on capturing teachers' perceptions of the importance of social skills for students with special educational needs and the challenges they face in developing these skills. The context of the study was within educational settings, specifically addressing the experiences and perspectives of teachers working with students with special educational needs. The present study aimed to validate a research tool that will be able to identify the adequacy of teachers in teaching social skills to children with special educational needs and the elements that have an important role in the aforementioned process. For this purpose, Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis techniques were applied to a set of 17 items concerning the above components. The results of the research revealed three factors that reflect the "Readiness of teachers and the importance of their competence in teaching social skills", the "Elements of influencing the adequacy of teachers in teaching social skills", and the "Elements that have an important role in teaching social skills", presenting a satisfactory goodness of fit. Regarding the readiness of teachers and the importance of their competence in teaching social skills, it is considered that elements concerning teachers' abilities determine it, as well as

their degree of competence in assessing students' social difficulties, while the role of cooperation between teachers and their increased academic level and their experience in teaching social skills should also be emphasized. At the same time, key elements that influence the adequacy of teachers in teaching social skills are cooperation with mental health professionals, attendance of respective training programs, and the continuous study of relevant scientific material. Finally, the role of the teachers and the mental health professionals is important in teaching social skills, as well as the cooperation between them.

Future research should replicate the current findings with other samples. Using the current data, researchers can identify potential factors that will influence the evolution of teacher perceptions over time and assess the correlation between this process and the increase in teacher ratings of students. It's probable that these processes are interrelated and impact each other. In conclusion, it is recommended that data from multiple sources be obtained to triangulate it most efficiently.

While the research tool used in this study provided valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of social skills for students with special educational needs, including those with ASD, there are a few considerations to take into account before recommending its use for future research purposes. Firstly, the sample size of teachers included in the study should be expanded to ensure a more representative population. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the research tool should be assessed to ensure its effectiveness in measuring teachers' perceptions accurately. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to include other stakeholders, such as parents and students, in future research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and interventions related to social skills in inclusive educational settings.

Based on the information provided, it is difficult to determine whether the data obtained clearly indicates that the research instrument used in this study is a useful tool for assessing teachers' perceptions of social skills for students with special educational needs. However, the results of the study suggest that the research instrument provided valuable insights into teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards inclusive education and their ability to support students with SEN in developing their social skills. The information provided does not explicitly indicate whether the metric characteristics of the research instrument speak to its usefulness in assessing teachers' perceptions accurately. However, it does mention that 17 items included in the instrument have information on reliability and validity. This suggests that the included research instrument is likely to have reliable and valid metric characteristics, which can contribute to its usefulness in accurately assessing teachers' perceptions of social skills in inclusive educational settings.

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Psihometrijsko proučavanje merne skale za nastavu socijalnih veština učenika sa posebnim obrazovnim potrebama

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Uvod: Podučavanje socijalnih veština učenika sa posebnim obrazovnim potrebama od suštinskog je značaja za njihov lični razvoj i integraciju u društvo. *Ciljevi:* Svrha ove studije je da se validira instrument za merenje elemenata uključenih u podučavanje i učenje socijalnih veština kod učenika sa posebnim obrazovnim potrebama. *Metod:* Da bi se postigao ovaj cilj, sprovedene su dve studije. Prvo, eksplorativna studija, sa polovinom uzorka, koja se sastoji od uzorka od 166 grčkih nastavnika koji rade u osnovnim i srednjim školama specijalnog i opšteg obrazovanja u regionu Zapadne Makedonije. Drugo, potvrdna studija, koja se sastoji od uzorka od 185 grčkih nastavnika koji takođe rade u osnovnim i srednjim školama specijalnog i opšteg obrazovanja u istom regionu. Svi prosvetni radnici rade sa učenicima sa blagim posebnim obrazovnim potrebama. Korišćeni instrument je bio „ad hoc" kreiran upitnik, koji se sastojao od 17 stavki po Likertovoj skali od 5 poena, na koji su primenjene različite analize da bi se potvrdila njegova validnost i pouzdanost. *Rezultati:* Eksploratorna faktorska analiza (EFA) pokazala je ukupno tri faktora koji odgovaraju „Spremnosti nastavnika u podučavanju socijalnih veština", prema „Elementima uticaja na nastavnike; Pogodnosti u podučavanju socijalnih veština i Elementima koji imaju važnu ulogu u podučavanju socijalnih veština". Nakon toga je sprovedena Konfirmatorna faktorska analiza (CFA), kroz koju su potvrđeni rezultati dobijeni iz AFE. *Zaključak:* Nalazi otkrivaju instrument koji je adekvatan u validnosti i pouzdanosti, u skladu sa literaturom, pokazujući da je model konzistentan i koherentan sa početnim teorijskim pretpostavkama.

   Ključne reči: validiranje instrumenta, pripremljenost nastavnika, podučavanje socijalnih veština, EFA, CFA

Cultivating inclusion: measuring safety in Indonesia early childhood education environments for every child

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Introduction. Safety holds paramount importance in inclusive school environments that accommodate all students. The UNICEF report emphasizes that, regrettably, both peers and teachers may engage in physical abuse against children in early childhood education (ECE). *Objective*. This paper aims to assess early childhood education teachers' perspectives on school safety, their strategies to ensure a safe environment, and the supporting rules for school environmental safety. *Method*. This research employed a quantitative descriptive approach, gathering numerical data through a survey questionnaire. The study included 52 ECE teachers who had undergone anti-violence education training in Banjarmasin and Banjarbaru, two inclusive cities in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Results*. Findings reveal that teachers reported instances of physical aggression, cyberbullying, verbal insults, and sexual harassment as infrequent occurrences. However, addressing social manipulation and physical aggression through corrective measures is recognized as necessary. Teachers implemented diverse strategies to maintain a safe and respectful classroom atmosphere, including reinforcing norms, promoting civility, teaching non-violent conflict resolution, and acknowledging students who intervened to protect victims. Importantly, teachers affirmed their commitment to transparency by refusing to conceal unethical behaviors by staff or students, thereby strengthening school safety protocols. Nevertheless, the evaluation of school environmental safety activities and regulations identified significant opportunities for improvement. *Conclusion*. The majority of ECE institutions lack clear protocols for conflict resolution, diversity promotion, bullying prevention, parental involvement, teacher training, and safety assessment. Addressing these shortcomings is

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crucial to establishing a more secure and inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of all children.

*Keywords***:** safety environment, teachers' strategies, school safety procedures, inclusive early childhood education

Introduction

Establishing a secure school environment is not only a foundational necessity but also a moral obligation within any educational context, with particular significance in inclusive schools (Haug, 2017). An inclusive educational institution surpasses mere acceptance of diversity and instead proactively welcomes students from diverse backgrounds, abilities, and needs (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018). In such a context, prioritizing safety holds heightened significance, substantiated by numerous compelling justifications. Inclusive educational institutions are intentionally structured to offer equitable educational opportunities to all students, regardless of their individual characteristics. This entails the coexistence of students with diverse skills, cultural backgrounds, learning preferences, and physical or emotional needs within the same educational environment (Thomas, 2016). Ensuring safety within this heterogeneous environment cultivates an environment conducive to the holistic development of every student, promoting a sense of dignity, and addressing their unique requirements.

Ensuring a safe and supportive climate in inclusive school settings is a fundamental requirement to facilitate optimal learning outcomes (Gray et al., 2017). When students experience a sense of physical and emotional security, they are more inclined to actively engage in the learning process, effectively articulate their thoughts, and cultivate meaningful relationships with peers and teachers. A secure environment fosters emotional well-being, diminishes stress levels, and improves concentration, all of which are pivotal factors in attaining positive educational outcomes (Twum-Antwi et al., 2020). The initiative effectively conveys a stance against various forms of prejudice, harassment, and harm, cultivating an environment that promotes inclusivity and acceptance (Clark, 2020a). This environment enables students to freely express their true identities without fear of judgment or mistreatment.

Furthermore, inclusive educational institutions often accommodate students who may vary in susceptibility due to disabilities, cultural differences, or other factors (Hassanein, 2015). Demonstrating a commitment to equity and social justice is exemplified through the act of safeguarding individuals' well-being. This statement acknowledges the educational institution's responsibility to protect those who may be more vulnerable to harm and to ensure they have equitable opportunities for academic and social success (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018).

The prevalence of abuse in institutional care settings has been illuminated by reports from UNICEF. These studies document instances where children have reported enduring physical harm, beatings, and mistreatment perpetrated by staff members (Unicef, 2014). Furthermore, it is important to note that these vulnerable children have also witnessed instances of mistreatment inflicted upon their peers by the staff members working within these establishments (Unicef, 2020).

School violence can have long-term effects on a child's learning (Lester et al., 2017). Students worldwide are vulnerable to educator and authority figure violence. Teachers use a variety of disciplinary tactics for student actions, some of which may appear minor. Punishments can cause bodily pain, emotional misery, and death. Contrary to popular opinion, corporal punishment hinders intellectual development. Gershoff (2017) accurately points out that using objects as punishment in schools would be considered assault if done to adults. According to Menesini and Salmivalli (2017), classroom members also contribute to aggressive activities like bullying. They underline that schools that reinforce bullies and leave victims defenseless increase the risk of vulnerable children being targeted.

In the local context, incidents of violence perpetrated by unethical teachers against autistic children at an Early Childhood Education (ECE) facility in Banjarmasin have brought broader concerns within the realm of early childhood education to light. Several factors contributed to the occurrence and subsequent concealment of these incidents. Insufficient understanding of autism spectrum disorders, coupled with inadequate preparation to meet the unique needs of autistic children, can lead to misunderstandings and inappropriate behavior. Concerns about potential negative repercussions on one's professional reputation, as well as a strong emphasis on maintaining a positive institutional image, may create an environment where individuals hesitate to promptly report incidents. Additionally, the lack of effective monitoring and regulatory frameworks, alongside persistent societal biases against individuals with disabilities, may perpetuate the prevalence of mistreatment in the absence of appropriate interventions (Horner-Johnson, 2021).

The alarming reports of rising incidents of mistreatment in institutional care, underscored by UNICEF, underscore the critical need for a secure educational environment for young children with special needs within an inclusive school framework. The urgency arises from the vulnerability of these children, the profound impact of abuse on their physical and emotional health, the hindrance to their development and advancement, and the potential erosion of trust and emotional stability (Vizard et al., 2022). Moreover, the imperative to create a secure environment aligns seamlessly with the core tenets of inclusive education, which advocate for diversity, tolerance, and empathy. The lasting repercussions of neglecting to safeguard these children from abuse, both on a

personal level and for society as a whole, underscore the urgency of addressing this issue. This viewpoint also conforms to legal and ethical responsibilities, as addressing abuse is essential in preventing recurring incidents of mistreatment and violence within institutional settings (Finkelhor et al., 2015; Sorkos & Hajisoteriou, 2021).

Ensuring physical safety within an inclusive educational environment is a fundamental element that surpasses the mere avoidance of accidents (Palfrey, 2017). This involves adopting a comprehensive approach to ensuring the physical welfare of every student inside the school's facilities. In addition to prioritizing physical safety, it is imperative for these institutions to place equal emphasis on fostering an emotionally and socially supportive environment, particularly for children with special needs (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Mahoney et al., 2021). Emotional safety encompasses the creation of a supportive atmosphere in which pupils are comfortable and confident in openly expressing their feelings. Inclusive educational institutions acknowledge the presence of students with special needs who may have distinct emotional difficulties, and they actively foster an environment that promotes emotional well-being. Social safety is of equal importance, particularly within the framework of inclusive education. These establishments foster social inclusiveness through the deliberate discouragement of exclusionary behavior and the promotion of constructive social relationships.

Early childhood education institutions that prioritize inclusivity place significant emphasis on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) as a fundamental component of their educational framework (DePaoli et al., 2017; Hayashi et al., 2022; Oberle et al., 2020). Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs are crucial for cultivating essential life skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making. These skills are particularly important for children with special needs, as they foster emotional resilience and enhance their ability to navigate social interactions effectively.

This research addresses a critical gap in early childhood education: ensuring the safety and well-being of children with special needs in inclusive schools. Several factors underscore the urgency of this research. Misunderstandings and inappropriate behavior can arise from a lack of preparedness to meet the unique needs of children with special needs. This knowledge gap jeopardizes the safety and developmental progress of these vulnerable children. The urgency of this investigation is further underscored by UNICEF reports of abuse in institutional care settings. Children with special needs are particularly susceptible to maltreatment, which can have severe physical and psychological impacts on their development. Inclusive education promotes diversity, tolerance, and empathy, making a safe school environment crucial for fostering their well-being.

Aim

This paper aims to investigate early childhood education teachers' perceptions of school environment safety, their strategies to ensure school safety, and the supportive regulations for maintaining a safe school environment.

Methods

The present study adopted a quantitative descriptive methodology, utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary instrument for collecting numerical data. Subsequently, statistical analysis methods were employed to derive comprehensive findings from the gathered data. The study involved a sample of 52 teachers specializing in early childhood education. Participants in this research underwent a rigorous selection process based on specific criteria, involving the recruitment of teachers from both inclusive early childhood education institutions and conventional institutions serving children with special needs in Banjarmasin and Banjarbaru. These cities are designated as inclusive cities in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. Each participant has received specialized training in anti-violence education, a common background that enriches the significance of their personal perspectives and insights regarding the research topic.

Table 1

Early childhood education teacher respondents

Variable	Category	Freq	%
Age	20-30 years	32	61.54
	31-40 years old	19	36.54
	41-50 years old	1	1.92
Education	Senior High School	8	15.38
	S1 ECE teacher education or psychology	27	51.92
	S1 another study program	17	32.69
Teaching experience	< 5 years	11	21.15
	5-10 years	35	67.30
	11-15 years	4	7.69
	16-20 years old	2	3.85
Gender	Woman	50	96.15
	Man	2	3.85

To gather data, an effective approach was utilized: a Google Form questionnaire sent electronically via the Google Forms platform. This methodology ensured an efficient and organized strategy for data collection, eliminating the need for physical distribution and facilitating the smooth aggregation of responses in a digital format. This method not only streamlined data collection but also contributed to the organization and management of the collected data.

The survey questionnaire was meticulously structured and systematically designed to include a set of carefully crafted and clearly articulated questions. The primary areas of investigation in the research included a comprehensive assessment of the safety of the learning environment, exploration of innovative strategies implemented by teachers to enhance safety, and identification of activities and policies that collectively strengthen overall school safety. These inquiries were strategically aligned with the core domains of investigation.

Following the completion of the data collection phase, the gathered dataset underwent rigorous data analysis using a method known as "descriptive analysis". This intricate process involved synthesizing and consolidating the collected data in a logical and coherent manner. Utilizing statistical measures such as percentages, averages, and frequency distributions facilitated the extraction of key insights from the dataset, revealing significant trends, patterns, and correlations inherent in the numerical data. This analytical approach aimed not only to uncover substantive insights but also to make the collected data comprehensible and accessible to a broader audience, thereby enriching discussions on safety protocols in early childhood education.

Results

Early childhood education teachers' assessment of school environment safety

The results of early childhood education teachers' responses to the school environment assessment can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Early childhood education teachers' assessment of school environment safety

School Environmental Safety Assessment	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Hurting someone by hitting, pushing, slapping, or shoving	0	0	7.7	19.2	73.1
Threatening verbally and in writing against other students with violence or other actions to intimidate them, both directly and on social media (cyber-bullying)	0	0	1.9	11.5	86.5
Insulting other students with lies, gossip, or insults, both directly and on social media (cyber-bullying)	0	0	0	7.7	92.3
Sexual harassment of other students (e.g., public sexual comments, unwanted touching)	0	0	0	0	100
Carrying out social manipulation to exclude certain children	0	0	1.9	7.7	90.4

Physical Harm

The data obtained from the study reveals a positive trend, with approximately 73.1% of participants reporting that they have never witnessed any instances of physical harm within the school premises. This significant finding underscores the prevailing perception of safety and security within the educational environment, indicating that a substantial percentage of individuals have neither encountered nor observed any incidents of physical assault. Furthermore, the statistical analysis indicates that a smaller proportion of participants, around 19.2%, reported a few occurrences of physical injury, while approximately 7.7% reported infrequent instances of bodily harm. Collectively, these statistics suggest that incidents of physical aggression within the school setting are infrequent. This underscores the effectiveness of existing measures implemented to safeguard the welfare and security of individuals within the school community.

Threats of Violence

The study results provide confidence, as a significant majority of 86.5% of participants affirmed that incidents of violent threats, whether communicated verbally or through digital means, are rare within the school environment. This overwhelming consensus underscores the prevailing perception of safety and security within the educational domain, indicating that a substantial proportion of individuals have not encountered or been exposed to instances of violence, whether physical or virtual. Further analysis of the data reveals a smaller proportion, approximately 11.5%, who reported sporadic instances of witnessing such threats. An even smaller fraction, comprising only 1.9% of participants, acknowledged occasional occurrences of threats through verbal or electronic channels. These findings illustrate that incidents of violent threats within the school setting are relatively infrequent. This suggests that interventions targeting verbal and cyber-based harassment appear to be reasonably effective, thereby fostering a sense of security and protection against these forms of violence and intimidation among individuals in the school community.

Verbal and Cyber-Bullying

The survey data reveals a significant trend: a substantial majority, 92.3% of participants, indicated that occurrences of insults, falsehoods, and gossip, whether in personal encounters or on digital platforms, are not prevalent within the educational institution. This overwhelming evidence strongly supports the perception of a safe and supportive environment within the school setting. The research suggests that a considerable proportion of individuals have not encountered or engaged in behaviors involving verbal insults, false statements, or gossip, whether face-to-face or online. Additionally, statistical data shows

a smaller proportion, approximately 7.7%, reported infrequent occurrences of such instances. Importantly, none of the participants reported facing insults, falsehoods, or rumors on a frequent or continuous basis. The dataset collectively paints a compelling picture of a school environment characterized by a notable absence of abusive language, dishonesty, and gossip. This suggests that interventions aimed at mitigating and discouraging such behaviors are effectively contributing to fostering an environment where individuals can experience emotional well-being and reduced vulnerability to verbal abuse and online harassment.

Sexual Harassment

According to the survey findings, all participants unequivocally reported no occurrences of sexual harassment, regardless of the number or characteristics of such incidents. The notable absence of documented instances of sexual harassment, including inappropriate remarks and unwelcome physical contact, underscores the institution's commendable commitment to fostering a secure and respectful atmosphere for all stakeholders. The lack of reported cases of sexual harassment serves as evidence of the effectiveness of preventive measures and educational programs aimed at addressing and eliminating such misconduct within the school community. This outcome underscores the institution's dedication to maintaining a safe educational environment and instills confidence among students, parents, and staff that proactive measures have been implemented to mitigate potential risks associated with sexual harassment. The absence of documented instances of sexual harassment indicates a positive safety climate within the educational institution, enabling students to engage actively in their academic pursuits without concerns related to such misconduct.

Social Manipulation

Based on the data analysis, it is evident that a significant majority of participants (90.4%) expressed the belief that instances of social manipulation aimed at excluding specific children from the school setting are nonexistent. Conversely, a minority of respondents (1.9%) indicated that such manipulation takes place occasionally, while an even smaller minority reported rare instances of such manipulation (7.7%). None of the participants indicated frequent or consistent occurrences of this manipulation.

The data also suggests that the school environment largely fosters a safe atmosphere characterized by infrequent occurrences of physical harm, threats of violence, verbal insults, weapon-related threats, and incidents of sexual harassment. The survey findings revealed that a substantial majority of participants reported rare or nonexistent occurrences of these detrimental behaviors. While there are areas that can be improved in addressing specific

types of bullying and intimidation, the results indicate a positive trend toward enhancing the overall safety and well-being of all children.

**Early childhood education teachers' strategies
to ensure the safety of the school**

Early childhood education teachers' strategies for ensuring school safety can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Early childhood education teachers' strategies to ensure the safety of the school

Early Childhood Education Teacher's Strategy	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Remind children of classroom rules that promote respectful and supportive interactions	38.5	46.2	5.8	1.9	7.7
Provide examples or teach strategies for non-violent conflict resolution	34.6	42.3	13.5	1.9	7.7
Reward children who are active in preventing violence or defending victims	23.1	26.9	28.8	7.7	13.5
Give children the opportunity to confidentially report aggressive actions	15.4	13.5	28.8	7.7	34.6
Ask for explanations from children who demean or abuse other children	21.2	26.9	26.9	5.8	19.2
Work with aggressive children to correct their behavior	23.1	48.1	15.4	0	13.5
Participate in silence or cover up violence perpetrated by unscrupulous teachers or students	0	0	0	7.7	92.3

Remind Children of Classroom Rules

The analysis of survey data on the use of reminders for children regarding classroom rules highlights teachers' proactive and commendable approach to maintaining a secure and respectful learning environment. According to the results, a significant majority of instructors (84.7%) indicated that they routinely or frequently remind children about the established regulations within the classroom setting. This proactive reinforcement of rules, which promotes respectful and supportive interactions, demonstrates a commitment to cultivating a positive and conducive learning environment.

Additionally, a minority of teachers, comprising approximately 5.8% of the sample, reported occasionally reminding students about classroom rules. This suggests periodic reinforcement of behavioral expectations within the educational setting. In contrast, a combined proportion of 9.6% of teachers

indicated infrequent or nonexistent use of strategies aimed at reinforcing these regulations to students. Despite this minority, it is crucial to acknowledge that the vast majority of teachers actively uphold these rules, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of fostering a secure and respectful atmosphere within the educational setting.

The data presented illustrates teachers' collaborative efforts in creating an environment where students are consistently encouraged to adhere to behavioral norms, fostering improved interpersonal dynamics and a heightened focus on academic engagement. The significant number of teachers who consistently reinforce classroom rules underscores their dedication to establishing a classroom environment that prioritizes respect, collaboration, and mutual understanding. Consequently, this enriches the overall educational experience for all students involved.

Non-Violent Conflict Resolution

The data on the implementation of non-violent conflict resolution strategies underscores teachers' commitment to imparting students with essential skills to manage disagreements positively and constructively. According to the findings, a significant majority of teachers, specifically 76.9%, indicated that they routinely or frequently teach non-violent dispute resolution skills to their students. This proactive approach in teaching conflict resolution strategies demonstrates a dedication to fostering a secure and peaceful educational environment where disagreements and conflicts can be effectively addressed through constructive means.

Furthermore, approximately 13.5% of teachers reported occasionally implementing non-violent conflict resolution procedures, suggesting periodic integration of these approaches into their teaching practices. In contrast, a combined 9.6% of instructors indicated infrequent or nonexistent implementation of these tactics. While this represents a minority, the substantial number of teachers actively integrating non-violent conflict resolution practices underscores their commitment to promoting communication, empathy, and problem-solving skills among students. The presented data illustrates teachers' collaborative efforts in equipping students with skills that enhance their ability to resolve disagreements without resorting to violence or aggression. Prioritizing non-violent conflict resolution tactics reflects a dedication to nurturing emotional intelligence and fostering positive interpersonal relationships.

Rewarding Children Who Prevent Violence

The provided data illustrates an effective and supportive approach adopted by teachers to promote positive behaviors among children by acknowledging and praising those who actively prevent violence. According to the statistical findings, a significant portion, totaling 50% of teachers, routinely or frequently

participate in recognizing and incentivizing students who demonstrate proactive behaviors in preventing violence or intervening on behalf of victims. Implementing this proactive strategy serves as a motivator for students to exhibit qualities such as empathy, courage, and a sense of responsibility within the educational environment.

Moreover, it was noted that a substantial proportion of teachers, specifically 28.8%, engage in the practice of praising and rewarding desirable behaviors on occasion. This indicates periodic reinforcement of these positive actions within the teaching profession. Conversely, a combined proportion of 21.2% of teachers indicated infrequent or nonexistent participation in this activity. While this is observed among a minority, the significant number of teachers who actively acknowledge and incentivize students for their efforts in preventing violence underscores a commitment to fostering a culture of intervention and support within the educational setting.

The findings underscore teachers' unwavering dedication to promoting positive behaviors that contribute to a safe and respectful educational environment. Through the systematic recognition and incentivization of students who demonstrate a commitment to preventing violence and advocating for victims, teachers foster a collective spirit and nurture the development of conscientious and compassionate individuals. This approach is instrumental in cultivating a school climate where students actively participate in promoting a culture characterized by kindness, empathy, and support.

Confidential Reporting of Violent Behaviors

The analysis of the implementation of confidential reporting of violent behaviors by children to teachers indicates both successful implementation and areas for improvement. According to the research findings, approximately 28.9% of teachers consistently or frequently provide children with the opportunity to discreetly report instances of aggressive behavior. This practice reflects a commitment to cultivating an environment where students feel secure and empowered to express their concerns without fear of negative consequences, thereby fostering a culture of transparent communication.

However, it is noteworthy that a similar proportion, around 28.8% of teachers, reported occasionally offering this opportunity, suggesting sporadic use of this strategy. In contrast, a combined proportion of 40.4% of teachers indicated infrequent or nonexistent implementation of confidential reporting mechanisms for students to report instances of aggression. This indicates the potential for enhancing the promotion of reporting aggressive activities while maintaining confidentiality.

The data illustrates the commendable efforts made by teachers to establish a climate of trust while also highlighting opportunities for improvement to ensure that students consistently feel secure in reporting any instances of

aggression they witness or experience. Promoting greater adherence and broader utilization of confidential reporting systems could enhance perceptions of safety and facilitate prompt and effective resolution of aggressive behavior. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering a secure and respectful school environment by cultivating an atmosphere that actively supports and protects the act of reporting.

Understanding the Roots of Bad Behaviors

The presented data underscores the proactive and engaged approach undertaken by teachers in addressing bad behaviors displayed by children who engage in acts of belittling or abusive nature towards others. Based on the results, a significant proportion of teachers, specifically 48.1%, exhibit a consistent or frequent tendency to request explanations from students who display insulting or abusive conduct. This approach exemplifies the teachers' dedication to directly confronting these bad behaviors and endeavoring to comprehend the underlying motivations behind them, thus fostering the development of a more respectful and supportive milieu.

Furthermore, it was shown that a significant proportion of teachers, specifically 26.9%, reported occasionally implementing this strategy, indicating a sporadic use of soliciting explanations from students engaged in undesirable activities. Conversely, a cumulative proportion of 25% of teachers indicated infrequent or nonexistent utilization of this approach. Although this pertains to a small portion, the data suggests that there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of this method for dealing with derogatory or harmful actions.

The findings underscore the importance of proactive measures and effective communication in nurturing a climate of responsibility and personal development among students. By engaging children in discussions about their problematic behaviors, teachers not only address immediate concerns but also create opportunities for reflection and educational growth. This approach instills in students a mindset that encourages them to consider the impact of their actions, thereby fostering a school environment characterized by empathy and respect.

Proactive Strategy in Addressing the Violent

The evidence presented underscores teachers' proactive and engaged approach in addressing violent behavior among students with the aim of correction. According to the findings, a significant majority of teachers, specifically 71.2%, demonstrate regular or frequent dedication to engaging with aggressive students to address and rectify their conduct. This proactive strategy exemplifies teachers' commitment to directly addressing negative behaviors and implementing measures to guide students toward more constructive interactions. In addition, approximately 15.4% of teachers reported occasional

implementation of this strategy, indicating sporadic use in addressing violent behavior. Conversely, a combined 13.5% of teachers indicated infrequent or nonexistent utilization of this approach. While this minority exists, the data suggests opportunities for improvement in increasing the consistency of these efforts.

These findings underscore the importance of teachers' involvement not only in correcting problematic behaviors but also in fostering students' understanding of the consequences of their actions and promoting personal development. Through direct engagement with students displaying violent behavior, teachers play a critical role in creating a secure and supportive educational environment where students learn conflict resolution skills, emotional regulation, and constructive interpersonal interactions. This approach emphasizes the values of empathy, understanding, and skill development, ultimately promoting a culture characterized by respect and collaboration within the school.

Furthermore, the data reveals a commendable commitment to transparency and safety within the educational setting, particularly in addressing or preventing acts of violence. A significant 92.3% of teachers indicated that they do not engage in suppressing or concealing instances of violence committed by either unethical instructors or students. This majority reflects a strong dedication to maintaining open communication channels and prioritizing the safety and well-being of all members of the school community. Conversely, only 7.7% of teachers acknowledged occasional, infrequent, or frequent engagement in such behaviors, suggesting that incidents of concealment or suppression of violence within schools, while present, are rare.

The available evidence indicates that teachers exhibit a proactive approach in implementing various measures aimed at enhancing the safety of the educational setting. Teachers frequently reinforce classroom norms to children, offer tools for conflict resolution, incentivize positive behaviors, address instances of aggression, and collaborate with children to rectify their conduct. Significantly, the evidence indicates a robust dedication to abstaining from engaging in the suppression or concealment of acts of violence. Nevertheless, there is potential for enhancing the promotion of confidential reporting in relation to aggressive behaviors.

Supporting rules for school environmental safety

Supporting rules for school environmental security can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Supporting rules for school environmental safety

Activities and Supporting Rules for School Environmental Safety	Exists and implemented	Exists, not implemented	drafting process	considered for drafting	None
School rules & policies promote and reward non-violent conflict resolution	42.3	1.9	19.2	28.8	7.7
School rules & policies promote and reward supportive and respectful behavior among children of all abilities and racial/ethnic groups.	48.1	3.8	15.4	25	7.7
Schools have a pathway for handling violence or bullying that occurs to children	30.8	1.9	23.1	26.9	17.3
Parenting that involves all children's parents and experts in aligning anti-violence education programs at home with schools	19.2	3.8	25	42.3	9.6
Training programs/workshops/etc. for teachers to improve classroom management strategies to promote mutual respect & non-violence	34.6	3.8	19.2	32.7	9.6
Evaluation with school principals, teachers, and parents of children in creating a school environment that is safe from physical, psychological, and sexual violence	44.2	1.9	17.3	30.8	5.8

School Policies of Non-Violent Dispute Resolution

The present study investigates the current status of school policies regarding the promotion of non-violent dispute resolution. A significant portion of educational institutions, specifically 42.3% of participants, have implemented and effectively enforced regulations aimed at promoting peaceful conflict resolution. This finding underscores the substantial emphasis placed by many schools on fostering harmonious resolutions to disputes.

Conversely, a small percentage of respondents (1.9%) reported having guidelines in place but noted deficiencies in their application, indicating a need for improvement in this area. Additionally, approximately 19.2% of individuals are currently involved in formulating these regulations, indicating ongoing efforts to enhance the use of non-violent conflict resolution methods. Moreover, a notable portion of respondents (28.8%) demonstrated forward-thinking

by considering potential future revisions, indicating a proactive approach to addressing this specific need. A subset of respondents (7.7%) indicated a lack of discussion on the formulation of regulations, suggesting that some educational institutions have yet to establish concrete guidelines for resolving non-violent conflicts.

The data presents a wide array of conditions observed in schools, encompassing both well-established and efficiently executed policies, as well as ongoing efforts in policy development and thoughts for future implementation. The statement highlights the ever-changing nature of conflict resolution tactics in educational environments, as most participants reported implementing effective measures to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts.

School Rules and Policies to Foster a Culture of Respect

A substantial number of respondents, specifically 48.1%, reported the existence of effective regulations promoting diversity and mutual respect. Conversely, a smaller percentage (3.8%) acknowledged the presence of regulations but noted implementation issues, indicating an area needing improvement. Moreover, a notable proportion (15.4%) is currently involved in formulating these regulations, underscoring ongoing efforts to establish structured principles for fostering constructive engagements among students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Additionally, a significant segment (25%) is considering future revisions, reflecting a proactive approach to policy evolution. A subset comprising 7.7% of respondents indicated a lack of engagement in discussions related to the formulation of regulations, suggesting that some institutions may have overlooked the development of explicit measures aimed at creating an environment conducive to supportive and respectful behavior.

This research underscores the importance of establishing inclusive and respectful educational environments. The findings reveal diverse circumstances in schools, with a notable portion indicating the implementation of measures aimed at promoting an environment conducive to supportive and respectful behavior among students of varied skills and racial backgrounds.

School Policies in Handling Violence or Bullying

The survey results reveal that a significant proportion of respondents, approximately 30.8%, reported having established effective pathways to address incidents of violence or bullying promptly. In contrast, a minority of respondents, 1.9%, acknowledged having pathways but encountered obstacles in their execution, highlighting the need for improvements. Furthermore, a substantial segment of respondents, namely 23.1%, are actively involved in developing these pathways, indicating ongoing efforts to establish comprehensive and efficient guidelines. Additionally, a significant proportion (26.9%) of respondents are

forward-thinking, contemplating potential future revisions, and demonstrating a proactive approach to addressing these concerns. A subset of respondents, comprising 17.3% of the sample, indicated a lack of engagement in discussions concerning the development of strategies for addressing instances of violence or bullying. This finding suggests that some situations may not have undergone thorough examination in terms of establishing explicit protocols.

The data underscores the diverse circumstances observed in schools, where varying levels of progress exist in implementing effective strategies for addressing violence or bullying. While a notable proportion of respondents indicated current implementation or contemplation of such pathways, the results also highlight ongoing efforts to establish comprehensive protocols ensuring a safe and respectful educational environment for all students.

Parental Involvement in Anti-Violence Education

The present study examines the extent of parental involvement in anti-violence education, specifically focusing on the effectiveness of tactics employed by 19.2% of respondents in fostering non-violent conduct among pupils. However, a notable proportion of respondents, 3.8%, exhibit deficiencies in executing parental participation, indicating room for improvement. Furthermore, a quarter of the participants are currently formulating strategies to enhance parental involvement, suggesting ongoing efforts to effectively include parents in projects focused on anti-violence education. A significant proportion of respondents, 42.3%, are considering future revisions, demonstrating a proactive stance in recognizing the importance of engaging parents in creating violence-free school environments. A subset of participants, comprising 9.6% of the total sample, reported not engaging in any discussions related to the formulation of strategies for parental involvement in anti-violence education.

This finding implies instances where exploration of this idea remains underdeveloped or unexplored. The presented data underscores the necessity of involving parents in initiatives aimed at fostering non-violence within educational institutions. The data also highlights a diverse array of strategies employed by schools, showing varying levels of progress in involving parents in anti-violence education initiatives. The results underscore ongoing efforts to develop efficient approaches for engaging parents in initiatives that promote a safe and respectful educational environment for all students.

Enhancing Classroom Safety Through Teacher Training Programs

Teacher training programs aimed at enhancing classroom management skills are successful for approximately 34.6% of respondents. These programs are designed to improve instructors' abilities in effectively managing their classrooms. However, a minority of 3.8% of individuals have encountered difficulties in executing these programs despite their presence. Moreover, it

is noteworthy that a significant proportion, specifically 19.2% of respondents, are currently involved in the development of training programs. This indicates ongoing efforts to establish organized and systematic initiatives aimed at enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge. Additionally, 32.7% of individuals are considering future revisions, emphasizing the importance of equipping teachers with effective instructional strategies to manage classroom dynamics.

A subset comprising 9.6% of participants indicated a lack of engagement in discussions regarding the development of training programs, suggesting that structured training initiatives may not have been thoroughly explored in certain instances This research underscores the critical need to provide teachers with effective resources to foster and maintain healthy classroom environments. The findings illustrate diverse circumstances across educational institutions in terms of the development and implementation of teacher training programs for efficient classroom management.

Evaluation of the School Environment Safety Involving Various Parties

The evaluation of creating a safe school environment was conducted, with approximately 44.2% of respondents implementing successful evaluation methods. These processes involved active participation from school principals, teachers, and parents, who collaborated in analyzing the effectiveness of safety measures. However, a minority of 1.9% of the surveyed entities identified areas requiring enhancement in implementation. Furthermore, a notable proportion of 17.3% are currently engaged in developing evaluation protocols, indicating ongoing efforts to establish structured methods for safety assessment. Additionally, a significant proportion of individuals, specifically 30.8%, are considering potential future revisions. This underscores the critical importance of conducting systematic assessments to ensure a secure and conducive educational setting. A subset comprising 5.8% of respondents indicated no discussions regarding the development of evaluation protocols, suggesting that in certain instances, structured safety evaluations have not been thoroughly explored.

This data underscores the importance of comprehensive evaluations and enhancing safety protocols within educational institutions. It highlights the various approaches employed by different schools, each at different stages of progress in implementing effective evaluation procedures to foster a secure educational environment. The findings also underscore ongoing efforts to establish thorough assessment systems that ensure the security and well-being of all individuals involved, including students, staff, and other relevant stakeholders.

Discussion

This research data highlights a concerning trend within Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions, indicating that a significant number lack established activities or regulations to effectively cultivate a safe learning environment for all students, including those with special needs. These findings provide a comprehensive perspective on the current state of efforts aimed at ensuring the well-being of students within these educational settings.

While reported incidents of violence in ECE settings may be infrequent, it is crucial to recognize that the absence of supportive activities or regulations designed to prevent and address acts of violence can have profound implications. Despite the rarity of such incidents, the absence of proactive measures can leave ECE institutions ill-prepared to manage unforeseen situations involving violence. The presence of supportive activities and regulations is essential in nurturing a secure learning environment for young children. These measures not only form the basis for preventing violent occurrences but also aid in anticipating and managing potential challenges. Without them, institutions may face various consequences.

Institutions lacking established protocols for prevention and management may struggle to handle unexpected situations effectively, resulting in confusion and delayed responses. Furthermore, the lack of clear guidelines on appropriate behavior and conflict resolution strategies can lead to uncertainty and ineffective improvised responses. This not only increases the risk of conflicts escalating but also disrupts students' learning experiences, compromising their sense of safety and hindering their educational progress. Additionally, perceived safety concerns may tarnish the institution's reputation, influencing enrollment rates and community trust. The absence of safety measures also raises legal and liability issues, potentially exposing institutions to risks in case of incidents. Considering these factors, the implementation of supportive measures that proactively address violence and foster a secure environment is crucial for cultivating an effective and nurturing learning atmosphere in early childhood education.

Emotional and psychological safety are pivotal aspects of inclusive schools, where the prevention and management of bullying are top priorities. These schools work diligently to combat all forms of bullying through comprehensive policies and strategies, fostering a culture centered on respect and kindness (Clark, 2020b). This environment nurtures confidence and active engagement in the learning process, enabling students to reach their academic potential. Inclusive schools also recognize the significance of addressing students' mental health needs, offering resources such as counseling services and mental health awareness programs. This holistic approach supports emotional and psychological growth alongside academic development (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015).

Social safety and inclusivity serve as cornerstones in inclusive schools, promoting a culture of respect for diversity and creating an atmosphere where every student feels valued and appreciated. Explicit rules and policies uphold respectful behavior, ensuring the dignity of all students is upheld. Peer relationships and teacher-student interactions play crucial roles in fostering a sense of belonging and emotional well-being. Inclusive schools nurture positive peer interactions and prioritize respectful connections between teachers and students (Mahoney et al., 2021). Customized support tailored to individual student needs ensures that no one feels marginalized.

Key factors in upholding a safe and inclusive environment include community engagement (Mapp et al., 2014), teacher professional development (Nishimura, 2014), authoritative school disciplines (Gerlinger & Wo, 2016), and ongoing assessment (Allen & Cowdery, 2014). Involving parents and caregivers as partners in safety efforts strengthens the school community. Teacher training equips teachers with the necessary skills to address diverse needs, while conflict resolution practices teach valuable life skills. Continuous evaluation ensures that safety protocols remain effective and pertinent.

Addressing childhood violence represents a global developmental challenge, acknowledged through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. While the detrimental effects of childhood violence on children's well-being are well-documented, its impact on educational outcomes has received limited attention. This research aligns with SDG education Target 4.a, emphasizing the importance of safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all (Boeren, 2019). It's crucial to link effective violence prevention approaches with SDG 4 (World Health Organization, 2019). The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, initiated in 2016, has developed evidence-based strategies highlighting the significance of safeguarding children through legal measures, nurturing positive social norms, establishing safe environments, offering support, empowering families, expanding access to services, and fostering life skills. These strategies must be connected to indicators associated with SDG Target 4.a, focusing on the creation of safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments (Unterhalter, 2019). Ultimately, the aim is to ensure that what transpires within these spaces promotes safety, inclusivity, and effective learning, benefiting children worldwide.

Conclusion

The data from this study indicates that early childhood education (ECE) institutions generally provide a secure environment where incidents of physical harm, threats of violence, verbal abuse, weapon-related intimidation, and incidents of sexual harassment are rare. Survey findings reveal that these detrimental behaviors are seldom encountered by most individuals within these educational settings. While there is room for improvement in addressing

specific types of bullying and intimidation, the overall trend suggests a positive trajectory toward enhancing children's safety and well-being.

This research underscores teachers' proactive efforts in implementing various safety initiatives within educational environments. Teachers consistently reinforce classroom norms, provide conflict-resolution strategies, promote positive behaviors, and actively address instances of aggression. Moreover, the data illustrates a strong commitment among teachers to refrain from suppressing or concealing acts of violence, fostering a transparent and supportive atmosphere for students.

However, there remains potential for enhancing the promotion of confidential reporting mechanisms for aggressive behaviors. The evaluation of school environmental safety initiatives and policies reveals clear areas for improvement, particularly in establishing more robust protocols for conflict resolution, promoting diversity, preventing bullying, engaging parents, training teachers, and conducting comprehensive safety assessments. It is imperative to prioritize these areas for assessment and enhancement to ensure that early childhood education environments are secure, inclusive, and conducive to the holistic development of all students.

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Negovanje inkluzije: merenje bezbednosti u indonezijskim sredinama za obrazovanje u ranom detinjstvu za svako dete

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Uvod: Bezbednost je od najveće važnosti u inkluzivnom školskom okruženju koje pruža usluge svim učenicima. Kao što je istaknuto u izveštaju UNICEF-a, u fizičkom zlostavljanju dece u obrazovanju u ranom detinjstvu (ECE), nažalost, učestvuju ne samo vršnjaci već i nastavnici i osoblje. *Cilj*: Ovaj rad ima za cilj da ispita procenu nastavnika angažovanih u procesu ranog vaspitanja i obrazovanja o bezbednosti školskog okruženja, strategije nastavnika u osiguranju bezbednosti škole, kao i prateća pravila za bezbednost školskog okruženja. *Metod*: Ovo istraživanje koristilo je kvantitativni deskriptivni pristup, prikupljajući numeričke podatke putem anketnog upitnika. Studija je uključivala 52 nastavnika ECE-a koji su prošli obuku o borbi protiv nasilja u Banjarmasinu i Banjarbaruu, dva inkluzivna grada u Južnom Kalimantanu, Indonezija. *Rezultati*: Istraživanje je pokazalo da su, prema podacima dobijenim od nastavnika, slučajevi fizičke agresije, maltretiranja putem interneta, verbalnih uvreda i seksualnog

uznemiravanja u školama retki. Međutim, postoji potreba da se korektivnim merama obuhvate socijalna manipulacija i fizička agresija. Nastavnici koriste različite metode za održavanje bezbednog okruženja u učionici, uključujući poštovanje, podsećanje učenika na norme u učionici, promovisanje uljudnosti, podučavanje nenasilnom rešavanju sukoba i odavanje priznanja učenicima koji brane žrtve. Važno je da su nastavnici posvećeni tome, da ne prikrivaju neetičke radnje koje počine nastavnici ili učenici, čime se osigurava bezbednost škole. Ipak, procena školskih aktivnosti i propisa o bezbednosti školskog okruženja ukazuje da postoji značajan prostor za poboljšanje. *Zaključak*: Većini institucija ECE nedostaju jasne procedure za rešavanje sukoba, promociju različitosti, prevenciju maltretiranja, učešće roditelja, obuku nastavnika i procenu bezbednosti. Bavljenje ovim oblastima je imperativ za stvaranje sigurnijeg i inkluzivnijeg okruženja za svu decu.

Communication abilities of Croatian and Roma children with mild intellectual disability: Performance on children's communication checklist (CCC)

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Introduction. Communication and language development in children with (mild) intellectual disability is generally delayed. Roma national minority children are sequential bilinguals, most introduced to the Croatian language upon entering the educational system. Information on communication in the natural context can be obtained through checklists completed by children's communication partners. *Objectives.* This study aims to obtain insight into the communication and Croatian language abilities of Croatian and Roma children with mild intellectual disabilities. *Method.* The study participants were 52 children between 9 and 16 years old (22 Croatian and 30 Roma). Their performance on the Children's Communication Checklist was analyzed and compared to published thresholds and each other. *Results.* The performance of Croatian and Roma children on the pragmatic composite is comparable to that of British peers with intellectual disability, as both groups scored below the normal range. Only the Roma children performed below clinical thresholds on the Speech and Syntax scale. No group displayed autism features. Mann-Whitney test showed significant differences between the groups in Speech output and Syntax subscales, indicating Roma children's poorer Croatian language abilities. Overall pragmatic abilities did not differ between the groups. Both groups scored below the threshold on the Coherence and Use of conversational context subscales, showing comparable pragmatic profiles. However, Croatian children outperformed Roma children on the Coherence, Use of conversational context, and Conversational rapport subscales. *Conclusion.* Roma children use the Croatian language in a way comparable to their Croatian peers despite being less proficient in its structure. Pragmatic abilities should be targeted in children with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: bilingualism, Roma national minority, language assessment in natural context

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Introduction

Intellectual disability (ID) represents a neurodevelopmental disorder marked by significant impairments in intellectual functioning and adaptive skills (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, n.d.). Nevertheless, the severity is determined by the level of adaptive functioning in the social, conceptual, and practical domains required to function independently and participate in society (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), including both communication and language abilities. About 1% of the world population has ID and 75% of the population with ID falls into category of mild (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

There is an association between cognitive, communication, and language development in children with ID (Bailoor & Rao, 2013). Their development is generally delayed and slower in rate (Pranjić et al., 2016), with deviations in language form, content, and use (Bray, 2003; Shree & Shukla, 2016). Research on non-syndromic mild ID (MID) is scarce due to the predominant focus on ID related to genetic syndromes. The existing literature, nevertheless, reports on delayed onset of first words and phrases, noun-dominated vocabulary, reduced use of adjectives, adverbs, and auxiliary verbs, simplified sentence structures, along with challenges in acquiring complex language concepts (Georgieva & Tcholakova, 1996; Patel et al., 2018), narrating (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2017), establishing and maintaining conversation topics (Okrainec, 1997), and adapting to communication partners and context (Kim et al., 2018).

A significant part of today's society is composed of bilingual and multicultural individuals. Even though defining bilingualism is complex, the most common definition is the ability to use more than one language (Liddicoat, 1991). Bilingualism can be classified by many criteria, such as proficiency in a language and the age of its acquisition (Baker & Jones, 1998). When a primary disorder, such as ID, impacts communication and language abilities in bilingual speakers, all languages are affected (Cheatham et al., 2012). National minorities constitute a distinct subset of the bilingual population whose first and native language is often not the majority language in their country of residence. Twenty-two national minorities currently reside in Croatia (Državni zavod za statistiku, 2022), including the Roma minority, mainly belonging to the Boyash group (Tahiri & Kregar Orešković, 2021). This group's native and first language is *ljimba d Bajaš*, also known as the Boyash dialect of the Romanian language (Šlezak, 2013), while Croatian is their second language (Jelaska, 2005). Boyash is not standardized and contains many loanwords from Croatian (Radosavljević, 2016). Though Roma minority acquire some Croatian vocabulary before entering the education system (Novak Milić et al., 2007), they are most commonly not exposed to Croatian culture and language on a systematic basis before that point (Martan & Srebačić, 2020). Hence, Roma children are faced with the complex challenge of acquiring their second language while receiving instruction in it

simultaneously. The difficulties in acquiring a second language are even greater for Roma children with ID, whose lower intellectual abilities, along with social challenges, further complicate this process.

For a complete picture of children's communication and language abilities, it is necessary to incorporate information about mentioned abilities in everyday context with other assessment methods. The most common means of assessing language structure (phonology, morphology, syntax) and content (semantics) is through standardized tests. However, assessing language use in context (pragmatics) is much more challenging due to the difficulty with eliciting behaviors and their variability (Hoffmann et al., 2013; Lam & Ho, 2014). This information can be obtained through checklists completed by persons familiar with the child (Bishop, 1998; Hoffmann et al., 2013). Such information can assist in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses (Lane et al., 2018). To date, pragmatic profiles of both typically developing (TD) and children with various disorders were described or compared, including children with ID (e.g., Botting, 2004; Hoffmann et al., 2013; Lane et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2017). However, our literature search yielded no information regarding the performance of children with ID of any level of severity on such checklists in their second language.

Currently, there is no information on communication and language abilities in the natural context regarding Croatian children with MID or Roma children with said disorder in either of their languages. In the case of Roma children, this might be partially true due to the absence of Boyash dialect assessment instruments and bilingual speech-language pathologists. The only study to date conducted by Očurščak Žuliček et al. (2022) found that Roma children with MID are less proficient at some aspects of Croatian noun morphology than Croatian children. Therefore, obtaining additional information is required to expand knowledge and improve clinical practice with these groups.

Objective

This study aims to gain insight into the communication and language abilities in the everyday context in children with MID in Croatian as first (Croatian children) and second (Roma children) language. These goals led to the formulation of the following questions:

1. Does CCC detect communication and language deficits in Croatian and Roma children with MID? Is there a profile of strengths and weaknesses in Croatian and Roma children with MID?

2. Are there statistically significant differences between Croatian and Roma children on the CCC subscales?

Methods

Participants

The CCCs were completed by educational rehabilitators, class teachers of 52 children of Croatian (42%) and Roma (58%) nationality with MID attending four schools for children with intellectual disabilities in the Republic of Croatia, where the sole language of instruction is Croatian. The study was communicated to the principals of the mentioned schools via email. If they agreed, they were asked to forward the invitation and instrument to their educational rehabilitators. In the Republic of Croatia, children are enrolled in such schools following an assessment conducted by a multidisciplinary team of professionals (including a psychologist who assesses the child's intellectual ability), which results in a Decision on the appropriate educational program. The intellectual status, as determined by the Decision, served as the basis for the inclusion in the study. The study participants provided consent. Children's ages range from 9 to 16 years old (M=12.29, SD=2.03). Regarding chronological age, there are no significant differences between Croatian and Roma nationality groups (t=.23, p>.05). The gender of children is predominantly male (71.2%). Considering Reetzke et al. (2015) suggestion that children must have at least 20% of lifetime exposure to their second language when assessing their abilities in that language, only children in grades 3-8 participated. We excluded children with moderate, severe, and profound ID, as well as children with comorbid autism spectrum disorder (ASD), sensory or motor disorders, and children who cannot express themselves in complete sentences. Table 1 provides sociodemographic information.

Table 1

Sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample

Variable		N (%) Croatian	N (%) Roma
Gender	Male	20 (90.9)	17 (56.7)
	Female	2 (9.1)	13 (43.3)
Chronological age	9	1 (4.5)	2 (6.7)
	10	2 (9.1)	8 (26.7)
	11	4 (18.2)	3 (10)
	12	7 (31.8)	4 (13.3)
	13	2 (9.1)	2 (6.7)
	14	2 (9.1)	4 (13.3)
	15	3 (13.6)	6 (20)
	16	1 (4.5)	1 (3.3)

Materials and procedure

Information regarding communication and language abilities in the everyday context was obtained using the Children's Communication Checklist (CCC, Bishop, 1998), translated into Croatian. The CCC contains seventy items formulated as statements and divided into nine subscales. Subscale A (Speech output) assesses aspects of speech and phonology, subscale B (Syntax) assesses syntax and morphology, subscales C (Inappropriate initiation), D (Coherence), E (Stereotyped conversation), F (Use of Conversational Context) and G (Conversational Rapport) assess different aspects of pragmatics, while subscales H (Social Relationships) and I (Interests) include characteristics indicative of ASD such as difficulties in establishing relationships with other persons and presence of restricted or unusual interests. (Bishop, 1998; Geurts et al., 2004). Pragmatic composite, a measure of pragmatic abilities, is derived by summarizing the results of Subscales C-G (Bishop, 1998). The persons filling out the checklist must mark if each statement does not apply to the child, somewhat applies, definitely applies, or if they are unable to judge.

Data were collected between June and November 2022.

Data analysis

The statistical analysis was performed using GNU PSPP 1.6.2. An exploratory analysis revealed that some variables were not normally distributed, and several were highly skewed. We also identified some extreme outliers. Therefore, we employed non-parametric statistics for the remainder of the analysis. The frequency of participants scoring below the published thresholds was determined for each nationality group. We then conducted Mann-Whitney U tests to compare the groups.

Results and Discussion

To determine whether CCC identifies communication and (Croatian) language deficits in Croatian and Roma children with MID, for each subscale, we calculated thresholds of one and two standard deviations (SDs) below the mean of TD British children of a wide age range (6-16 years) from Bishop and Baird (2001)'s study and compared their performance to the mentioned thresholds. So far, no thresholds have been established specifically for Croatian and Roma children. However, performance (on pragmatic composite) comparable to British children from Bishop and Baird's (2001) study was found in TD children of different nationalities, including Norwegian (Helland & Heimann, 2007), Belgian, Dutch (Geurts et al., 2004), as well as Taiwanese (Wang & Tsao, 2015). This procedure was replicated from Botting's (2004) study, which compared the performance of children with various disorders (including ID) on pragmatic composite, with mentioned thresholds. Additionally, we compared the performance of Croatian and Roma children with the performance of British children with ID from Botting's (2004) study. We have also followed Botting's

criteria, which states that below-average performance refers to one or more SDs below the TD children from Bishop and Baird's (2001) study.

Table 2

Mean scores of Croatian and Roma children with ID on each CCC subscale and the number and percentage of each group performing below published clinical threshold

	Possible range	Min	Max	Median (IQR)	< 1 or more SD N (%)	<2 or more SD N (%)
A) Speech Output					<34	<32
Croatian		18	36	34.5 (5)	9 (40.9)	6 (27.3)
Roma	16-38	23	36	27 (6)	27 (90)	24 (80)
B) Syntax					<31	<30
Croatian		26	32	32 (1)	3 (13.6)	2 (9.1)
Roma	24-32	24	32	27 (3)	26 (86.7)	24 (80)
C) Inappropriate Initiation					<25	<23
Croatian		20	30	25 (5.5)	10 (45.5)	5 (22)
Roma	18-30	19	30	27 (5.5)	10 (33.3)	7 (23.3)
D) Coherence					<34	<33
Croatian		22	36	32.5 (4.25)	14 (63.6)	11 (50)
Roma	20-36	22	36	28 (5)	27 (90)	26 (86.7)
E) Stereotyped Conversation					<26	<24
Croatian		21	30	26 (6)	8 (36.4)	3 (13.6)
Roma	14-30	17	30	27 (6.25)	11 (36.7)	8 (26.7)
F) Use of Conversational Context					<29	<27
Croatian		23	32	28 (4)	12 (54.5)	6 (27.3)
Roma	16-32	22	31	27 (4)	23 (73.3)	13 (43.3)
G) Conversational Rapport					<31	<30
Croatian		26	34	33 (4)	7 (31.8)	3 (13.6)
Roma	18-34	23	34	32 (3.25)	10 (33.3)	8 (26.7)
Pragmatic composite					<147	<141
Croatian		127	159	142 (18)	13 (59.1)	10 (45.4)
Roma	88-162	116	157	138 (13.75)	23 (76.7)	17 (56.7)
H) Social Relationships					<31	<30
Croatian		21	33	31.5 (5.25)	7 (31.8)	6 (27.3)
Roma	14-34	23	34	31 (3.25)	11 (36.7)	5 (16.7)
I) Interests					<29	<27
Croatian		27	34	30.5 (4.25)	5 (22.7)	0
Roma	20-34	28	35	31 (2)	2 (6.7)	0

Since the only data regarding the performance of children with ID on pragmatic composite was provided by Botting (2004), it is examined first. Most Croatian and Roma children performed below average (Table 2), as did their British peers in Botting's (2004) study. The majority (63% Croatian and 83.3% Roma children) performed within 1 SD of the mean (M=141.4, SD=11.2) of British children with ID. This suggests that children with MID may display similar pragmatic limitations across languages. Most of our study sample scored below 1 SD below TD children from Bishop and Baird's (2001) study, indicating below-average performance. Further, approximately half of both Croatian and Roma children achieved a score below 2 SDs or less.

The first subscale included in the pragmatic composite is subscale C (Inappropriate Initiation). It deals with behaviors such as to whom and how the child speaks and their turn-taking in conversation (Dukarić et al., 2014). In general, most Croatian and Roma children perform within the normal range on this subscale (Table 2). Subscale D (Coherence) consists of items that evaluate the child's ability to explain and narrate (Dukarić et al., 2014). Coherence refers to the interrelationship between events (Cain, 2003) and requires understanding and expressing them in appropriate language structures (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2017). A substantial number of Croatian and Roma children with MID scored below the thresholds (Table 2), indicating that coherence presents an area of weakness. It is consistent with the literature indicating that children with MID have limited narrative abilities (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2017). Subscale E (Stereotyped Conversation) assesses features such as monitoring conversation partner interest and using over-learned phrases. As most participants scored within the normal range on this subscale (Table 2), this area might be another of their strengths. The subscale F (Conversational context) evaluates a child's understanding of social rules (Dukarić et al., 2014) and adapting to a variety of situations and conversation partners, which is imperative for developing social relationships (Kuvač Kraljević & Olujić, 2015). Both nationalities performed below average on this subscale, suggesting these abilities might be another area of weakness. Lastly, the pragmatic composite includes subscale G (Conversational Rapport), which assesses understanding of facial expressions and gestures and the appropriateness of responses during a conversation (Adams et al., 2017; Bishop, 1998; Botting, 2004). Most participants scored within a normal range on the subscale, indicating that these abilities may also be an area of strength.

Regarding subscales A (Speech Output) and B (Syntax), most Croatian children performed within the normal range (Table 2). Nevertheless, standardized language tests usually show below-average performance in line with the intellectual functioning level (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2017). Additionally, previous research (e.g., Georgieva & Tcholakova, 1996) has shown that children with MID have a variety of limitations across language structure. It is possible that these deficits might be less apparent in a natural context, as they are not

elicited by a specific task. Additionally, subscale items do not capture a wide range of possible language structure deficits. It should be noted, however, that comprehensive speech and language assessments rely on multiple sources of information. Roma children tend to score below average in both subscales (Table 2), which is unsurprising given that they are evaluated in their second language abilities.

As for the final two subscales, H (Social relationships) and I (Interests) neither of the studied groups, in general, exhibited the features associated with ASD with only a small number of participants in both groups manifesting certain autistic features.

Since children with the diagnosis of MID and comorbid ASD were excluded from this research, these results were anticipated.

Overall, the CCC can identify strengths and weaknesses in Croatian and Roma children with MID in several areas of communication and language. As compared to TD children, their pragmatic abilities are lower, and they both exhibit weaknesses in the areas of narration and adjusting to conversational partners. Despite the fact that deficits in language structure may not be apparent to teachers in Croatian as a first language, they are very evident in Croatian as a second language.

To compare Croatian and Roma children's performance on CCC, we used the Mann-Whitney tests. Table 3 summarizes the results.

Table 3

Comparison of Croatian and Roma children's performance on CCC subscales

Variable	Sum of ranks		U	Z
	Croatian nationality children	Roma nationality children		
A) Speech Output	797.50	580.50	115.50	-4.00**
B) Syntax	836.50	541.50	76.50	-4.79**
Pragmatic Composite	671.50	706.50	241.50	-1.64
C) Inappropriate Initiation	534.50	843.50	281.50	-.90
D) Coherence	786.50	591.50	126.50	-3.78**
E) Stereotyped Conversation	578.50	799.50	312.50	-.08
F) Use of Conversational Context	700.50	677.50	212.50	-2.20*
G) Conversational Rapport	707.00	671.00	206.00	-2.33*
H) Social Relationships	578.50	799.50	325.50	-.08
I) Interests	571.00	807.00	318.00	-.22

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

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences between groups on subscales A (Speech Output) (z=-4.00, p<.01) and B (Syntax) (z=-4.79, p<.01). Compared to Croatian children, Roma children are less proficient in Croatian language structure. Given that Croatian is their second and less-frequently used language, these differences are anticipated. Despite these differences, Croatian and Roma children do not differ significantly on the pragmatic composite (z=-1.64, p>.05). These results suggest that there is no difference between their overall pragmatic competence in the Croatian language regardless of the differences in their mastery of its structural components. Literature supports the notion that proficiency in language structure does not necessarily translate into proficiency in its use (Antoniou et al., 2019). Therefore, one can communicate effectively in a given language even if violating some of its structural rules. Even though we found no difference in overall pragmatic ability between groups, we did detect them in its components. Mann-Whitney test revealed statistically significant differences on subscales D (Coherence) (z=-3.78, p<.01), F (Use of Conversational Context) (z=-2.20, p<.05) and G (Conversational Rapport) (z=-2.33, p<.05). Although both groups scored below average on subscale D (Coherence), Croatian children's utterances during conversation and narration were more coherent. Narratives are expressions of one's culture, language, and cognitive and emotional abilities and differ to a level in various languages and cultures (Burck, 2011; Shiro, 2023). Hence, both linguistic and sociocultural differences may contribute to a lower quality of Roma children's narratives in Croatian. Therefore, the transfer of narrative abilities may not be possible between Croatian and Boyash because of such differences, although this issue needs to be further explored. Croatian children performed better on subscale F (Use of Conversational Context) as well, demonstrating higher proficiency in adapting their utterances to different contexts. There is some cultural variation in the rules of socially acceptable behavior (Adair et al., 2015). Cultural differences may be associated with the observed differences, but as no information is available on this aspect of Boyash dialect pragmatics, this assumption is only speculative. The difference between groups on subscale G (Conversational Rapport) was surprising, especially given that both groups scored within the normal range. Croatian children demonstrated superior performance on this subscale as well (Table 3). These differences could also be attributed to sociocultural differences in the use of nonverbal means, but that is yet to be researched.

Our findings could have some implications for intervention in Croatian language pragmatics. Based on our results, the speech and language intervention in children with MID should include narrative abilities as well as rules of how to adapt to different communication partners and contexts. Nevertheless, it is important to strengthen structural abilities in Croatian, especially in Roma students.

Although these results provide insight into the communication and (Croatian) language abilities of Croatian and Roma children with MID, they should be interpreted cautiously. Due to the sample being both convenient and small, the ability to generalize these findings is limited. Moreover, there was a lack of control over certain variables, such as the amount of exposure to Croatian in Roma students. Furthermore, without the data on the performance of TD Croatian and Roma children on CCC, there is no certain way to determine that their peers with MID truly perform below their average. Moreover, the newer version of the checklist (CCC-2; Bishop, 2003) has already been translated and adapted into many languages and has been used extensively in international research and standardized as a clinical tool (Andrés-Roqueta et al., 2021). A standardized and redefined version of CCC-2 already exists for the Serbian language (Andrés-Roqueta et al., 2021; Glumbić & Brojčin, 2012). Thus, it may be more appropriate to adapt and standardize this version to Croatian. This might facilitate the conduct of crosslinguistic and cross-cultural research. It is also important to note that the CCC-2 has been used in more extensive research on a wide range of disorders, such as mental illness and intellectual disability, which may allow for comparisons as well (Wellnitz et al., 2021). Another limitation of this study is that only class teachers completed the checklists. Ideally, multiple experts, or an expert and a parent, should complete CCC to enhance reliability. Based on all the above, it is evident that further research is necessary.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to determine whether a checklist used to assess communication and language abilities in a natural context can identify components of said abilities that represent strengths and weaknesses in children with MID who speak Croatian as their first and second language and whether there are differences in their mastery of different aspects of mentioned abilities. Our results indicate that despite being less proficient in structural components of the Croatian language, Roma children with MID can still use the language components they have acquired in everyday communication as effectively as their Croatian peers. Furthermore, the two groups display the same profile of strengths and weaknesses in different areas of language pragmatics, and their overall pragmatic abilities are below average. The area of language use should, therefore, be targeted during speech and language therapy, especially the areas of narration and adjusting to different conversation partners. However, it is important to develop clinical thresholds for the Croatian and Roma children on this instrument or adapt a newer and wider used one. Additional research is needed to improve understanding of communication and language in monolingual and bilingual children with MID.

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Komunikacijske sposobnosti dece hrvatske i romske nacionalnosti s lakim intelektualnim teškoćama: Postignuće na Ček-listi dečje komunikacije (CCC)

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Uvod: Komunikacijski i jezički razvoj u dece s (lakim) intelektualnim teškoćama obeležen je kašnjenjem. Deca romske nacionalnosti su dvojezična deca. Njihova izloženost hrvatskom jeziku najčešće započinje ulaskom u vaspitno-obrazovni sistem. Skale popunjene od komunikacijskih partnera omogućavaju prikupljanje podataka o dečjim komunikacijskim sposobnostima u prirodnom kontekstu. *Cilj*: Cilj ovog istraživanja je da se dobije uvid u komunikacijske i jezičke (hrvatski jezik) sposobnosti dece hrvatske i romske nacionalnosti s lakim intelektualnim teškoćama. *Metode*: U istraživanju je učestvovalo 52 dece hronološke starosti između 9 i 16 godina (22 hrvatske i 30 romske nacionalnosti). Analizirana su njihova postignuća na Ček-listi postignuća u dečijoj komunikaciji, te upoređena s prethodno objavljenim graničnim vrednostima i međusobno. *Rezultati*: Postignuće hrvatske i romske dece na pragmatičkom kompozitu ispodprosečno je i uporedivo s postignućem njihovih britanskih vršnjaka s intelektualnim teškoćama. Ispodprosečno postignuće na podskalama Govor i Sintaksa prisutno je samo kod dece romske nacionalnosti. Nijedna grupa ne pokazuje obeležja poremećaja iz spektra autizma. Man–Vitnijev test pokazao je statistički značajne razlike između grupa na podskalama Govor i Sintaksa, što govori o lošijoj ovladanosti jezičkom strukturom kod dece romske nacionalnosti. Grupe se ne razlikuju u pragmatičkim sposobnostima. Obe grupe postigle su ispodprosečan rezultat na podskalama Koherencija i Upotreba konteksta, pokazujući uporedive pragmatičke profile. Deca hrvatske nacionalnosti

pokazuju značajno bolje postignuće na podskalama Koherencija, Upotreba konteksta i Raport. *Zaključak*: Deca romske nacionalnosti upotrebljavaju hrvatski jezik jednako uspešno kao i hrvatski vršnjaci uprkos slabijoj ovladanosti njegovom strukturom. Pragmatičke sposobnosti trebalo bi da budu uključene u tretman dece s intelektualnim teškoćama.

Obrazovni status dece i mladih sa problemima ponašanja na domskom smeštaju

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Uvod: Deca i mladi na hraniteljskom i domskom smeštaju imaju niža obrazovna postignuća u poređenju sa opštom populacijom. Prethodna istraživanja sugerišu da su teškoće u obrazovanju posebno učestale kod dece i mladih koji su upućeni na domski smeštaj zbog problema ponašanja. *Cilj:* Istraživanje je imalo za cilj da se utvrdi obrazovni status dece i mladih koji su primljeni na smeštaj u ustanovu za vaspitanje. *Metode:* Uzorak su činili korisnici koji su tokom prethodne četiri godine bili smešteni u Zavodu za vaspitanje dece i omladine Beograd ($N = 69$). Deca i mladi iz uzorka bili su oba pola (muški 75.4%), uzrasta 9–18 godina na prijemu u ustanovu ($AS = 15.39$, $SD = 2.01$). Podaci o obrazovnom statusu i drugim relevantnim karakteristikama dece i mladih prikupljeni su iz službene dokumentacije. *Rezultati:* U vreme prijema na smeštaj 24.6% korisnika nije pohađalo školu, a 33.2% završilo je četiri razreda osnovne škole ili manje. Tokom prethodnog obrazovanja 63.8% ponavljalo je razred, 98.2% učestalo je izostajalo iz škole, prema 26.1% primenjene su vaspitno-disciplinske mere u školi, a 29.0% obrazovalo se prema individualnom obrazovnom planu. Nađene su značajne veze između prosečnog opšteg uspeha i demografskih karakteristika korisnika. *Zaključak:* Deca i mladi u vaspitnim ustanovama iskusili su ozbiljne teškoće u učestvovanju i napredovanju u obrazovanju. Ovo istraživanje skreće pažnju na potrebu za sistematskim praćenjem i unapređivanjem obrazovnih postignuća korisnika na domskom smeštaju u Srbiji.

Ključne reči: alternativni smeštaj, obrazovanje, obrazovna postignuća, problemi ponašanja, socijalna zaštita dece

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Uvod

Na internacionalnom nivou deca i mladi na smeštaju u sistemu socijalne zaštite prepoznati su kao grupa sa nižim obrazovnim postignućima u poređenju sa opštom populacijom. U Srbiji je malo pažnje posvećeno ovom problemu. Gotovo da nema istraživanja koja se bave obrazovanjem dece i mladih na hraniteljskom i domskom smeštaju. Komparativni podaci o obrazovnim postignućima dece i mladih na smeštaju i opšte populacije učenika nisu javno dostupni. U zvaničnim publikacijama o obrazovanju u Srbiji Republičkog zavoda za statistiku nema podataka o obrazovanju ove grupe učenika, a Republički zavod za socijalnu zaštitu objavljuje samo oskudne podatke o njihovoj uključenosti u obrazovanje. Iskustva iz drugih evropskih zemalja pokazuju da nedostatak podataka o obrazovnim postignućima korisnika na smeštaju dovodi do fenomena statističke nevidljivosti, što ima za posledicu da se prisutni problemi ne prepoznaju, niti rešavaju (Montserrat & Casas, 2017, str. 752).

Obrazovna postignuća dece i mladih na smeštaju

Rezultati inostranih istraživanja iz prethodnih nekoliko decenija pokazuju da, ukupno posmatrano, deca i mladi na hraniteljskom i domskom smeštaju imaju niža obrazovna postignuća u odnosu na njihove vršnjake iz opšte populacije. Nalazi većine ovih studija sumirani su u tri sistematska pregleda (Luke & O'Higgins, 2018; Scherr, 2007; Trout et al., 2008), koji izveštavaju da se korisnici na smeštaju razlikuju u odnosu na opštu populaciju učenika prema: nižim intelektualnim sposobnostima i izraženijim potrebama za dodatnom podrškom u obrazovanju; ispotprosečnom opštem uspehu i postignućima na standardizovanim testovima čitanja, pisanja i matematike; većoj učestalosti ponavljanja razreda, izostajanja i isključenja iz škole.

Sistematski pregledi istraživanja o ishodima obrazovanja kod mladih koji koriste ili su ranije koristili usluge hraniteljskog ili domskog smeštaja jasno sugerišu da, u poređenju sa opštom populacijom, u manjem broju slučajeva završe srednje obrazovanje, upisuju i završavaju studije, te nalaze zaposlenje (Gypen et al., 2017; Pecora, 2012). Nalazi sistematskih pregleda koji se specifično bave visokim obrazovanjem potvrđuju da se mladi sa iskustvom smeštaja ređe upisuju na fakultet, a kada se upišu imaju niža postignuća, duže studiraju i učestalije ne završe studije (Geiger & Beltran, 2017; Gillum et al., 2016).

Faktori nižih obrazovnih postignuća dece i mladih na smeštaju

Podatke o nižim obrazovnim postignućima dece i mladih koji žive u hraniteljskoj porodici ili domu ne treba uzeti kao dokaz uzročno-posledične povezanosti između smeštaja i postignuća, već ovu vezu treba sagledati u

svetlu individualnih i sredinskih faktora koji deluju pre i nakon izdvajanja iz porodice. Samo u prethodnih par godina objavljeno je nekoliko sistematskih pregleda u kojima su identifikovane desetine individualnih, porodičnih i školskih faktora, kao i faktora samog smeštaja i šireg sistema koji su povezani sa obrazovnim postignućima ove dece i mladih (Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021; Luke & O'Higgins, 2018; O'Higgins et al., 2017; Townsend et al., 2020). Prema rezultatima navedenih sistematskih pregleda, niža obrazovna postignuća dece i mladih na smeštaju posledica su delovanja više faktora iz različitih domena. Na primer, Garsia-Moloza i saradnici (Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021), u pregledu koji se isključivo bavi obrazovnim postignućima korisnika na domskom smeštaju, kao najznačajnije faktore navode: pol, emocionalne probleme i probleme ponašanja, uzrast prilikom prijema na smeštaj, odnose sa vršnjacima u školi i menjanje škole usled promene smeštaja.

Rezultati ovih sistematskih pregleda takođe otkrivaju da su individualne karakteristike i iskustava pre smeštaja snažno povezani sa obrazovnim postignućima. Za temu ovog rada posebno su značajni nalazi o problemima ponašanja i prethodnom obrazovnom statusu. U tri sistematska pregleda (Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021; O'Higgins et al., 2017; Townsend et al., 2020) navode se rezultati istraživanja koji konzistentno ukazuju na povezanost problema ponašanja i nižih obrazovnih postignuća kod dece i mladih na smeštaju. Pomenuti autori takođe ukazuju da, iako postoje indicije da je obrazovni status pre prijema na smeštaj važan faktor kasnijih obrazovnih postignuća, nedostaju empirijski podaci o iskustvima korisnika u prethodnom obrazovanju. Nalazi malobrojnih istraživanja u kojima je ispitivana ova veza sugerišu da većina korisnika ima niža obrazovna postignuća pre prijema i da to može da bude razlog za njihovo slabije napredovanje u obrazovanju tokom smeštaja (Berridge et al., 2020; Sinclair et al., 2020; Trout et al., 2008).

U kontekstu ovog istraživanja važno je istaći saglasnost empirijskih nalaza u pogledu nižih obrazovnih postignuća dece i mladih na domskom smeštaju u odnosu na korisnike hraniteljskog smeštaja. Bez obzira na specifičnosti domskog smeštaja u pojedinim državama, ovakav trend zabeležen je u SAD (Keller et al., 2007; Zima et al., 2000), Kanadi (Flynn et al., 2013), Velikoj Britaniji (Berridge et al., 2020; Sebba et al., 2015), Australiji (Maclean et al., 2017), Španiji (Montserrat & Casas, 2017), Finskoj (Kääriälä et al., 2019), Švedskoj (Berlin et al., 2011), Belgiji (Gypen et al., 2022), Holandiji (Leloux-Opmeer et al., 2017) i Severnoj Koreji (Kang et al., 2014). Smatra se da su niža obrazovna postignuća korisnika na domskom smeštaju prevashodno povezana sa njihovim individualnim karakteristikama, kao što su: muški pol, stariji uzrast, teškoće u prethodnom obrazovanju, te viši nivo problema ponašanja i emocionalnih problema (Flynn et al., 2013; Leloux-Opmeer et al., 2017; Montserrat & Casas, 2017). Pored toga, neki autori nalaze da su značajni faktori obrazovnih postignuća trajanje i promene

smeštaja (Berridge et al., 2020), kao i odnosi i podrška u domskom okruženju (Gypen et al., 2022; Zima et al., 2000).

Obrazovni status dece i mladih na smeštaju u Srbiji

U 2022. godini stopa dece koja koriste usluge smeštaja na 1.000 dece iznosila je 4.7%, i to 4.2% za hraniteljski i 0.5% za domski smeštaj (Republički zavod za statistiku [RZS], 2023a). Tokom iste godine ukupno 2.093 dece i mladih koristilo je usluge domskog smeštaja, a 31. decembra 2021. u ustanovama za decu i mlade bilo je 1.909 korisnika (Republički zavod za socijalnu zaštitu [RZSZ], 2022). Prema Uredbi o mreži ustanova socijalne zaštite (2013), 21 ustanova pruža usluge domskog smeštaja deci i mladima, uključujući tri ustanove za vaspitanje dece i omladine – u Beogradu, Nišu i Knjaževcu. U ustanove za vaspitanje, na osnovu odluke organa starateljstva, odnosno rešenja centra za socijalni rad, upućuju se deca i mladi sa problemima ponašanja. Zakon o socijalnoj zaštiti (2022) propisuje da se u ovim ustanovama takođe izvršavaju vaspitne mere koje sud izriče učiniocima krivičnih dela uzrasta 14–18 godina.

U ustanovama za vaspitanje tokom 2021. ukupan broj korisnika iznosio je 81, a 31. decembra 2021. godine 47 (RZSZ, 2022). U 54.3% slučajeva korisnici su smešteni na osnovu odluke organa starateljstva, a u 45.7% na osnovu izrečene vaspitne mere. Osnovne karakteristike korisnika su: 83.0% je muškog pola, 66.0% je uzrasta 16 i više godina, a 61.7% ima teškoće u mentalnom razvoju (27.6% intelektualna ometenost i 72.4% drugi mentalni poremećaji). Podaci o obrazovnom statusu pokazuju da 3.7% korisnika upućenih od organa starateljstva i 25.0% korisnika sa izrečenom vaspitnom merom koji su srednjoškolskog uzrasta ne pohađa srednju školu.

Prema našim saznanjima, u Srbiji nisu rađene studije o obrazovnom statusu dece i mladih u ustanovama za vaspitanje, a malobrojna istraživanja o obrazovanju korisnika na porodičnom i domskom smeštaju sugerišu da je stanje slično kao u drugim državama. U studiji o karakteristikama dece i mladih na smeštaju, Milanović i Žegarac (2014) navode da prilikom prijema 7.5% korisnika školskog uzrasta nije bilo uključeno u obrazovanje ili je napustilo školu, a 5.3% je imalo nedovoljan opšti uspeh. Nalazi istraživanja Burgund Isakov i Hrnčić (2018) na uzorku mladih koji su u procesu pripreme za napuštanje staranja pokazuju da je 94.7% uključeno u obrazovanje, a da među onima koji pohađaju školu 5.3% ima nedovoljan uspeh. U ovom istraživanju nisu nađene značajne razlike u obrazovnim postignućima između mladih na hraniteljskom, srodničkom i domskom smeštaju. Informativni su i empirijski nalazi o obrazovnom statusu dece i mladih u prihvatilištima, prema kojima 39.1% korisnika Prihvatilišta za decu Beograda (Stojanović i Žunić-Pavlović, 2019) i 24% korisnika Prihvatilišta za urgentnu zaštitu dece od zlostavljanja

i zanemarivanja (Žunić-Pavlović et al., 2022) nije pohađalo školu u vreme prijema na smeštaj.

Cilj ovog istraživanja je utvrđivanje obrazovnog statusa dece i mladih u vreme prijema na smeštaj u Zavod za vaspitanje dece i omladine u Beogradu. Prethodni pregled literature otkriva da autori iz drugih država saglasno izveštavaju o nižim obrazovnim postignućima korisnika na smeštaju, ali da nedostaju informacije o stanju u Srbiji. Sudeći prema empirijskim nalazima da su niža obrazovna postignuća značajno povezana sa domskim smeštajem i problemima ponašanja, deca i mladi u ustanovama za vaspitanje predstavljaju posebno ugroženu grupu. Smatramo da su informacije o obrazovnom statusu dece i mladih na prijemu u ustanovu za vaspitanje od ključnog značaja za izbor i primenu mera usmerenih na unapređenje njihovih obrazovnih postignuća.

Metode

Uzorak

Uzorak čine sva deca i mladi sa problemima ponašanja koji su u periodu od 1. januara 2019. do 1. februara 2023. godine koristili usluge smeštaja u Zavodu za vaspitanje dece i omladine Beograd. U posmatranom periodu na smeštaju u Zavodu bilo je 69 dece i mladih oba pola (muški 75.4%), uzrasta na prijemu 9–18 godina (AS = 15.39, SD = 2.01). Detaljan prikaz karakteristika uzorka dat je u Tabeli 1.

Instrumenti

Za potrebe ovog istraživanja formiran je instrument za sistematsko prikupljanje podataka iz dokumentacije, koji je sadržao sledeće grupe varijabli: osnovne karakteristike korisnika, uključenost i napredovanje u obrazovanju i teškoće u obrazovanju. Sve varijable su dihotomizovane. Varijable koje opisuju osnovne karakteristike korisnika su: način upućivanja (upućivanje od organa starateljstva ili izrečena vaspitna mera), uzrast na prijemu (do 15 godina ili 15 godina i stariji), pol (muški ili ženski), nacionalna pripadnost (Srbi ili drugo), prethodni smeštaj (sa biološkim roditeljima ili drugo), smetnje u razvoju (da ili ne), mentalni poremećaji (da ili ne), problematična upotreba alkohola i droga (da ili ne) i zlostavljanje i zanemarivanje u porodici (da ili ne). Varijable koje opisuju uključenost i napredovanje u obrazovanju su: uključenost u obrazovanje (da ili ne), vrsta škole (redovna škola ili drugo), kašnjenje u obrazovanju (da ili ne) i opšti uspeh (dovoljan ili dobar, vrlodobar i odličan). Varijable koje opisuju teškoće u prethodnom obrazovanju i u školskoj godini koja je prethodila prijemu na smeštaj su: ponavljanje razreda (da ili ne), učestalo izostajanje sa nastave (da ili ne), izrečene vaspitno-disciplinske mere u školi (da ili ne) i školovanje po individualnom obrazovnom planu – IOP 1 (da ili ne).

Procedure

Istraživanje je odobrila Etička komisija Akademije za humani razvoj (Odluka br. 7/189). Plan istraživanja prezentovan je Upravi Zavoda za vaspitanje dece i omladine u Beogradu i dobijena je saglasnost za realizaciju istraživanja.

Uzorak je selekcionisan na osnovu uvida u matičnu knjigu i konsultacija sa socijalnom radnicom Zavoda. Podaci o deci i mladima na smeštaju prikupljeni su iz dosijea korisnika, koji sadrži: izveštaje i dopise centra za socijalni rad, zdravstvenu i školsku dokumentaciju, sudske presude i rešenja, kao i izveštaje stručnih radnika Zavoda o funkcionisanju korisnika pre i nakon prijema na smeštaj. Obučena istraživačica (jedna od autorki) analizirala je dokumentaciju i popunjavala instrument za prikupljanje podataka.

Obrada podataka

Podaci su obrađeni pomoću statističkog paketa SPSS version 21. Urađena je deskriptivna analiza svih varijabli uključenih u istraživanje, a zatim je metodama inferencijalne statistike (hi-kvadrat test) ispitana povezanost između varijabli uključenih u istraživanje. Analizirane su razlike u uključenosti, napredovanju i teškoćama u obrazovanju u odnosu na demografske karakteristike korisnika (pol, uzrast, nacionalna pripadnost, prethodni smeštaj i način upućivanja).

Rezultati

Osnovne karakteristike dece i mladih iz uzorka

U Tabeli 1 prikazane su osnovne karakteristike uzorka, a u nastavku su data samo neophodna objašnjenja za pojedine varijable. Kategorija korisnika druge nacionalne pripadnosti uključuje 46.4% Roma i po 1.4% Albanaca, Slovaka i Mađara. Korisnici koji nisu živeli sa roditeljima, bili su na smeštaju u: hraniteljskoj porodici (18.8%), ustanovi za decu bez roditeljskog staranja (14.5%), prihvatilištu (14.5%) i sigurnoj kući (1.4%). Evidentirane smetnje u razvoju su: laka intelektualna ometenost (10.1%), oštećenje vida (1.4%) i govorno-jezički poremećaji (1.4%). Dijagnostikovani mentalni poremećaji (izuzimajući intelektualnu ometenost) su: poremećaj ponašanja (78.3%), komorbiditet poremećaja ponašanja i drugih mentalnih poremećaja (15.9%) i drugi mentalni poremećaji (2.9%).

Tabela 1

Osnovne karakteristike uzorka (N = 69)

Varijabla	Grupe	f	%
Način upućivanja	organ starateljstva	33	47.8
	vaspitna mera	36	52.2
Uzrast na prijemu	do 15 godina	20	29.0
	15 i više godina	49	71.0
Pol	muški	52	75.4
	ženski	17	24.6
Nacionalnost	Srbi	34	49.3
	drugo	35	50.7
Prethodni smeštaj	sa biološkim roditeljima	35	50.7
	drugo	34	49.3
Smetnje u razvoju		9	13.0
Dijagnostikovani mentalni poremećaji		67	97.1
Problematična upotreba alkohola i droga		23	33.3
Zlostavljanje i zanemarivanje u porodici		45	65.2

Uključenost i napredovanje u obrazovanju

U Tabeli 2 prikazani su podaci o uključenosti i napredovanju u obrazovanju korisnika pre prijema na smeštaj. U kategoriji korisnika neuključenih u obrazovanje 17.4% napustilo je obrazovanje, a 7.2% isključeno je iz škole. Korisnici su prethodno pohađali: redovnu osnovnu (47.8%) ili srednju školu (34.8%), osnovnu školu za učenike sa smetnjama u razvoju (13.0%) i osnovnu (1.4%) ili srednju (2.9%) školu za obrazovanje odraslih. Više od polovine korisnika nema završenu osnovnu školu, među kojima je 26.1% uzrasta 15 i više godina. Trećina (33.2%) ukupnog broja korisnika i petina (20.3%) korisnika uzrasta 15 i više godina završila je samo četiri razreda osnovne škole ili manje.

Tabela 2

Karakteristike uključenosti i napredovanja u obrazovanju (N = 69)

Varijabla	Grupe	f	%
Uključenost u obrazovanje	da	52	75.4
Vrsta škole	redovna škola	57	82.6
	škola za učenike sa smetnjama u razvoju	9	13.0
	škola za obrazovanje odraslih	3	4.3
Nivo obrazovanja	nezavršena osnovna škola	38	55.1
	završena osnovna škola	30	43.5
	završena srednja škola	1	1.4
Prosečan školski uspeh	dovoljan	39	56.5
	dobar	23	33.3
	vrlodobar	7	10.1

Teškoće u obrazovanju

Tokom prethodnog obrazovanja kod 97.1% korisnika evidentirana je neka od sledećih teškoća: ponavljanje razreda, učestalo neopravdano izostajanje sa nastave, izricanje vaspitno-disciplinskih mera u školi ili potrebe za pohađanjem nastave prema IOP-u 1. U proseku, svaki korisnik je tokom obrazovanja iskusio dve teškoće (AS = 2.12, SD = 0.87). Tabela 3 sadrži podatke o učestalosti navedenih teškoća tokom prethodnog obrazovanja i u školskoj godini koja je prethodila prijemu na smeštaj.

Tabela 3

Učestalost teškoća u obrazovanju (N = 69)

Varijabla	Tokom prethodnog obrazovanja		U školskoj godini koja je prethodila prijemu	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*
Ponavljanje razreda	44	63.8	19	27.5
jedanput	32	46.4		
dva puta	9	13.0		
tri puta	2	2.9		
četiri puta	1	1.4		
Neopravdano izostajanje	64	92.8	59	85.5
Vaspitno-disciplinske mere	18	26.1	10	14.5
premeštaj u drugu školu	4	5.8	2	2.9
isključenje iz škole	8	11.6	5	7.2
ukor direktora ili nastavničkog veća	18	26.1	12	17.4
IOP 1	20	29.0	19	27.5

Povezanost obrazovnog statusa i karakteristika korisnika

U tabelama 4 i 5 prikazani su podaci o obrazovnom statusu korisnika prema polu, uzrastu, nacionalnoj pripadnosti, prethodnom smeštaju i načinu upućivanja, kao i rezultati testiranja značajnosti razlika između grupa primenom hi-kvadrat testa. Značajne razlike nađene su samo u pogledu nižeg opšteg uspeha, koji je značajno zastupljeniji kod korisnika mlađeg uzrasta (χ^2 = 6.32, df = 1, p < .05) i kod korisnika koji nisu srpske nacionalne pripadnosti (χ^2 = 4.20, df = 1, p < .05).

Tabela 4

Razlike u uključenosti i napredovanju u obrazovanju

Varijabla	Uključenost u obrazovanje		Redovna škola		Kašnjenje u obrazovanju		Niži opšti uspeh	
	%	$\chi^2(1)$	%	$\chi^2(1)$	%	$\chi^2(1)$	%	$\chi^2(1)$
Pol								
muški	75.0	0.39	82.7	0.00	78.8	0.74	57.7	0.12
ženski	82.4		82.4		88.2		52.9	
Uzrast								
mlađi od 15	70.0	0.44	90.0	1.07	75.0	0.70	80.0	6.32*
15 godina i stariji	77.6		79.6		83.7		46.9	
Nacionalna pripadnost								
Srbi	85.3	3.56	79.4	0.48	73.5	2.55	44.1	4.20*
drugo	65.7		85.7		88.6		68.6	
Prethodni smeštaj								
sa roditeljima	74.3	0.04	82.9	0.00	77.1	0.75	48.6	1.83
drugo	76.5		82.4		85.3		64.7	
Način upućivanja								
organ starateljstva	69.7	1.09	87.9	1.22	78.8	0.23	63.6	1.30
vaspitna mera	80.6		77.8		83.3		50.0	

Napomena: *p < .05

Tabela 5

Razlike u učestalosti teškoća u obrazovanju

Varijabla	Ponavljanje razreda		Neopravdano izostajanje		Vaspitno-disciplinske mere		IOP 1	
	%	$\chi^2(1)$	%	$\chi^2(1)$	%	$\chi^2(1)$	%	$\chi^2(1)$
Pol								
muški	65.4	0.24	96.2	3.63	30.8	2.40	32.7	1.41
ženski	58.8		82.4		11.8		17.6	
Uzrast								
mlađi od 15	60.0	0.17	90.0	0.32	30.0	0.22	30.0	0.01
15 godina i stariji	65.3		93.9		24.5		28.6	
Nacionalna pripadnost								
Srbi	58.8	0.71	88.2	2.04	23.5	0.23	26.5	0.21
drugo	68.6		97.1		28.6		31.4	
Prethodni smeštaj								
sa roditeljima	71.4	1.80	87.5		17.1	2.95	22.9	1.30
drugo	55.9		100.0		35.3		35.3	
Način upućivanja								
organ starateljstva	57.6	1.05	90.9	0.32	24.2	0.11	36.4	1.67
vaspitna mera	69.4		94.4		27.8		22.2	

Diskusija

Rezultati ovog istraživanja podržavaju hipotezu o postojanju znatnih teškoća u učestvovanju i napredovanju u obrazovanju kod dece i mladih na smeštaju u ustanovama za vaspitanje. Prezentovani rezultati imaju podršku u nalazima inostranih studija da kod korisnika domskog smeštaja postoji značajna povezanost problema ponašanja sa: nižim uspehom (González-García et al., 2017; Sinclair et al., 2020), disciplinskim problemima u školi (Moreno Manso et al., 2011; Zima et al., 2000), nižim nivoom angažovanja u školi (Maneiro, 2019), neusklađenošću kalendarskog i školskog uzrasta (Sullivan et al., 2010) i nižim nivoom obrazovanja na starijem uzrastu (Vinnerljung & Sallnäs, 2008). U nastavku su nalazi o obrazovnom statusu korisnika na smeštaju u Zavodu za vaspitanje dece i omladine Beograd komparirani sa zvaničnim statističkim podacima o obrazovanju dece i mladih u Srbiji.

Uključenost u obrazovanje korisnika na smeštaju manja je u odnosu na opštu populaciju školskog uzrasta. Pre prijema na smeštaj 75.4% od ukupnog broja korisnika bilo je uključeno u obrazovanje – 70.0% uzrasta do 15 godina i 77.6% uzrasta 15 i više godina. Prema zvaničnim statističkim podacima u Srbiji je u školskoj 2020/2021. godini obuhvat osnovnim obrazovanjem iznosio 95.7%, a srednjim 86.1% (RZS, 2022). U 2022. godini stopa mladih uzrasta 15–24 godine koji nisu zaposleni, niti pohađaju obrazovanje ili obuku, iznosila je 13.0% (RZS, 2023b).

Dobijeni rezultati pokazuju da su pre smeštaja deca i mladi iz uzorka učestalije pohađali škole za učenike sa smetnjama u razvoju (13.0%) i škole za obrazovanje odraslih (4.3%), u poređenju sa njihovim vršnjacima iz opšte populacije. U Srbiji u školskoj 2020/2021. godini zastupljenost učenika koji pohađaju osnovne i srednje škole za učenike sa smetnjama u razvoju iznosila je 0.8%, a škole za osnovno obrazovanje odraslih 1.21% (RZS, 2022).

Kod korisnika na smeštaju evidentna je neusklađenost kalendarskog i školskog uzrasta, što najbolje ilustruje nalaz da 26.1% korisnika uzrasta 15 i više godina nije završilo osnovnu školu, a da je 20.3% završilo najviše četiri razreda osnovne škole. Prema rezultatima PISA 2018 studije, 0.9% petnaestogodišnjaka pohađalo je sedmi ili osmi razred osnovne škole, dok je 99.0% pohađalo srednju školu (Videnović i Čaprić, 2020). Na uzrastu 15–24 godine 5.0% mladih je u najboljem slučaju završilo osnovnu školu i nije nastavilo dalje školovanje (RZS, 2023b). U 2022. godini u Srbiji stopa završavanja osnovnog obrazovanja iznosila je 96.4%, a srednjeg obrazovanja 90.9% (RZS, 2023a).

Prosečan opšti uspeh tokom prethodnog obrazovanja niži je kod dece i mladih iz uzorka u odnosu na opštu populaciju. O tome najbolje govori podatak da je više od polovine ostvarilo dovoljan uspeh, a da nijedan korisnik nije ostvario odličan uspeh. Na nivou Srbije, od ukupnog broja učenika koji su polagali završni ispit u školskoj 2021/2022. godini, dovoljan opšti uspeh u

šestom razredu ostvarilo 0.5%, u sedmom razredu 1.2% i u osmom razredu 1.5% učenika, dok je odličan uspeh ostvarilo 51.3% učenika na kraju šestog, 41.1% na kraju sedmog i 42.6% razreda na kraju osmog razreda (Vukmirović, 2022).

Gotovo sva deca i mladi iz uzorka iskusili su teškoće tokom prethodnog obrazovanja u vidu ponavljanja razreda, učestalog neopravdanog izostajanja sa nastave, izricanja vaspitno-disciplinskih mera u školi ili potrebe za pohađanjem nastave prema IOP-u 1. Učestalost ponavljanja razreda kod korisnika na smeštaju (63.8%) daleko je veća u odnosu na rezultate PISA 2018 studije, prema kojima se Srbija ubraja među države sa najnižom učestalošću ponavljanja razreda – svega 1.4% (Videnović i Čaprić, 2020). Često neopravdano izostajanje sa nastave evidentirano je kod 92.8% korisnika na smeštaju, ali treba istaći da međunarodne studije izveštavaju o relativno visokoj učestalosti ove pojave u Srbiji. Tokom dve nedelje koje su prethodile PISA testiranju učestalost neopravdanog izostajanja iz škole ceo dan i sa ponekog časa bila je veća u Srbiji (24% i 41%) u odnosu na prosek za države članice OECD-a (21% i 27%) (Videnović i Čaprić, 2020). Izricanje najtežih vaspitno-disciplinskih mera u školi iskusilo je više od četvrtine korisnika na smeštaju, a 11.6% je isključeno iz škole. Pošto zvanični statistički podaci o ovom pokazatelju obrazovanja nisu dostupni za Srbiju, može se navesti podatak iz inostranih studija da je učestalost isključenja iz škole dece i mladih na smeštaju od četiri do 13 puta veća nego u opštoj populaciji učenika (Sebba et al., 2015). U našem istraživanju skoro trećina (29.0%) uzorka pohađala je nastavu prema IOP-u 1, u poređenju sa 1.6% ukupnog broja učenika koji su u školskoj 2021/2022. godini polagali završni ispit (Vukmirović, 2022).

Rezultati ovog istraživanja pokazuju da je niži opšti uspeh značajno povezan sa nacionalnom pripadnošću i uzrastom na prijemu. U poređenju sa korisnicima srpske nacionalne pripadnosti, korisnici druge nacionalne pripadnosti su u značajno većem broju slučajeva imali niži opšti uspeh. Imajući u vidu da kategoriju druge nacionalne pripadnosti uglavnom čine Romi, može se reći da ovaj nalaz odražava razlike u obrazovnim postignućima koje su inače prisutne u opštoj populaciji učenika. U školskoj 2021/2022. godini dovoljan uspeh na kraju osmog razreda imalo 15.1% učenika romske nacionalne manjine obuhvaćenih afirmativnim merama, u odnosu na 1.5% ostalih učenika (Vukmirović, 2022). U prilog dobijenim nalazima govore i rezultati studije o položaju dece u romskim naseljima u Srbiji, za koje je stopa završavanja osnovne škole (64.0%) znatno niža u poređenju sa ostalom decom u Srbiji (93.4%) (RZS i UNICEF, 2014). Autori inostranih istraživanja takođe nalaze da je etnička pripadnost značajan faktor postignuća na testovima akademskih veština i znanja kod dece i mladih na domskom smeštaju (Berridge et al., 2020; Griffith et al., 2010; Turpel-Lafond, 2007; Zima et al., 2000).

Prema rezultatima ovog istraživanja, niži opšti uspeh značajno je učestaliji kod korisnika koji su primljeni na smeštaj na uzrastu mlađem od 15 godina u odnosu na korisnike koji su na prijemu imali 15 i više godina. Ovaj nalaz odstupa od rezultata drugih istraživanja na uzorcima dece i mladih na domskom smeštaju koji ukazuju na postojanje negativne veze između uzrasta na prijemu i opšteg uspeha (Berridge et al., 2020), odnosno postignuća na testovima akademskih veština i znanja (Griffith et al., 2010). Međutim, treba imati u vidu da uzorak našeg istraživanja čine isključivo deca i mladi sa problemima ponašanja, pa je očekivano da do izražaja dođu drugi faktori obrazovnih postignuća. Prema teoriji Teri Mofit (Moffitt, 1993), problemi ponašanja sa početkom u detinjstvu imaju različitu etiologiju od onih koji započinju u adolescenciji. Za razliku od problema ponašanja u adolescenciji, problemi ponašanja na mlađem uzrastu povezani su sa kognitivnim deficitima, što može objasniti niži opšti uspeh mlađih korisnika iz našeg uzorka.

S druge strane, u ovom istraživanju nisu nađene značajne razlike u obrazovnom statusu u zavisnosti od pola, prethodnog smeštaja i načina upućivanja korisnika. Kada je reč o polnim razlikama, dobijeni nalazi su u skladu sa zvaničnim podacima za opštu populaciju učenika u Srbiji koji sugerišu da dečaci imaju niža obrazovna postignuća, ali da te razlike nisu značajne. U 2022. godini stopa odustajanja od školovanja u osnovnom obrazovanju bila je 0.5% za muški i 0.3% za ženski pol (RZS, 2023c), a u srednjem obrazovanju 1.4% za muški i 1.0% za ženski pol (RZS, 2023d). U generaciji koja je u školskoj 2021/2022. godini polagala završni ispit nije se značajno razlikovala proporcija dečaka i devojčica sa dovoljnim uspehom u šestom (0.7% i 0.2%), sedmom (1.8% i 0.7%) i osmom razredu (2.2% i 0.8%) (Vukmirović, 2022). Prema istom izvoru, nastavu prema IOP-u 1 pohađalo je više dečaka (63.1%) nego devojčica (36.9%), što je potvrdilo i ovo istraživanje. Što se tiče ponavljanja razreda, rezultati PISA 2018 studije pokazuju da nema značajnih polnih razlika (Videnović i Čaprić, 2020).

Zanimljivo je da nisu nađene značajne razlike u obrazovnom statusu u zavisnosti od toga da li su korisnici prethodno živeli sa biološkim roditeljima ili su bili na smeštaju u sistemu socijalne zaštite. Međutim, u studijama koje su ispitivale efekte restriktivnosti prethodnog smeštaja na postignuća na testovima akademskih veština i znanja takođe nisu nađene značajne veze (Griffith et al., 2010). Empirijski podaci pokazuju da deca i mladi koji su duže vreme na smeštaju imaju bolja obrazovna postignuća od njihovih vršnjaka u stanju socijalne potrebe koji nisu na smeštaju (Sinclair et al., 2020). Ovi nalazi impliciraju da odgovarajući smeštaj u sistemu socijalne zaštite može da doprinese boljim obrazovnim postignućima korisnika.

Na kraju, prema nalazima ovog istraživanja nema značajnih razlika u obrazovnom statusu između korisnika upućenih od organa starateljstva i korisnika sa izrečenom vaspitnom merom. Malo se zna o potencijalnim

efektima zajedničkog smeštaja ove dve grupe korisnika. Autori inostranih istraživanja opravdavaju ovakvu praksu pozivajući se na empirijske nalaze o sličnosti dve grupe u pogledu potreba za tretmanom u domenu mentalnog zdravlja i nivou rizika od osude za krivična dela u odraslom dobu (Jäggi et al., 2021). Rezultati našeg istraživanja pokazuju da su ove dve grupe korisnika slične i prema obrazovnom statusu.

Okolnosti koje dovode do smeštaja dece i mladih u ustanovu za vaspitanje obično su teške, što potvrđuju podaci o učestalosti zlostavljanja i zanemarivanja, mentalnih poremećaja, problematične upotrebe supstanci i smetnji u razvoju kod korisnika iz uzorka. Negativna iskustva i teškoće u funkcionisanju u različitim razvojnim domenima mogu se odraziti na obrazovna postignuća (González-García et al., 2017; Maclean et al., 2017). U budućim istraživanjima treba ispitati efekte ovih faktora.

Ovo istraživanje ima niz ograničenja. Kao što je pomenuto, analizom nisu obuhvaćene neke važne karakteristike korisnika i njihove životne situacije koje mogu uticati na obrazovni status. Pored toga, u istraživanju je korišćena službena dokumentacija, koja sadrži samo šture informacije o ispitivanim varijablama. Dobro bi bilo da se u buduća istraživanja uključe korisnici i njihovi roditelji ili staratelji, kako bi se dobila potpunija slika obrazovnog statusa na prijemu na smeštaj. Istraživanje je rađeno u jednoj ustanovi za vaspitanje dece i omladine i na relativno malom uzorku korisnika. Dobijene nalaze treba proveriti obuhvatnijim istraživanjima u drugim ustanovama ovog tipa, kao i poređenjem sa korisnicima drugih vrsta smeštaja i opštom populacijom školskog uzrasta.

I pored navedenih ograničenja, rezultati ovog istraživanja predstavljaju značajan doprinos znanju o ključnim pokazateljima obrazovnog statusa dece i mladih u sistemu socijalne zaštite, posebno u ustanovama za vaspitanje. Dobijeni nalazi nedvosmisleno sugerišu da istraživači treba da posvete više pažnje proučavanju obrazovanja korisnika na smeštaju. Razumevanje njihovih obrazovnih potreba može imati praktične implikacije u vidu: obezbeđivanja kvalitetnije dodatne podrške, unapređenja programa obrazovanja i uslova smeštaja, stručnog usavršavanja zaposlenih u socijalnoj zaštiti i obrazovanju, kao i bolje saradnje ova dva sistema. Ozbiljnu prepreku u razvoju obrazovnih politika koje imaju za cilj unapređenje položaja dece i mladih na smeštaju predstavlja nepostojanje zvaničnih statističkih podataka o njihovom obrazovanju. U Strategiji razvoja obrazovanja i vaspitanja u Republici Srbiji do 2030. godine (2021) ukazuje se na potrebu za prikupljanjem podataka o obrazovanju učenika iz osetljivih grupa, kao i za povezivanjem statistike u obrazovanju i drugim sistemima.

Zaključak

    Prezentovani rezultati o obrazovnom statusu dece i mladih na prijemu u ustanovu za vaspitanje otkrivaju visoku učestalost teškoća u učestvovanju i napredovanju tokom prethodnog obrazovanja. Ovi nalazi su u skladu sa rezultatima prethodnih istraživanja i naglašavaju potrebu za obezbeđivanjem odgovarajuće dodatne podrške u obrazovanju i vaspitanju u cilju nadoknađivanja propuštenog i ostvarivanja pozitivnih obrazovnih ishoda u budućnosti. Dobijeni rezultati sugerišu da se obrazovna postignuća dece i mladih koji se primaju na smeštaj u ustanove za vaspitanje razlikuju u zavisnosti od njihovih demografskih karakteristika. Stoga poznavanje faktora koji negativno utiču na obrazovna postignuća i detaljna procena obrazovnog statusa na prijemu imaju ključnu ulogu u obezbeđivanju kvalitetnog obrazovanja za korisnike na smeštaju.

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Educational status of children and youth with behavioral problems in residential care

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Introduction. Children and youth in foster and residential care have lower educational attainment compared to the general population. Previous research suggests that difficulties in education are especially frequent among children and youth who have been admitted to residential care due to behavioral problems. *Objective.* The aim of the research was to determine the educational status of children and youth who were admitted to an educational institution. *Methods.* The sample consisted of users placed in the Institute for the Education of Children and Youth Belgrade in the previous four years ($N = 69$). Children and youth from the sample were of both sexes (male 75.4%), aged 9–18 years at the time of admission ($M = 15.39$, $SD = 2.01$). Data on education and other relevant characteristics of children and youth were collected from official documentation. *Results.* At the time of admission, 24.6% did not attend school, and 33.2% had four or fewer grades of elementary school. During their previous education, 63.8% repeated one grade, 98.2% were often absent from school, 26.1% were subjected to disciplinary measures, and 29.0% were educated according to an individual educational plan. Significant relationships were found between average performance and demographic characteristics of users. *Conclusion.* Children and youth in educational institutions have experienced serious difficulties in participating and progressing in education. This research draws attention to the need for systematic monitoring and improvement of the educational attainment of children and youth in residential care in Serbia.

   Keywords: alternative care, education, educational attainment, behavioral problems, child welfare

Social inclusion of adult people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia

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Introduction. Contemporary social policies aimed at individuals with disabilities are grounded in the social model of disability. As a result, the primary objective of social policy towards individuals with disabilities globally, within the EU, and also in Croatia, is the pursuit of social inclusion following the initiation of deinstitutionalization. *Objectives*. This research aimed to examine the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities in Croatia. The primary objective involved identifying dimensions or factors within the social inclusion Questionnaire. Additionally, the study sought to explore potential correlations between the age and gender of adults with intellectual disabilities and their level of social inclusion. *Method*. The study comprised 145 adults with intellectual disabilities, residing with their families in various cities across the Republic of Croatia. A questionnaire specifically tailored to measure the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities was developed. *Results*. The final version of the Questionnaire singled out 4 factors within the construct of social inclusion: Social environment and physical health; Inclusion and human rights; Mental health and relationships with family and friends; and Economic well-being. The findings revealed that there were no statistically significant associations between the social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities and either their age or gender. *Conclusion*. It is important to develop better measurement instruments for social inclusion and to conduct research on

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a larger sample of individuals not involved in non-governmental programs. The impact of age and gender should also be examined qualitatively to identify specific characteristics. Additionally, according to the descriptive data, there is a need for improved educational programs and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: adults with intellectual disabilities, social inclusion, age, gender

Introduction

People with disabilities are a particularly vulnerable social group (Snipstad, 2022). Contemporary social policies directed at individuals with disabilities are grounded in the social model of disability. This model emphasizes that disability is linked to societal barriers faced by individuals with physical and/or psychological limitations in their functioning (Mihanović, 2011). This perspective marks a significant departure from the traditional medical model, which views disability primarily as a problem of the individual, caused by physical or mental impairments that require medical treatment or intervention (Shakespeare, 2013). Instead, the social model emphasizes the need for societal change to remove these barriers, thereby promoting equality and full participation for individuals with disabilities. Following the onset of deinstitutionalization, the concept of social inclusion emerged as the primary objective of global, EU-wide, and Croatian social policies directed toward individuals with disabilities (Leemann et al., 2022; Steward, 2000, both according to Nousiainen & Leemann, 2024). This is supported by numerous documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OG, 2007), the European Disability Strategy (EU, 2010), as well as the domestic document National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2017 to 2020 (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2017). Social inclusion refers to the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged based on their disabilities. Social inclusion is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses various aspects of life, including social interactions, access to education and employment, physical and mental health, human rights, and economic well-being.

When it comes to people with intellectual disabilities, they represent a particularly marginalized group within the group of people with disabilities. It is one of the most socially excluded social groups (Bollard, 2009). Skočić Mihić and Kiš-Glavaš (2010) speak of "a particularly unfavorable employment and social status of people with intellectual disabilities" (p. 388), which is certainly inseparable from the status of social inclusion. Also, in the European report on the implementation of the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2010-2020, the European Union states that most of the activities were related to people with visible disabilities, while the needs of people with intellectual disabilities were less considered (EU, 2020). This paper researches some determinants

of social inclusion in this population, i.e., adults with intellectual disabilities. Understanding social inclusion should be guided by the principles what are created by Brown et al. 2015 and some of them are: social inclusion is viewed within the framework of an ecological perspective; it is the result of a complex interaction between a person and the society or communities within which persons live and develop; social inclusion should be viewed from a lifelong and developmental perspective; it is a dynamic process, not an immutable state, etc.

Research on social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities was first, as stated by Amado et al. (2013), focused on the mere physical presence of persons in local communities and on the number of community activities in which persons could have been involved. Gradually, the direction of research turned toward the actual involvement of persons in the communities in which they lived, examining the concepts of "belonging", "community connection", and "friendships" in local communities. Cobigo et al. (2012) state that a sense of belonging and personal well-being should also be included in defining social inclusion. Despite the relatively long era of research on the subject, the concept of social inclusion is still unclear. According to Cobigo & Stuart (2010), it is not agreed upon what the concept of social inclusion is made of. Studies identify various factors influencing the social inclusion of people with disabilities (Koller et al., 2018) like the role of family and friends (Leyser & Kirk, 2004), financial possibilities (Wann & Burke-Smalley, 2023) or societal attitudes (Smith et al., 2016). This research explores factors and potential individual determinants of social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities, such as gender and age.

Pagan (2020) states that Yang and Victor (2011) found that the prevalence of loneliness generally increases with age, but this relationship may vary from country to country. Additionally, Pagan (2020) found that men have lower loneliness scores compared to women. Also, a strong association was found in his research between loneliness and the age of the individual, but with differences according to gender and disability status. In men with a more severe degree of disability, the level of loneliness decreases with age, while in women, the opposite result occurs. Gender and age are cited by Sarkar and Parween (2021) as one of the factors of social exclusion of persons with disabilities. Lazarus and Oluwole (2017, according to WHO 2010) state that there is exclusion, stigma, prejudice, and inequality toward girls with disabilities. Pandey et al. (2024) also mention the importance of the influence of age, sex, and gender orientation in controlling resources (including social resources), whereby women are in a significantly worse position. Silver (2015) states that gender, age, and disability are the basis for social exclusion in almost all countries, but the extent of these differences is different from country to country. He believes that the national and cultural context shapes social inclusion at the level of economic, social, and political life. Quinn et al. (2016) note that in Bangladesh, women with

disabilities are doubly discriminated against and that they are excluded from social activities and social groups. Tefera et al. (2018) also point out that, along with disability, gender is one of the important factors that limit the possibility of women with disabilities achieving equal participation in society. Women with disabilities face additional barriers to social inclusion – because of the prejudices they may face due to their gender and disability (White et al., 2018). Simões and Santos (2016) found that gender is a predictor of the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities (including social inclusion). Morán et al. (2019), on a sample of children and young people with intellectual and autism spectrum disorders, also found gender differences that showed that girls were less socially involved than boys.

Obviously, there is still much space to define and explore social inclusion. This paper seeks to contribute to understanding the concept of social inclusion in the context of people with intellectual disabilities. This study area aims to identify (1) dimensions (factors) within the framework of the questionnaire on the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities in Croatia, (2) the correlation between the age and gender of people with intellectual disabilities and their social inclusion, and (3) descriptive data of responses to selected sections of the questionnaire. Descriptive data is provided to summarize and highlight the key findings of the study in relation to the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities, such as education, employment and income, leisure, and social networks.

Method

Sample

The sample included people with intellectual disabilities (N=145, gender – male N=68 (47%), female N=77 (53%), age M=26.63, min 18 years, max 70 years) who live with their families and use social services of half-day stay and psychosocial rehabilitation at the Center for Education Lug and in the association members of the Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities from the following cities: Osijek (N=12), Slatina (N=6), Orahovica (N=19), Slavonski Brod (N=19), Split (N=9), Pula (N=52), Zagreb (N=10), Samobor (N=6), and Šibenik (N=12). The sample is convenient and was obtained through the authors of this work themselves. The study included people with mild intellectual disability who are verbal and able to answer the questionnaire questions according to the assessment of the organizations' employees. The respondents were divided into three groups by age: young (18–29 years, N=39, 27%), median age (30–50 years, N=86, 59%) and mature age (51–70 years, N=20, 14%). Most of the sample consisted of people living in large cities (N=113, 78%) and 32 (22%) living in rural settings. The variable place of residence is coded according to the population criterion– places with more than 50,000 inhabitants are large cities, and the rest are smaller places. When deciding on the criterion for the

size of residence, the last Census of Population from 2011 was consulted (available at https://www.dzs.hr/hrv/censuses/census2011/censuslogo.htm). The only exception was the city of Šibenik, which has a little less than the mentioned number of inhabitants but is still included in the group of large cities due to its size and cultural and historical significance. When contacting potential respondents, ethical principles and the dignity of users were considered, and consent was sought from parents/guardians of persons with disabilities. The purpose of the research was explained to everyone, and the ways of handling their personal data were clarified. Before conducting the research, implementation approval was requested and obtained from the competent ministry (Ministry of Labor and Pension System, Family, and Social Policy). The users were given a survey description and consent form in an easy-to-understand format.

Procedure

The questions were individually and verbally explained to the person with intellectual disabilities, and they answered the questions with the assistance of a support worker who knew them best. The questionnaire included subjective (*e.g., "How do you feel as unemployed?"*), as well as objective (e.g., "*What is the highest level of your education?*") variables. Several measures were implemented in the study to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities understood all questions, including:

Providing additional time and clarification of questions: Researchers and support workers additionally clarified questions for the respondents during the survey completion process. Certain terms were further clarified with the sub-questions that were contained in the instructions at the end of the questionnaire. For example, the concept of leisure time is further clarified for people with intellectual disabilities in this research as a time when they are free from mandatory activities that are covered daily within associations and organizations (since most of them are unemployed).

Using visual aids: For those who had difficulty with the concept of time, we used visual materials (such as calendars) to better illustrate the different time intervals. Also, answers on a five-point scale were facilitated by pictorial concretes (emoticons).

Assistance from a familiar support worker: The respondents completed the survey with the help of a support worker who knew them well to ensure the validity of their responses (support workers knew what level of education they had, if they worked, or how many hours per week they worked).

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the basic characteristics of the data collected from the respondents. This included calculating measures such as means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values. Factor analysis was performed to validate the instrument used in measuring social inclusion. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between gender, age, and social inclusion. The following variables were

used in the study: social inclusion (measured by the Social Inclusion Questionnaire), gender (M/F), and age group (18–29, 30–50, 51–70).

Measuring instrument

The Questionnaire on social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities was developed for the purpose of this study based on the Social Inclusion Scale SIS (Secker et al., 2007) and the Social and Community Opportunities Profile (SCOPE) (Huxley et al., 2012). The SIS scale (alpha=.85) available in open access in the original version consists of 16 items divided into three subscales: social isolation (alpha=.76), social relations (alpha=.70), and social acceptance (alpha=.76). The SCOPE questionnaire (alpha≥.70) in the original version, depending on its form, contains 117, 44 and 21 items each. The scale consists of eight dimensions (Health, Family and Social, Education, Safety, Finance, Work, Housing and Accommodation, Leisure and Participation). Searching for an optimal instrument, both the SIS and SCOPE scales were compared. While each scale has its strengths, we identified areas where they could be improved. To create a more comprehensive tool adapted for persons with intellectual disability, we added questions from the SIS scale to the SCOPE to cover aspects that were not previously included in the SCOPE. While SIS and SCOPE are valuable tools for measuring social inclusion, the new instrument developed for this study seeks to address their limitations by combining their strengths. It aims to provide a more comprehensive, adaptable, and user-friendly tool for assessing social inclusion among individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Thus, for the purpose of this questionnaire, 5 questions from the SIS scale were taken (from the social isolation subscale: *Do you also socialize with people who do not have difficulties and disabilities? Have you been involved in an activity, club, or organization that all people go to, with and without difficulty? Do you have friends you see or hear from every week? Do you think you are a useful member of society? From social acceptance subscale: Do you know your human rights?).* As stated earlier, all the questions were additionally verbally presented and explained, with some answers offered for better understanding, for example for the question "*Do you know your human rights*?" offered answers were:" Yes, I know my rights very well.", "Yes, I know most of my rights.", "Yes, I know some of my rights.", " I am not sure what my rights are.", " No, I do not know my rights at all." Next, 14 questions from the SCOPE questionnaire were taken: *Are there many opportunities in your place that you can get involved in if you want? E.g., cultural centers, volunteer clubs, church groups, sports clubs, courses, etc.?* (Leisure and participation domain) *In general, how safe do you feel in your settlement (city)?* (Safety domain) *Do you have a chance to find a job? How many hours a week do you work (Monday to Sunday)? How do you feel about being unemployed? (Work domain) Do you have an opportunity to increase revenue (for additional earnings)? (Finance domain) What is the highest level of your education? In the last year, have you been involved in educational programs (e.g., courses or retraining)? (Education domain) How is your physical health? (Health domain) Do*

*you have at least one parent? Do you see your family as much as you'd like? How many friends do you have? How often do these friends or neighbors come home to visit? (*Family and Social domain) *In general, are you as included in society as you would like to be?* Overall, the questionnaire contains a total of 22 questions where the answers to 14 questions were given on a five-point scale, answers to 2 questions were given numerically (*How many hours a week do you work (Monday to Sunday)? How many friends do you have?*), and answers on 2 other questions were given by marking one of the offered answers: yes/no/I don't know (*Have you been involved in an activity, club, or organization that all people go to, with and without difficulty?*; *In the last year, have you been involved in educational programs (e.g., courses or retraining*). Fourteen variables were taken from the SCOPE, 5 from the SIS, and 3 more variables were added by the authors regarding personal data of the respondents (age, gender, and place of living).

The overall level of social inclusion was calculated by adding up all answers to questions (except sociodemographic data). Certain particles are inversely encoded. The higher score indicated a higher level of social inclusion. Fourteen particles entered the factor analysis (because they provided 1 to 5 scale answers), and they grouped by obtaining 4 factors or 4 areas of social inclusion measured by the Questionnaire. Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Questionnaire on social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities (14 particles) is α=.72, which indicates moderate reliability and solid acceptability for research purposes. The lowest score on the Questionnaire was 27, and the highest was 61. The average score was 45.06, indicating the point around which most results cluster. Scores vary by approximately 6.721 units from the mean, indicating moderate dispersion of results.

Results

Factor analysis

To verify the validity of the created questionnaire, we performed a factor analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy measures (KMO=.779) and Bartlett's sphericity test (χ^2 (145) = 546.002, p<.001) suggest that the data are suitable for conducting factor analysis.

A total of 14 quasi-interval variables were analyzed, and the first four components have eigen values greater than 1. Accordingly, based on the Kaiser-Guttman criterion (whereby the components of an eigen value greater than 1 are retained), the first four components can be retained that together explain 57.865% variability in the data. Catello's Scree test also justifies maintaining the same number of factors.

Table 1

Amount of variance explained in the questionnaire of social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, after extraction by main components method and Varimax rotation

Factor	Initial		After rotation	
	Altogether	% of variance	Altogether	% of variance
1	4.204	30.025	2.646	18.897
2	1.581	11.293	1.910	13.641
3	1.258	8.989	1.792	12.797
4	1.058	7.558	1.754	12.530

After conducting varimax rotation, each factor explains 1-3% variance and, together, 18.897% variance, as seen in Table 1. Only 14 items grouped into 4 factors entered the statistical analysis, which showed good reliability in the factor analysis, thus obtaining 4 factors or 4 areas of social inclusion measured by the Questionnaire.

Table 2

Factor structure matrix of the social inclusion questionnaire, obtained by component analysis with Varimax rotation

Questions	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
1.	.743			
2.		.549		-.348
3.	.667			
4.	.595			-.506
5.				.730
6.	.437			-.585
7.	.533		.474	
8.			.766	
9.		.449	.487	.455
10.			-.533	.480
11.		.738		
12.	.589	.420		
13.	.556		.446	
14.		.720		

Table 3

Descriptive analysis of results on the Questionnaire on social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities

Particles	M	SD	Min	Max
1.	3.44	1.178	1	5
2.	3.74	1.213	1	5
3.	**4.46**	**.707**	1	5
4.	2.31	1.367	1	5
5.	2.83	1.076	1	5
6.	**2.09**	**1.296**	1	5
7.	3.94	.888	1	5
8.	3.97	.950	1	5
9.	3.81	1.209	1	5
10.	3.06	1.203	1	5
11.	3.66	1.288	1	5
12.	3.64	.977	1	5
13.	4.11	1.081	1	5
14.	2.82	1.284	1	5

From Table 3. it is evident that the average score or value (M) given by people with intellectual disabilities on the Questionnaire of social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities is between 2.09 (the lowest average score on the variable – *6. Do you have an opportunity to increase your income or for additional earnings*? which indicates reduced opportunities for additional earnings) and 4.46 (the highest average score on the variable – *3. In general, how safe do you feel in your settlement/city?* which indicates that they feel quite safe in their settlement/city).

Dispersion of answers (SD) ranged from .707 (the lowest variability on question - *3. In general, how safe do you feel in your settlement/city?*) to 1.296 (the highest variability on question - *6. Do you have an opportunity to increase your income or for additional earnings?*). It is also evident that all theoretical grade ranges (from 1 to 5) are represented in the answers.

The results presented in Table 4 indicate the following distribution of the factors with the highest saturation regarding the four subscales to which the names have been assigned, guided by the theoretical basis of social inclusion, and considering the distribution of issues: Social environment and physical health, Inclusion and human rights, Mental health and relationships with family and friends, Economic well-being.

Table 4

Dispersion of questions on the following factors

Factor 1 Social environment and physical health	Factor 2 Inclusion and human rights	Factor 3 Mental health and relationships with family and friends	Factor 4 Economic well-being
1. Is there a lot of opportunities in your town that you can get involved in if you want? E.g., cultural centers, volunteer clubs, church groups, sports clubs, courses, etc.?	2. Do you also socialize with people who do not have difficulties and disabilities?	8. How is your mental health? 9. Do you see your family as much as you'd like?	5. How do you feel as unemployed?
3. In general, how safe do you feel in your settlement (city)?	11. Do you have friends you see or hear from every week?	10. How often do these friends or neighbors come home to visit?	6. Do you have an opportunity to increase your income (for additional earnings)?
4. Do you have a chance to find a job?	14. Do you know your rights?		
7. How is your physical health?			
12. In general, are you as involved in society as you would like?			
13. Do you think you are a useful member of society?			

Table 5

Descriptive analysis of results on the extracted factors on the Questionnaire of social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities

Factors	M	SD	Min	Max
Factor 1	17.96	3.860	10	25
Factor 2	10. 21	2.757	6	15
Factor 3	10.84	1.899	6	15
Factor 4	4.92	1.465	2	9

In Table 5, it is evident that Factor 1 shows the highest mean value and the greatest variability (M=17.96, SD=3.860, Min=10, Max=25), which may indicate a wider distribution of results within this factor. Factors 2 (M=10.21, SD=2.757, Min=6, Max=15) and 3 have similar mean values (M=10.84,

SD=1.899, Min=6, Max=15), but Factor 3 shows less variability. Factor 4 has the lowest mean value and the smallest dispersion (M=4.92, SD=1.465, Min=2, Max=9), suggesting that the results for this factor are the most consistent among the respondents. It should be noted that the smaller number of variables and the presence of negative variables in Factors 3 and 4 may affect the results, reducing data diversity and impacting the mean values and standard deviations.

Cronbach alpha coefficient for Factor 1 (6 particles) is α=.78, indicating moderate reliability; for Factor 2 (3 particles), it is α=.56, indicating low reliability. This lower reliability may be due to the limited number of items and the potential diversity in the respondents' understanding and experiences of social inclusion and human rights. There are three items loaded onto Factor 3, two of which have a negative sign, making it inappropriate for calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient. This complexity suggests that further refinement and additional items may be needed to capture this dimension accurately. In Factor 4, the presence of negative correlations and the limited number of items make it inappropriate to calculate a Cronbach alpha coefficient for this factor.

Correlation of social inclusion with age and gender

The distribution of the results of all the variables in question deviated from normal, which was determined by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, as well as the visual inspection of the histogram and analysis of correlations by Spearman's correlation coefficient.

Table 6

Correlation between age, gender, and social inclusion (N=145)

Social inclusion measured by the Questionnaire	Age group (1=18–29, 2=30–50, 3=51–70)	Gender (male/female)
Spearman's correlation coefficient	-.138	-.041
P	.097	.625
N	145	145

The correlation between the variables age and social inclusion are examined, and it is evident that r=-.138, p>.05, N=145 (Table 6). There is a negative correlation, but it is too small and insufficiently significant at the confidence interval of 95%. Therefore, we conclude that there is no statistically significant correlation between age and social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities in this sample. The correlation between the variables gender and social inclusion was examined, and the following results were obtained: r=-.041, p>.05, N=145. Again, the correlation is negative (the data are encoded in such a way that 1=male sex, 2=female sex). However, the correlation coefficient is too small, and statistical significance is insufficient. Thus, we conclude that there is no statistically significant association between gender and social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities.

Descriptive analysis of selected particles from the questionnaire

In the following text, selected questionnaire items related to important aspects of social inclusion for adults with intellectual disabilities are presented. These variables were chosen based on their relevance to understanding the respondents' experiences and the challenges they face in different areas of life. Specifically:

Education

Most of the respondents completed primary school (N=61, 42.10%), followed by secondary school under a special program (N=60, 40.70%). Some respondents (N=18, 12.40%) did not complete primary school, and 4.80% (N=7) of respondents have completed regular secondary school according to an adapted program. The third group of respondents (51-70) was educated in a different educational system (segregated), which could be one of the reasons they did not finish school. It is evident that around 40% (N=59) of adults with ID completed elementary school, and 40% (N=59) of them completed high school with special programs. Also, for people who have completed some form of secondary education, it is questionable how employable they are in the existing labor market. Regular secondary education programs, especially programs in special secondary schools, are outdated in the context of a highly technologically developed world of work. This is why lifelong learning is very important. Thus, the respondents were asked if they had been involved in some form of education in the past year. Most of them (N=123, 84.80%) did not attend any course or retrained in the last year. These results indicate a gap in gaining skills and knowledge, which are declining with age, especially in the population of people with intellectual disabilities.

Business and income

When asked if they were employed, 82.80% (N=120) of the respondents declared themselves unemployed, while only 17.20% (N=25) declared themselves as employed. Most of them do not have jobs on a regular, open market, but they receive material compensation in nongovernmental organizations through forms of supported employment. This indicates that in Croatia, there is not enough developed employment with support as an appropriate form of employment of people with intellectual disabilities. Also, there are not enough flexible forms of work (work in occasional forms, work in incomplete working hours, self-employment with support, work in social entrepreneurship, and more). When asked if they had the opportunity to find a job, 28.6% (N=42) of the respondents indicated that they did not have any opportunities, and an additional 24% (N=35) said that they had very poor opportunities to find a job. Accordingly, when asked if they had an opportunity to increase revenue, 48.3% (N=71) of the

respondents replied that they had no opportunity to increase income. It is also important to note that a portion of the sample consists of individuals over the age of 70, who are typically retired. This demographic detail might influence the high percentage of respondents classified as unemployed, as retirement status is a significant factor in their employment status.

When asked how they feel as unemployed, 31.7% (N=46) of the respondents answered "bad", and 31.7% (N=46) answered "neither bad nor good". From this, it is evident that most respondents have a desire to be employed, though various barriers remain.

Leisure

When asked if they had the opportunity to participate in leisure activities, 25% (N=36) of the respondents answered "there are some opportunities"; 26% (N=38) of them answered "there are quite some opportunities", 23% (N=33) answered "there are a lot of opportunities" (cultural centers, volunteer clubs, church groups, sports clubs, courses, etc.). From this, we can conclude that people perceive their local environment as a place with developed services and facilities. On the other hand, when asked if they were involved in an activity, club, or organization that all people go to, with and without difficulties, 62.1% (N=90) of the respondents answered that they were not involved. In other words, almost 38% (N=56) of the respondents were included only in organizations that exclusively deal with people with disabilities. Although this is also a form of social inclusion, a more ideal indicator of true inclusion would be one where people with disabilities spend time with people without disabilities.

Networks of friends and socializing

When asked how often friends or neighbors come home to visit, 26.9% (N=39) of the respondents answered "at least once a week", 26% (N=38) answered "at least once a month", and 24% (N=35) answered "at least once every two weeks." Some of the respondents, 13% (N=19), said that friends and neighbors never visited them. According to these results, it seems that the respondents have frequent contact and socializing with friends and neighbors. Finally, 44.8% (N=65) of the respondents estimate that they are generally well involved in society. In this matter, 20% (N=29) of people who said they were not sure, and over 11% (N=16) who said they were minimally included in society, should not be ignored. This question is quite abstract and is left to the respondents on a subjective impression. While the majority pleaded to be well included, it is not a negligible proportion of respondents who stated that they were unsure.

Discussion

The factor analysis conducted in this study provided an overview of the dimensions of social inclusion among adults with intellectual disabilities in Croatia. Four distinct factors emerged, each representing key aspects of social inclusion: Social environment and physical health, Inclusion and human rights, Mental health and relationships with family and friends, and Economic well-being. The factor "Social environment and physical health" aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of a supportive social environment and good physical health in overall quality of life and promoting social inclusion (Brown et al., 2013). The factor "Inclusion and human rights" revealed low reliability. This factor comprises items that assess social interactions with non-disabled individuals, the presence of friends, and awareness of rights. The low reliability might be attributed to the limited number of items and the possible diversity in the respondents' understanding of social inclusion and human rights. Previous studies have highlighted the complexity of measuring social inclusion and human rights, as these constructs can be influenced by various social, cultural, and personal factors (Barnes & Mercer, 2010, according to French & Swain, 2015). Future research should focus on expanding the number of items and refining the existing ones to improve the reliability of this factor. The third factor, "Mental health and relationships with family and friends", includes three items related to mental health, family interactions, and social visits from friends or neighbors. The negative correlation between the frequency of social visits and the overall score on this factor suggests that fewer social visits are associated with lower scores on mental health and social relationships. This finding indicates that social isolation can negatively impact mental health, which is consistent with existing literature (Shakespeare, 2013). However, the presence of negative correlations among the items and the insufficient number of items with positive correlations rendered it inappropriate to calculate a Cronbach alpha coefficient for this factor. This complexity suggests that additional items and further refinement are needed to accurately capture the nuanced relationships between mental health and social relationships. The fourth factor, "Economic well-being", is comprised of two items evaluating the subjective experience of unemployment and opportunities to increase income. The negative correlations between these items and the overall factor suggest that poorer perceptions of unemployment and lower perceived opportunities for income generation are associated with lower economic well-being. This finding highlights the critical impact of economic stability on social inclusion, as financial insecurity can significantly limit an individual's ability to participate fully in society (Krysovatyy et al., 2024). Future research should aim to develop a more comprehensive set of items to better capture the economic dimensions of social inclusion.

Factors of social inclusion found in this research are comparable to factors within the *Ecological model of social inclusion* (Simplican et al., 2015).

This model explains social inclusion through two large domains: interpersonal relationships and community participation, in which every domain consists of three components – category, structure, and level or function. Our four factors fit the given domains in a way that our first factor - Social environment and physical health, and our third factor - Mental health and relationships with family and friends, fall into the domain of community participation, while our second factor - Inclusion and human rights as well as our fourth factor - Economic well-being, fall into the domain of interpersonal relationships.

The findings of this study indicate that there is no significant age-related or gender-related association with the social inclusion of adult persons with intellectual disability in Croatia in this sample. The respondents generally have frequent contact with friends and neighbors, indicating good social interactions. While many respondents perceive their local environment as having developed services and facilities for leisure activities, a majority are only involved in organizations specifically for people with disabilities. True social inclusion would involve more integration with people without disabilities. These results are aligned with similar qualitative research on a Croatian sample when the respondents were satisfied with their level of social inclusion, but they were mainly included in segregated daily programs (Fabris et al., 2023). These are positive results in the context of social inclusion and gender equality, but the results of many foreign studies show the opposite. According to them, people with disabilities experience social exclusion depending on the type of impairment, gender, age, and other characteristics (Saran et al., 2023).

Investigating the connection between loneliness, social support, social isolation, and well-being in adults with and without disabilities, in addition to the conclusion that people with disabilities experience a significantly greater feeling of loneliness, social isolation, and low social support than people without disabilities, the authors of this study have also concluded that loneliness is expressed the most in younger people with disabilities (Emerson et al., 2021). Thus, the population of persons with disabilities faces unique social challenges, but the age in our sample did not significantly correlate to their social inclusion. Although older people with disabilities are often discriminated against because of their age and disability, older women with disabilities may be particularly disadvantaged (UN Women, 2020). Men with disabilities are socially included to a greater extent than women, older respondents are more socially included than younger, and women with disabilities are often exposed to double discrimination due to their gender and disability (Saeed Al Harthy et al., 2024).

Also, the third group of respondents (51-70) was educated in a different educational system (segregated), so this could also be one of the reasons why they did not finish school.

McCarron et al. (2011) showed that older people (over the age of 40) living in institutions and people with greater intellectual disabilities had fewer

social contacts. Our study found no significant differences in social inclusion across age groups for those living with their families. This suggests that family environments may mitigate the impact of age on social inclusion. Emerson et al. (2020) concluded that the feeling of personal well-being among people with disabilities is significantly lower in men and the younger population, thus emphasizing the importance of demographic characteristics in the relationship between disability and feeling of well-being.

Leutar et al. (2014) found that men are more informed and, overall, more active in the local community and are better self-represented than women (with different kinds of disabilities). In other words, according to the research on two subscales, men showed better social inclusion than women. These findings contradict our results. Maybe because our respondents are individuals with intellectual disabilities, and it is important to consider their social and emotional differences.

With regard to the connection of age and gender with socially excluding characteristics, Banks et al. (2017) found that the association between disability and poverty is constant in both sexes, and that in the literature it is more represented in working-age people than in older people. Economic factors, including employment and access to resources, play a key role in the social inclusion of people with disabilities. Unemployment can result in financial difficulties and difficulties in accessing services. In addition, employment for people with intellectual disabilities is one of the facilitators for equal participation in everyday life, which is the goal of social inclusion. This also indicates insufficient development of supported employment and flexible work forms for people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia. Given that employment has a significant impact on social inclusion, research results have also shown that women with disabilities and elderly people with disabilities are in a particularly disadvantaged position (Abed et al., 2024).

This research did not include the digital aspect of social inclusion, although it is more and more relevant to social inclusion, especially after the global experience of the COVID 19 pandemic. On that note, Scholz et al. (2017) analyzed the use of the Internet as one of the aspects of social inclusion of persons with disabilities and discovered that elderly persons with disabilities and female persons with disabilities have reduced access to the Internet.

When interpreting the results of our research, it is important to bear in mind that the data were collected directly from people with intellectual disabilities, so data are influenced by their personal interpretation. It is possible that people with intellectual disabilities have a different understanding of social inclusion and may have lower or different standards than those considered "typical" in society. So, maybe they set lower thresholds for satisfactory interpersonal relationships. In addition, it is possible that their satisfaction with social interaction can be achieved through simple or less demanding forms of

communication and interpersonal relationships. Maybe people with intellectual disabilities compare themselves less with social norms or standards. Therefore, it is important to consider different expectations and perspectives and to adjust social inclusion assessments according to the individual needs and abilities of people with intellectual disabilities. This indicates the importance of tailored approaches in assessing and supporting social inclusion to meet the specific needs of this population.

The limitations of the research are reflected in the convenient sample and the nature of the questions from the questionnaire, which are sometimes abstract to people with intellectual disabilities. The impact of these deficiencies was attempted to be minimized by using verbal and pictorial clarifications of questions and answers to the respondents themselves.

Conclusion

Social, economic, and cultural factors are often key to understanding and promoting the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, and understanding them is an important aspect of research and practice to improve their quality of life. This research brought some interesting findings related to the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities in Croatia.

The results of factor analysis highlight several important considerations. Firstly, the moderate reliability of the factors related to social environment and physical health and the overall questionnaire suggest that these areas are important for understanding and improving social inclusion among adults with intellectual disabilities. Secondly, the low reliability of the "Inclusion and human rights" factor indicates a need for additional items and potentially a re-evaluation of the existing items to capture this dimension better. Moreover, the complexity of measuring mental health and relationships with family and friends, as well as economic well-being, underscores the necessity for more nuanced and comprehensive tools. Future studies should aim to develop and validate additional items that can provide a more accurate assessment of these factors.

The finding that there is no significant age-related association in this sample may imply that social inclusion remains relatively stable during the aging process in people with intellectual disabilities. This can be a positive indicator, indicating the ability to preserve social connections through different life stages. Also, it is important to consider that people who participated in the research are users of state and non-governmental organizations through which they have organized leisure activities that include socializing (regardless of their age and gender). It was mentioned before in this text that the social network of people with intellectual disabilities in this sample mostly consisted of other people with disabilities. Thus, in future research, it would be good to include people with intellectual disabilities who are not involved in state and non-governmental support programs.

There was no significant association between gender and social inclusion, i.e., both men and women with intellectual disabilities estimated that there was no difference in their social involvement. Overall, in this sample, it was not confirmed that gender and age play a significant role in the social inclusion of persons with intellectual disability. Therefore, these results can be interpreted as a positive step toward an inclusive society where all individuals have equal treatment and equal chances of social inclusion. Despite that, this does not mean that there are no other more subtle or contextual ways in which gender and age can affect social inclusion.

The descriptive data highlight critical areas for support and intervention to enhance the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities. There is need for better educational programs, employment and income opportunities, and programs to support inclusion with individuals without disabilities. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of continued efforts to enhance educational and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. By improving their economic prospects and expanding their social networks, policymakers and practitioners can work towards achieving greater social inclusion and overall well-being for this population.

Therefore, future research may analyze how gender stereotypes or prejudices against people with intellectual disabilities affect their social inclusion, although this may not be reflected directly in the results of this study. Also, a deeper qualitative analysis can be conducted to understand how gender and age can affect specific situations and circumstances of social inclusion. Ultimately, this research may serve as a starting point for further analysis and consideration of how gender and age can affect social inclusion, even if they do not appear as dominant associations in current results.

Furthermore, this research also contributes to encouraging further scientific and general reflections on the topic of social inclusion in general, especially for people with disabilities and people with intellectual disabilities. The obtained findings and conclusions cannot be generalized to the entire population of people with intellectual disabilities, but they can serve as relevant guidelines for the Croatian context, given that the sample was quite large and geographically dispersed.

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Socijalno uključivanje odraslih sa intelektualnim smetnjama u Hrvatskoj

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Uvod: Savremene socijalne politike usmerene na osobe sa invaliditetom zasnovane su na socijalnom modelu invaliditeta. Kao rezultat toga, primarni cilj socijalne politike prema osobama sa invaliditetom na globalnom nivou, unutar EU, pa tako i u Hrvatskoj, jeste težnja za socijalnom uključenošću, nakon pokretanja deinstitucionalizacije. *Ciljevi*: Ovo istraživanje imalo je za cilj da se ispita socijalna uključenost odraslih osoba s intelektualnim smetnjama u Hrvatskoj. Primarni cilj uključivao je identifikovanje faktora u upitniku za socijalno uključivanje. Pored toga, studija je nastojala da istraži potencijalne korelacije između starosti i pola odraslih osoba sa intelektualnim invaliditetom i njihovog nivoa društvene uključenosti. *Metod*: Istraživanje je obuhvatilo 145 odraslih osoba sa intelektualnim smetnjama, koje sa svojim porodicama borave u različitim gradovima širom Republike Hrvatske. Razvijen je upitnik posebno prilagođen za merenje socijalne uključenosti osoba sa intelektualnim smetnjama. *Rezultati:* Pronađena su četiri faktora u okviru konstrukta socijalne inkluzije: Društveno okruženje i fizičko zdravlje; Inkluzija i ljudska prava; Mentalno zdravlje i odnosi sa porodicom i prijateljima; Ekonomsko blagostanje. Nalazi su otkrili da ne postoje statistički značajne veze između socijalne uključenosti osoba sa intelektualnim smetnjama i njihovog uzrasta ili pola. *Zaključak*: Važno je razviti bolje instrumente merenja za socijalno uključivanje i sprovesti istraživanje na većem uzorku pojedinaca koji nisu uključeni u nevladine programe. Uticaj starosti i pola takođe treba dubinski, kvalitativno ispitati da bi se identifikovalo postojanje specifičnih karakteristika koje nije moguće obuhvatiti upitnikom. Pored toga, prema deskriptivnim podacima, postoji potreba za unapređenjem obrazovnih programa i mogućnosti zapošljavanja osoba sa intelektualnim smetnjama.

Ključne reči: odrasli sa intelektualnim smetnjama, socijalna inkluzija, doba, pol

Kvalitet života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju

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Uvod: Može se reći da je kvalitet života koncept koji široko meri nečije iskustvo u odnosu na nade i težnje te osobe. Ova definicija može se primeniti kako na individualnu, tako i na porodičnu perspektivu. *Cilj:* Cilj istraživanja je da se ispita kvalitet života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, te međusobna povezanost porodičnog kvaliteta života i određenih sociodemografskih karakteristika porodice i deteta. Pri tome sociodemografske karakteristike porodice i deteta uključuju: strukturu porodice, odnosno ukupan broj njenih članova, broj odraslih osoba i broj dece u porodici; materijalne uslove, odnosno prosečna mesečna primanja i broj članova porodice koji privređuju; mesto stanovanja; dostupnost usluga za pomoć porodici; vrstu razvojnih smetnji i uzrast deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju. *Metod:* Uzorak istraživanja čini 42 roditelja dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, a kontrolnu grupu 63 roditelja dece tipičnog razvoja. Za procenu porodičnog kvaliteta primenjena je Skala porodičnog kvaliteta života (Beach Center Family Quality of Life Scale – Beach FQOL Scale). *Rezultati:* Porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju imaju značajno niži nivo porodičnog kvaliteta života u odnosu na porodice dece tipičnog razvoja, pri čemu je najlošije ocenjen domen emocionalnog blagostanja. U nastojanju razumevanja razlika u porodičnom kvalitetu života, sprovedene su dodatne analize na relacijama sa određenim sociodemografskim karakteristikama porodica. *Zaključak:* Nalazi sugerišu da na kvalitet života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju utiču prosečna mesečna primanja, struktura porodice i korišćenje usluga za pomoć porodici, dok nije pronađena veza između nivoa porodičnog kvaliteta života i mesta stanovanja, broja osoba u porodici koje privređuju, vrste razvojnih smetnji i uzrasta deteta sa smetnjama.

      Ključne reči: porodični kvalitet života, porodica, roditelji, deca sa smetnjama u razvoju

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Uvod

Porodični kvalitet života – definisanje pojma

Svetska zdravstvena organizacija definiše kvalitet života (u daljem tekstu KŽ) kao percepciju pojedinca o svom položaju u životu u kontekstu kulture i sistema vrednosti u kojima živi i u odnosu na sopstvene ciljeve, očekivanja, standarde i brige (World Health Organization, n. d.). Zapravo kvalitet života, u bilo kom trenutku, meri razliku između nada i težnji pojedinca i njegovog trenutnog iskustva (Jassak & Kanafi, 1990), odnosno razlike između željene i stvarne situacije. Drugim rečima, izražava subjektivno zadovoljstvo koje osoba doživljava i koje projektuje na određene aspekte svog života (fizičke, psihičke, socijalne i duhovne) (Owczarek, 2013). Dok jedna osoba može definisati KŽ prema bogatstvu ili zadovoljstvu životom, druga osoba ga može definisati u odnosu na sposobnosti (npr. sposobnost da živi dobar život u smislu emocionalnog i fizičkog blagostanja). U svakom slučaju, ovo je višedimenzionalni koncept, koji obuhvata emocionalno, fizičko, materijalno i socijalno blagostanje (Jenkinson, 2020). Međutim, pojedinci su deo većeg sistema – porodice. Iz toga sledi da kada jedan član porodice doživi stres, taj stres utiče na sve ostale članove porodice, potencijalno izazivajući promene u porodičnoj ravnoteži. Ako se prihvati definicija KŽ kao koncepta koji široko meri nečije iskustvo u odnosu na nade i težnje te osobe, definicija se može proširiti sa individualne na porodičnu perspektivu (Jassak & Kanafi, 1990). Premda je koncept KŽ inicijalno uobičajeno bio usmeren na pojedinca, a s obzirom na to da pojedinac neizostavno pripada porodičnom sistemu i ne može se posmatrati isključivo kao izolovana jedinka, u protekle dve decenije proučavanje KŽ dobija širi fokus (Milićević i sar., 2014). Porodični kvalitet života (u daljem tekstu PKŽ) kao ishod programa prirodni je nastavak rada na individualnom KŽ, posebno imajući u vidu snažan naglasak koji se, u oblasti rada sa decom i osobama sa smetnjama ili invaliditetom, stavlja na model pružanja usluga koje su usredsređene na pomoć porodici (Poston et al., 2003). Iako ne postoji konsenzus kada je u pitanju definisanje pojma PKŽ, jedan od najprihvaćenijih teorijskih koncepata definiše ovaj pojam kao „dinamičan osećaj dobrobiti porodice, kolektivno i subjektivno definisan i saopšten od strane njenih članova, u kome su individualne i porodične potrebe u interakciji" (Zuna et al., 2010; prema, Mora et al., 2020). Drugačije rečeno, PKŽ se odnosi na uslove u kojima su potrebe porodice zadovoljene, članovi porodice uživaju u zajedničkom životu i imaju mogućnost da se bave stvarima koje smatraju važnim (Park et al., 2003).

Konstrukt porodice podrazumeva roditelje ili staratelje, njihovu decu, a u nekim slučajevima i druge bliske rođake koji zajedno žive u istom domu, odnosno na istom mestu stanovanja (Balton, 2009; prema, Milićević, 2015a). Drugi autori smatraju da se porodica može definisati kao svaka celina koja

sebe označava kao porodicu, uključujući pojedince koji su u krvnom srodstvu ili u braku, kao i one koji su se obavezali da dele svoje živote, a ključno je da pripadnici te celine vide sebe kao porodicu, da su međusobno povezani i da su se obavezali da brinu jedni i drugima (Hanson & Lynch, 2004; prema, Milićević, 2015a).

Porodica je centralni i najznačajniji deo detetovog okruženja, najveći deo životnog iskustva dete upravo stiče u porodici, te ovo okruženje oblikuje participaciju deteta, ali i obrnuto, dete neizbežno utiče na participaciju ostalih članova porodice (Milićević i Nedović, 2017). Porodice sa detetom sa smetnjama u razvoju svakodnevno se suočavaju sa brojnim izazovima koji mogu imati uticaj na različite aspekte porodičnog života (Milićević, 2015b; Nestorov S. i Nestorov V., 2020). Za suočavanje sa svakodnevnim zahtevima podizanja deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju roditeljima je veoma značajna formalna i neformalna podrška, pri čemu se pod formalnom podrškom podrazumeva ona koju pružaju terapeuti, lekari i drugi stručnjaci, a pod neformalnom ona koju roditelji dobijaju od drugih članova porodice, volontera, prijatelja, udruženja roditelja i nevladinih organizacija (Vučinić i sar., 2022). Porodični kvalitet života, kao koncept, naglašava značaj partnerskog odnosa između porodice i stručnjaka u postavljanju prioriteta i ostvarivanju zajedničkih ciljeva i, konačno, naglašava porodične snage (Milićević, 2015a).

Dosadašnja istraživanja ukazuju na to da se KŽ roditelja dece sa smetnjama često značajno razlikuje u odnosu na KŽ porodica dece bez razvojnih smetnji. Najveći broj istraživanja bavio se detetom sa smetnjama u razvoju unutar porodice, kao i majkama, na koje uglavnom pada sav teret brige o detetu, što dovodi do disbalansa i izmenjenih odnosa unutar porodice. Ne mora da znači da će dolazak deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju u porodicu uvek imati negativan efekat na porodicu, ali neosporno je da se ove porodice suočavaju sa velikim brojem izazova (Brown et al., 2006). Istraživanja o KŽ porodica pokušavaju da odgovore na pitanje koji to faktori imaju univerzalno dejstvo na KŽ ovih porodica.

Milićević i saradnici (2014) utvrdili su da u porodicama dece sa cerebralnom paralizom (CP) postoji značajno niži stepen roditeljskog zadovoljstva PKŽ u određenim domenima, u odnosu na porodice dece tipičnog razvoja. U drugim studijama navodi se da prisustvo CP dovodi do promena u pojedinim dimenzijama društvenog uključivanja, čije su posledice vidljive u stepenu zadovoljstva PKŽ koji roditelji izražavaju, kao i da su promene u participaciji u porodičnim aktivnostima dece sa CP povezane sa KŽ cele porodice (Milićević, 2015b; Milićević i Nedović, 2017). Kao osnovne faktore PKŽ dece sa CP Milićević (2015a) navodi: stepen smetnje i intenzitet ispoljavanja problema u ponašanju; finansijsko stanje porodice; porodične odnose; zdravstveno stanje ostalih članova porodice; jake strane funkcionisanja porodične zajednice i ostvarivanje partnerskog odnosa između porodice i

stručnjaka. Slično tome, Arora i saradnici (Arora et al., 2020) među faktorima za koje se pokazalo da utiču na smanjenje KŽ kod osoba koje brinu o deci sa intelektualnom ometenošću (u daljem tekstu IO) navode: komorbiditetna stanja, niža primanja, niži percipirani nivo socijalne podrške, izraženije probleme u ponašanju i emocionalne probleme kod dece. Rezultati istraživanja Stauntona i saradnika (Staunton et al., 2020) sugerišu da nivo roditeljskog stresa i IO u komorbiditetu sa poremećajima autističnog spektra ili problemima u ponašanju nepovoljno utiču na kvalitet života porodice. Dejvis i Gavidija-Pejn (Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009) takođe ističu pojavu problema u ponašanju kod dece sa smetnjama u razvoju kao faktor koji doprinosi nižem PKŽ, ali ne nalaze ovakvu vezu i sa težinom dečije kliničke slike. Porodice koje navode da dete ima problem u ponašanju često su zabrinute za njegov uspeh u školi. Decu koja ispoljavaju probleme u ponašanju zbog toga isključuju iz raznih aktivnosti, kako u školi, tako i u van nje. Problemi u ponašanju negativno utiču i na porodične interakcije, naročito na odnose sa braćom i sestrama. Navedene pojave koje prate probleme u ponašanju deteta dovode do povećanja stresa u ovim porodicama, umanjujući na taj način njihov KŽ (Smith-Bird & Turnbull, 2005).

Boum i Karter (Boehm & Carter, 2019) ispitali su PKŽ dece i odraslih sa IO i došli do zaključka da PKŽ u najvećoj meri doprinosi socijalna povezanost koju porodica ostvaruje u formalnom (stručnjaci) i neformalnom (porodica i prijatelji) kontekstu. Profesionalna podrška snažan je prediktor PKŽ. Istraživanja su pokazala da pružanje usluga porodicama dece sa smetnjama u razvoju na podržavajući način, koji ukazuje poštovanje roditeljima i daje im osećaj važnosti, ima pozitivan efekat na porodice. Podrška koju roditelji dobijaju od drugih članova porodice i prijatelja, posebno oni stilovi podrške koji u većoj meri imaju osnažujući efekat, dovode do osećaja blagostanja, zadovoljstva roditeljstvom i zajedništva (Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009). Boum i Karter (Boehm & Carter, 2019) u svom istraživanju posebno naglašavaju uticaj odnosa sa prijateljem/osobom van porodice s kojim roditelji ostvaruju emocionalnu razmenu, kao vezu koja ima značajan uticaj na KŽ. Prema tome, prakse koje omogućavaju roditeljima vreme za održavanje prijateljskih odnosa pokazale su se kao značajni prediktori KŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju.

Braun i saradnici (Brown et al., 2006) u svom istraživanju, navodeći razlike između porodica sa različitim nivoom KŽ, ističu kao značajne vreme koje porodice imaju za brigu o zdravlju svih članova, obrazovanje i građenje karijere, vreme koje imaju za slobodne aktivnosti i opuštanje. Vreme uloženo u obrazovanje i građenje karijere trebalo bi da obezbedi bolje ekonomske uslove i samim tim veće zadovoljstvo. Pažnja i vreme posvećeno svakom članu porodice povezano je sa ukupnim zadovoljstvom i uživanjem u porodici. S druge strane, nedostatak podrške zajednice, komšija i rođaka dovodi do osećaja izolovanosti.

Demografske karakteristike porodice često su ispitivane u studijama o KŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju. Glinac i saradnici (2015) navode da, prema proceni roditelja dece sa CP, među porodicama nema statistički značajne razlike u KŽ u odnosu na uzrast i pol deteta, kao i u odnosu na socioekonomski status porodice (Glinac i sar., 2015). S druge strane, u velikom broju istraživanja pokazalo se da KŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju korelira sa visinom prihoda porodice (Boehm & Carter, 2019; Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009; Meral et al., 2013). Porodice koje imaju decu sa smetnjama u razvoju imaju značajne troškove za rehabilitacione potrebe deteta (Nestorov S. i Nestorov V., 2020). Porodice koje imaju veća primanja, verovatno imaju i pristup većem broju servisa podrške i drugim resursima koji im pomažu da se nose sa poteškoćama koje se javljaju kao posledica stanja deteta (Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009). U manjim sredinama ovakve podrške i usluga često nema, što predstavlja dodatni izazov za ove porodice (Nestorov S. i Nestorov V., 2020).

S obzirom na brojne izazove sa kojima se suočavaju porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju i širok spektar faktora koji mogu uticati na njihov KŽ, problem ovog istraživanja može biti predstavljen pitanjem: „Da li je percepcija kvaliteta života niža u porodicama dece sa smetnjama u razvoju u poređenju sa porodicama dece bez teškoća, ako jeste u kojim domenima, kao i koji faktori doprinose nižem kvalitetu života porodica dece sa smetnjama?"

Metode

Cilj istraživanja

Cilj istraživanja je da se ispitaju kvalitet života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, međusobna povezanost porodičnog kvaliteta života i određenih sociodemografskih karakteristika porodice i deteta. Pri tome sociodemografske karakteristike porodice i deteta uključuju: strukturu porodice, odnosno ukupan broj članova porodice, broj odraslih osoba i broj dece u porodici; materijalne uslove, odnosno prosečna mesečna primanja i broj članova porodice koji privređuju; mesto stanovanja; dostupnost usluga za pomoć porodici; kao i vrstu razvojnih smetnji i uzrast deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju.

Uzorak

Uzorak istraživanja činilo je 105 roditelja. Jedan deo uzorka obuhvatao je 42 roditelja dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (SM), uglavnom majki (*N*=38, 90.5%), dok je kontrolnu grupu činilo 63 roditelja dece tipičnog razvoja (TR), takođe većinom majki (*N*=57, 90.5%). Prilikom formiranja uzorka osnovni kriterijumi selekcije bili su da porodica živi na teritoriji Republike Srbije i da u porodici žive deca starosti od jedne do 21 godine. S obzirom na to da je istraživanje sprovedeno online, svi ispitanici su

obavešteni da će prikupljeni podaci biti korišćeni u naučno-istraživačke svrhe, da je učešće u istraživanju anonimno, kao i da popunjavanjem upitnika pristaju na učešće u istraživanju. Distribucija uzorka u odnosu na kategoričke varijable prikazana je u Tabeli 1, a u odnosu na numeričke pokazatelje u Tabeli 2.

Tabela 1

Distribucija uzorka u odnosu na kategoričke varijable (N=105)

	SM		TR	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Pol roditelja				
Muški	4	9.5	6	9.5
Ženski	38	90.5	57	90.5
Mesto stanovanja				
Grad	30	71.4	45	71.5
Selo	8	19.1	14	22.2
Prigradsko naselje	4	9.5	4	6.3
Nivo obrazovanja roditelja				
Osnovna škola	1	2.4	1	1.6
Srednja škola	20	47.5	21	33.3
Viša ili visoka škola	7	16.7	12	19.1
Fakultet – osnovne akademske studije	7	16.7	15	23.8
Fakultet – master akademske studije	7	16.7	14	22.2
Prosečna mesečna primanja porodice				
Do 50.000 dinara	11	26.2	6	9.5
Od 50.000 do 100.000 dinara	20	47.6	18	28.6
Od 100.000 do 200.000 dinara	6	14.3	22	34.9
Više od 200.000 dinara	2	4.8	13	20.6
Nedostajući podaci	3	7.1	4	6.4

Napomena. SM – Grupa porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (*N*=42); TR – Grupa porodica dece tipičnog razvoja (*N*=63); Nedostajući podaci – ispitanici nisu želeli da daju odgovor.

Tabela 2

Distribucija uzorka u odnosu na numeričke pokazatelje (N=105)

	SM				TR			
	Min	*Max*	*AS*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*	*AS*	*SD*
Uzrast roditelja	29	56	38.38	5.90	28	62	38.75	7.93
Broj članova porodice	2	8	4.26	1.25	2	11	4.35	1.72
Broj odraslih u porodici (osobe starije od 18 godina)	1	7	2.50	1.27	1	11	2.94	1.80
Broj dece u porodici (deca do navršenih 18 godina)	1	5	1.88	0.86	/	4	1.63	0.89
Broj osoba koje privređuju	1	3	1.81	0.59	1	6	2.21	1.07

Napomena. SM – Grupa porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (*N*=42); TR – Grupa porodica dece tipičnog razvoja (*N*=63).

U cilju preciznijeg utvrđivanja faktora koji mogu uticati na nivo PKŽ porodica grupe SM, drugi deo analiza rađen je na relaciji sa određenim sociodemografskim karakteristikama ovih porodica, a distribucija uzorka data je u Tabeli 3.

Tabela 3

Distribucija uzorka porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (N=42)

	N	%
Pol deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju		
Muški	27	64.3
Ženski	15	35.7
Uzrast deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju		
1–7 godina	26	61.9
8–14 godina	14	33.3
15–21 godina	2	4.8
Dete pohađa vaspitno-obrazovnu ustanovu		
Da	33	78.6
Ne	9	21.4
Uključenost u tretmane i rehabilitaciju		
Da	36	85.7
Ne	6	14.3
Vrsta smetnji u razvoju		
Smetnje u jednom domenu razvoja	10	23.8
Višestruke smetnje	32	76.2
Korišćenje usluga za pomoć porodici		
Da	26	61.9
Ne	16	38.1
Razlozi nekorišćenja usluga za pomoć porodici		
Nisu potrebne	2	12.5
Nepoznavanje usluga	7	43.8
Nedostupnost usluga	6	37.5
Odobrenje zahteva na čekanju	1	6.3
Angažovanje dodatne pomoći		
Niko	31	73.8
Lični pratilac	6	14.3
Personalni asistent	2	4.8
Rodbina	3	7.1

Instrumenti istraživanja

Sociodemografski podaci koji obuhvataju nezavisne varijable istraživanja prikupljeni su upitnikom konstruisanim za potrebe istraživanja. Porodični kvalitet života procenjen je primenom *Skale porodičnog kvaliteta života* (Beach Center Family

Quality of Life Scale – Beach FQOL Scale; Beach Center on Disability, 2012), koja je za potrebe istraživanja sa izvornog engleskog jezika adaptirana slobodnim prevodom na srpski jezik. Podaci o validnosti skale na srpskom jeziku nisu poznati. FQOL skala namenjena je proceni porodičnog kvaliteta života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju uzrasta od rođenja do 21. godine. Sadrži 25 ajtema, odnosno tvrdnji u okviru kojih ispitanici izražavaju nivo zadovoljstva kvalitetom života u različitim aspektima porodičnog života. Ispitanici izražavaju nivo zadovoljstva putem petostepene skale, pri čemu ocena 1 podrazumeva izrazito nezadovoljstvo, a ocena 5 izrazito zadovoljstvo ovim segmentom. Skala sadrži pet podskala koje procenjuju nivo zadovoljstva u sledećim oblastima: 1) porodične interakcije; 2) roditeljstvo; 3) emocionalno blagostanje; 4) fizičko/materijalno blagostanje i 5) podrška koja se odnosi na ometenost člana porodice. Viši skor ukazuje na veći stepen zadovoljstva porodičnim kvalitetom života. U ovom istraživanju Kronbahov α koeficijent iznosi .96 za skalu u celini, odnosno .93 u domenu porodičnih interakcija, .90 u domenu roditeljstva, što ukazuje na visok nivo pouzdanosti. Dobar nivo pouzdanosti utvrđen je za ostale subskale, odnosno Kronbahov α koeficijent iznosi .87 u domenu emocionalnog blagostanja, .83 u domenu fizičkog/materijalnog blagostanja i .85 u domenu podrške koja se odnosi na ometenost člana porodice.

Za kontrolnu grupu deo upitnika o sociodemografskim podacima isti je kao i onaj koji popunjavaju roditelji dece sa smetnjama u razvoju u pogledu stavki koje se odnose na opšte karakteristike porodice (struktura porodice, mesto stanovanja, materijalni status), a izuzete su stavke koje se odnose na dete sa smetnjama u razvoju. Za merenje porodičnog kvaliteta života korišćen je isti merni instrument kao i u grupi roditelja dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, sa izuzetkom pete podskale, koja meri podršku koja se odnosi na ometenost člana porodice.

Mesto i vreme istraživanja i statistička obrada podataka

Istraživanje je sprovedeno na teritoriji Republike Srbije tokom jula i avgusta 2022. godine. Ispitanici iz grupe roditelja dece sa smetnjama u razvoju identifikovani su u okviru Facebook grupa za podršku roditeljima dece sa smetnjama u razvoju i putem metode *snežne kugle*, dok su ispitanici iz grupe roditelja dece tipičnog razvoja identifikovani isključivo primenom metode *snežne kugle*.

Podaci su obrađeni u statističkom programu za obradu podataka IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Korišćena je deskriptivna statistika. S obzirom na to da su rezultati Kolmogorov–Smirnov testa pokazali da ne postoji odstupanje od modela normalne raspodele, za analizu podataka korišćeni su parametrijski statistički testovi (t-test, ANOVA, Pirsonov koeficijent korelacije, višestruka regresiona analiza i Koenov d statistik kao mera jačine uticaja).

Rezultati istraživanja

Na osnovu deskriptivnih mera, PKŽ ispitanika iz grupe SM ocenjen je kao niži u odnosu na PKŽ ispitanika iz grupe TR (Tabela 4). Razlika je uočljiva na nivou ukupnog FQOL skora i svih podskala ovog mernog instrumenta. Obe grupe su kao najniži ocenile PKŽ u domenu emocionalnog blagostanja. Grupa SM najbolje je ocenila PKŽ u domenu porodične interakcije, a grupa TR najbolje domene roditeljstvo i porodične interakcije, dok je domen fizičko/materijalno blagostanje ocenjen nešto nižom prosečnom ocenom.

Tabela 4

Deskriptivne mere porodičnog kvaliteta života grupa porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju i porodica dece tipičnog razvoja

	SM				TR			
	Min	*Max*	*AS*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*	*AS*	*SD*
Porodične interakcije	1.00	5.00	3.65	1.04	2.00	5.00	4.18	0.63
Roditeljstvo	1.00	4.83	3.48	0.91	3.17	5.00	4.19	0.54
Emocionalno blagostanje	1.00	4.75	2.66	1.05	1.50	5.00	3.69	0.80
Fizičko/materijalno blagostanje	1.20	5.00	3.32	0.84	2.20	5.00	3.93	0.74
Podrška koja se odnosi na ometenost člana porodice	1.00	5.00	3.41	0.90	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Ukupan FQOL skor	1.16	4.88	3.35	0.81	2.71	5.00	4.03	0.58

Napomena. SM – Grupa porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (*N*=42); TR – Grupa porodica dece tipičnog razvoja (*N*=63).

Rezultati t-testa za nezavisne uzorke pokazali su da grupa SM izveštava o značajno nižem PKŽ u odnosu na grupu TR (t=4.72, *df*=68.32, p<.001), velike jačine uticaja (d=.97).

U cilju utvrđivanja faktora koji mogu uticati na nivo PKŽ, dalje analize rađene su na relaciji sa određenim sociodemografskim karakteristikama porodica. Najpre je ispitan uticaj porodične strukture na PKŽ, pri čemu je pod porodičnom strukturom podrazumevan ukupan broj članova porodice, broj odraslih i broj dece u porodici. Rezultati višestruke regresione analize pokazuju da se skupom prediktorskih varijabli može objasniti oko 26% ukupne varijanse PKŽ u grupi SM (*F*=5.71, *df1*=3, *df2*=38, p=.002, korigovani R^2=.26), dok u grupi TR nije pronađena statistička značajnost na ovoj relaciji (*F*=0.87, *df1*=3, *df2*=59, p>.05, korigovani R^2=.01). Parcijalni doprinos pojedinačnih prediktora u grupi SM prikazan je u Tabeli 5, a TR u Tabeli 6. Prediktori su u tabelama dati redosledom koji diktira nivo statističke značajnosti.

Tabela 5

Doprinos prediktora kvalitetu života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju

Prediktori	B	SE	β	t	p
Broj odraslih	0.676	0.220	1.059	3.078	.004
Ukupan broj članova	0.677	0.240	1.042	2.818	.008
Broj dece	0.267	0.245	0.283	1.091	.282

Napomena. B – nestandardizovani regresioni koeficijent; SE – standardna greška; β – standardizovani regresioni koeficijent.

Tabela 6

Doprinos prediktora kvalitetu života porodica dece tipičnog razvoja

Prediktori	B	SE	β	t	p
Broj dece	0.114	0.115	0.174	0.988	.327
Ukupan broj članova	0.016	0.073	0.047	0.215	.831
Broj odraslih	0.001	0.057	0.004	0.021	.983

Napomena. B – nestandardizovani regresioni koeficijent; SE – standardna greška; β – standardizovani regresioni koeficijent.

Dva od tri prediktora daju parcijalni doprinos ukupnom kvalitetu života u grupi SM. Najveći parcijalni doprinos PKŽ ima broj odraslih u porodici ($β$=1.059, p=.004), nešto manji uticaj ima ukupan broj članova porodice ($β$=1.042, p=.008), dok parcijalni doprinos nije uočen kada je u pitanju broj dece u porodici ($β$=0.283, p=.282, Tabela 5).

Deskriptivni pokazatelji porodičnog kvaliteta života u odnosu na mesto stanovanja za obe grupe ispitanika prikazani su u Tabeli 7. Ispitanici grupe SM koji žive u prigradskim naseljima najbolje ocenjuju PKŽ (AS=3.62, SD=0.65), dok je kod TR to slučaj sa ispitanicima iz gradskih sredina (AS=4.07, SD=0.57).

Tabela 7

Deskriptivni pokazatelji porodičnog kvaliteta života u odnosu na mesto stanovanja

	SM				TR			
	AS	SD	Min	Max	AS	SD	Min	Max
Grad	3.32	0.92	1.16	4.88	4.07	0.57	2.71	5.00
Selo	3.30	0.39	2.84	3.92	3.96	0.65	2.76	5.00
Prigradsko naselje	3.62	0.65	2.76	4.32	3.77	0.43	3.14	4.05

Napomena. SM – Grupa porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (N=42); TR – Grupa porodica dece tipičnog razvoja (N=63).

Iako se na osnovu deskriptivnih pokazatelja može videti da ispitanici grupe TR imaju viši KŽ u odnosu na SM u svim kategorijama mesta stanovanja, ova razlika nije statistički značajna. Rezultati jednofaktorske analize varijanse

pokazuju da mesto stanovanja nema statistički značajan uticaj na PKŽ kako u SM grupi (F=0.25, $df1$=2, $df2$=39, p>.05, η^2=.01), tako ni u TR (F=0.61, $df1$=2, $df2$=60, p>.05, η^2=.02).

Kako bi se ispitale razlike PKŽ u odnosu na materijalne uslove, vršena je Pirsonova korelacija na dve relacije. Prva relacija imala je za cilj da ispita postojanje povezanosti između PKŽ i broja osoba u porodici koje privređuju (izdržavaoca). Rezultati pokazuju da nema značajne povezanosti između izdržavaoca i PKŽ u SM grupi (r=.15, p>.05), kao ni TR grupi (r=.18, p >.05). Druga relacija imala je za cilj da ispita postojanje povezanosti između PKŽ i prosečnih mesečnih primanja porodice. Najpre je sproveden hi kvadrat test, na osnovu čega je utvrđeno da ispitanici iz grupe SM imaju statistički značajno niža prosečna mesečna primanja (χ^2=15.34, df=3, p=.002) u odnosu na ispitanike iz TR grupe. Rezultati Pirsonove korelacije pokazali su da postoji značajna pozitivna korelacija između primanja i PKŽ kako u SM grupi (r=.33, p=.04), tako i u TR grupi (r=.41, p=.001). Zbog utvrđene statistički značajne povezanosti na ovoj ispitanoj relaciji, sprovedena je jednostruka regresiona analiza za obe grupe ispitanika. Rezultati regresione analize pokazali su da je na osnovu podataka o primanjima moguće predviđati PKŽ i u SM grupi (F=4.54, $df1$=1, $df2$=37, p=.04) i u TR grupi (F=11.65, $df1$=1, $df2$=57, p=.001). Ipak, treba imati u vidu da varijacije prediktorske varijable mogu da objasne tek oko 9% varijacija kriterijumske varijable u SM grupi (korigovani r^2=.09) i oko 16% u TR grupi (korigovani r^2=.16).

Daljim analizama ispitan je PKŽ dece sa smetnjama u razvoju u odnosu vrstu smetnji i uzrast deteta, kao i u odnosu na to da li porodica koristi neku od usluga za pomoć porodici. Rezultati t-testa za nezavisne uzorke pokazuju da nema statistički značajne razlike (t=0.86, df=40, p>.05, d=0.33) u PKŽ u porodicama dece sa smetnjama u jednom razvojnom domenu (AS=3.54, SD=0.67) u odnosu na porodice dece sa višestrukim smetnjama (AS=3.29, SD=0.85). Takođe, rezultati Pirsonovog koeficijenta korelacije pokazali su da između uzrasta deteta i PKŽ postoji slaba negativna povezanost, koja nije statistički značajna (r=.14, p>.05). Nasuprot tome, rezultati t-testa za nezavisne uzorke pokazali su da je PKŽ porodica koje koriste usluge za pomoć porodici (AS=3.57, SD=0.60) statistički značajno viši (t=2.11, df=21.94, p=.046, d=0.71) od kvaliteta života porodica koje ne koriste ove usluge (AS=2.99, SD=0.99). Na osnovu Koenovog d statistika može se zaključiti da se radi o efektu srednje veličine.

Diskusija

Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da grupa SM (*AS*=3.35, *SD*=0.81) izveštava o značajno nižem kvalitetu života (*t*=4.72, *df*=68.32, *p*<.001, *d*=0.97) u odnosu na grupu TR (*AS*=4.03, *SD*=0.58). Braun i saradnici (Brown et al., 2006) takođe su izvestili da je u porodicama dece bez smetnji u razvoju uočen statistički značajno viši nivo zadovoljstva kvalitetom života porodice u svim ispitanim domenima u odnosu na porodice dece sa Daunovim sindromom i porodice dece sa poremećajima autističnog spektra.

Ispitanici iz grupe SM najlošije su ocenili kvalitet života u domenu emocionalnog blagostanja (*AS*=2.66, *SD*=1.05). Ovi nalazi su u saglasnosti sa izveštajima drugih studija u kojima se navodi da je utvrđeno postojanje povišenog nivoa stresa, kao i povišeno ispoljavanje depresivnih simptoma i anksioznosti kod roditelja dece sa različitim hroničnim zdravstvenim stanjima i smetnjama u razvoju (Al-Farsi et al., 2016; Brown et al., 2006; Davis & Carter, 2008; Dervishaliaj, 2013; Dimoski i Grbović, 2020; Michalik & Valenta, 2012; Rudić i sar., 2013; Sarajlija i sar., 2013; Williams et al., 2003). Kada je u pitanju PKŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju u različitim domenima, nalazi dobijeni u ovoj studiji veoma su slični nalazima o kojima izveštavaju Milićević i Nedović (2017). Prema nalazima ovih autora, roditelji dece sa cerebralnom paralizom najbolje su ocenili kvalitet života u domenima porodične interakcije, roditeljstvo i podrška koja se odnosi na ometenost člana porodice. U našoj studiji ova tri domena PKŽ porodica su takođe najbolje ocenjena, i to istim redosledom. Saglasnost rezultata istraživanja vidljiva je i u domenu emocionalnog blagostanja, koji je najniže ocenjen i u drugim istraživanjima (Milićević i Nedović, 2017; Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009; Staunton et al., 2020).

U nastojanju da se bolje razumeju razlike u nivoima zadovoljstva PKŽ među ovim grupama, kao i faktora koji mogu uticati na PKŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, odgovore možemo potražiti u sociodemografskim karakteristikama porodica. Kada se uzme u obzir da porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju koje žive u ruralnim sredinama u Srbiji imaju teškoće u pronalaženju rehabilitacionih i defektoloških usluga i adekvatnog obrazovanja, očekivano je da ovakvi izazovi negativno utiču na kvalitet života (Nestorov S., Kovačević, Nestorov V., 2016, prema Nestorov S. i Nestorov V., 2020). Rezultati istraživanja prikazani u ovom radu pokazali su da mesto stanovanja ipak ne predstavlja jedan od faktora kojim bi ove razlike mogle biti objašnjene, odnosno da mesto stanovanja nema statistički značajan uticaj na PKŽ kako u porodicama dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (*F*=0.25, *df1*=2, *df2*=39; *p*>.05, *η²*=.01), tako ni u porodicama dece tipičnog razvoja (*F*=0.61, *df1*=2, *df2*=60, *p*>.05, *η²*=.02). Vučinić i saradnici (2022) takođe ne nalaze vezu između mesta stanovanja i očekivane podrške koja je potrebna porodicama.

Kada su u pitanju materijalni uslovi u kojima porodica živi, nije pronađena veza između broja osoba koje učestvuju u izdržavanju porodice i PKŽ ni u porodicama dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (r=.15, p>.05), ni u porodicama dece tipičnog razvoja (r=.18, p>.05). Međutim, rezultati su pokazali da postoji značajna pozitivna korelacija između prosečnih mesečnih primanja i PKŽ kako u porodicama dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (r=.33, p=.04), tako i u porodicama dece tipičnog razvoja (r=.41, p=.001). Takođe, na uzorku ovog istraživanja utvrđeno je da porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju imaju statistički značajno niža prosečna mesečna primanja (χ^2=15.34, df=3, p=.002), pa se ovaj podatak može smatrati značajnim prilikom tumačenja rezultata koji sugerišu da porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju imaju niži PKŽ u odnosu na porodice dece tipičnog razvoja. Ovakvi rezultati su u saglasnosti sa rezultatima istraživanja drugih autora koji navode da je u porodicama sa nižim primanjima utvrđen niži nivo PKŽ, što ne iznenađuje jer veća primanja omogućavaju pristup uslugama i resursima za izdržavanje porodice i brigu o deci (Boehm & Carter, 2019; Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009; Gine et al., 2015; Hsiao, 2018; Meral et al., 2013). Istraživanja pokazuju i da porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju imaju i veće troškove usled stanja deteta, kao što su razne dijagnostičke procedure i tretmani, što dodatno opterećuje njihov budžet (Nestorov, S., Kovačević, 2016; Nestorov, S., Nestorov, V., 2018, prema Nestorov S. i Nestorov V., 2020). Pored toga, majke često napuštaju posao kako bi se brinule o detetu sa smetnjama u razvoju, što otežava finansijsku situaciju ovih porodica, ali i smanjuje broj socijalnih kontakata majke i lišava je značajnog resursa emocionalne podrške (Vučinić i sar., 2022).

Prethodna istraživanja pokazala su da na PKŽ može uticati bračni status i prisutnost jednog ili oba roditelja u porodici, broj dece (braće i sestara), kao i ukupan broj članova domaćinstva. Iako različite studije daju kontradiktorne rezultate u pogledu konkretnog uticaja broja članova porodice na PKŽ, nalazi u najvećoj meri sugerišu da struktura porodice utiče na PKŽ (Gine et al., 2015; Hsiao, 2018; Mora et al., 2020). Rezultati ovog istraživanja pokazali su da je na osnovu skupa prediktorskih varijabli koje se tiču porodičnog sastava u odnosu na broj njenih članov, moguće objasniti oko 26% ukupne varijanse PKŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (F=5.71, $df1$=3, $df2$=38, p=.002, korigovani R^2=.26). Daljom analizom rezultata vidi se da parcijalni doprinos ima broj odraslih članova porodice, ali da broj dece ne utiče na PKŽ. Istraživanja drugih autora takođe pokazuju da roditelji koji žive sa partnerom ispoljavaju viši nivo PKŽ u poređenju sa jednoroditeljskim porodicama, kao i da broj dece u porodici nema uticaja na PKŽ (Hsiao, 2018).

U cilju boljeg razumevanja nekih faktora specifičnih za porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, ispitan je nivo PKŽ u odnosu na broj smetnji, uzrast deteta i korišćenje usluga za pomoć porodici. U našem istraživanju nisu pronađene značajne razlike u PKŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u jednom

domenu razvoja i porodica dece sa višestrukim smetnjama (t=0.86, df=40, p>.05, d=0.33), kao ni značajna povezanost PKŽ sa uzrastom deteta sa smetnjama (r=.14, p>.05). Ovi nalazi nisu u saglasnosti sa rezultatima nekih drugih autora, a koji govore u prilog tome da ovi faktori imaju uticaj na PKŽ porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju (Bohem & Carter, 2019; Meral et al., 2013; Mora et al., 2020; Staunton et al., 2020). Određene karakteristike deteta koje otežavaju roditeljima da ispune svoju ulogu povezane su sa višim nivoima stresa kod roditelja (Staunton et al., 2020). Problemi u ponašanju kod deteta koji su uzrok dodatnih briga i podrške koja je potrebna detetu povezani su sa nižim PKŽ, posebno sa emocionalnim blagostanjem i podrškom koja se odnosi na dete (Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009). S druge strane, isti autori ne nalaze vezu između PKŽ i težine razvojnih smetnji. Razlog neusaglašenosti rezultata ove studije sa nalazima koje navode drugi autori mogao bi da bude u veličini uzorka ove studije, koji može biti nedovoljan za dobijanje statistički značajnih rezultata u ovom domenu. Takođe, kada je u pitanju broj smetnji, u ovom istraživanju uzorak je podeljen samo na osnovu toga da li su u pitanju višestruke smetnje ili se one ispoljavaju u jednom razvojnom domenu, ali nisu uzeti u obzir podaci o funkcionalnom statusu dece.

Kada je u pitanju uzrast dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, iako rezultat nije dostigao nivo statističke značajnosti, korelaciona analiza pokazala je negativan smer. Milićević i Nedović (2018) u svom istraživanju takođe otkrivaju neobičan rezultat prema kome je učešće starije dece (13–18 godina) u porodičnim aktivnostima povezano sa nižim PKŽ. Uzrok ovakvih rezultata mogao bi se tražiti u emocionalnom odgovoru roditelja i njihovoj mogućnosti prilagođavanja na specifične zahteve roditeljstva nakon rođenja deteta sa smetnjama u razvoju, kao i način njihovog reagovanja na prolongiranu izloženost stresnim situacijama, naročito kada se uzmu u obzir i materijalni uslovi života (Heiman, 2002; Kearney & Griffin, 2001; Michalik & Valenta, 2012). Pojedina istraživanja ne nalaze vezu između uzrasta deteta i PKŽ, ili je ta veza jako slaba (Meral et al., 2013; McStay et al., 2014, prema Hsiao, 2018), dok druga govore o višem PKŽ u porodicama sa decom starijom od 18 godina (Gine et al., 2015). Naravno da su istraživači pokušali da objasne ovako neusaglašene rezultate. Tako se, s jedne strane, smatra da što je dete starije, to je viši nivo anksioznosti i stresa koji roditelji osećaju, dok drugi smatraju da je s godinama proces adaptacije i prihvatanja stanja deteta doveo do „normalnijeg" načina života ovih porodica (Gine et al., 2015). Sve to govori da se sam uzrast deteta ne može uzeti kao varijabla bez razmatranja drugih karakteristika porodice.

Nasuprot tome, rezultati t-testa za nezavisne uzorke pokazali su da je PKŽ porodica koje koriste usluge za pomoć porodici (AS=3.57, SD=0.60) statistički značajno viši (t=2.11, df=21.94, p=.046, d=0.71) od PKŽ porodica koje ne koriste ove usluge (AS=2.99, SD=0.99). Ovakve podatke možemo

naći i u istraživačkim izveštajima drugih autora, u kojima se navodi da lična, finansijska ili obrazovna podrška porodici predstavlja faktor koji utiče na PKŽ (Gine et al., 2015; Hsiao, 2018; Svavarsdottir & Tryggvadottir, 2019). U tom smislu može se reći da je očekivan nalaz da porodice koje koriste usluge pomoći iskazuju veći nivo zadovoljstva PKŽ, s obzirom na to da ispitanici pretežno navode da koriste finansijsku pomoć. Pored dostupnosti profesionalnih usluga porodicama, jako važnu ulogu ima i način na koji se roditelji tretiraju u profesionalnom okruženju. Jedna studija ističe značaj pružanja podrške roditeljima na način koji iskazuje poštovanje i uvažava ih kao aktivne članove u brizi o detetu. Pokazalo se da pristup informacijama i servisima na jasan i sveobuhvatan način povoljno utiče na osećaj dobrobiti porodica (Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009).

Zaključak

Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da porodice dece sa smetnjama u razvoju imaju značajno niži nivo porodičnog kvaliteta života u odnosu na porodice dece tipičnog razvoja. Kao najniži je ocenjen domen emocionalnog blagostanja. U nastojanju razumevanja razlika u porodičnom kvalitetu života sprovedene su dodatne analize na relacijama sa određenim sociodemografskim karakteristikama porodica. Nalazi sugerišu da na kvalitet života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju utiču prosečna mesečna primanja, struktura porodice i korišćenje usluga za pomoć porodici, dok veza nije pronađena između nivoa porodičnog kvaliteta života i mesta stanovanja, broja osoba u porodici koje privređuju, vrste razvojnih smetnji i uzrasta deteta sa smetnjama.

Mali uzorak istraživanja, nedovoljno detaljan pregled porodične strukture i nedostatak procene funkcionalnog statusa deteta predstavljaju osnovna ograničenja ove studije, te se predlaže da u budućim istraživanjima i ovi podaci budu uzeti u obzir kako bi bilo moguće dodatno i temeljnije razumevanje faktora koji potencijalno utiču na kvalitet života porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju.

Uprkos istaknutim nedostacima, može se reći da ova studija raznovrsnošću obuhvaćenih faktora doprinosi sagledavanju potencijalno problematičnih domena kvaliteta života, kao i potreba porodica dece sa smetnjama u razvoju, a time ujedno pruža osnovu za planiranje budućih istraživanja, kao i adekvatnih intervencija u ovoj oblasti.

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Quality of life of families of children with developmental disabilities

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Introduction. Quality of life can be defined as a concept that broadly measures one's experience in relation to that person's hopes and aspirations. This definition can be applied to both an individual and a family perspective. *Objectives*. This research aimed to examine the quality of life of families of children with developmental disabilities and the interrelationship between family quality of life and certain socio-demographic characteristics of the family and the child. The socio-demographic characteristics of the family and the child include family structure, i.e., the total number of family members, the number of adults and the number of children in the family; material conditions, i.e., average monthly income and number of family members who earn money; place of living; availability of family support services; as well as the type of developmental disabilities and the age of the child with developmental disabilities. *Methods*. The research sample consists of 42 parents of children with developmental disabilities, and the control group consists of 63 parents of children with typical development. The Family Quality of Life Scale was used to assess family quality of life (Beach Center Family Quality of Life Scale – Beach FQOL Scale). *Results*. The results of the research showed that families of children with developmental disabilities have a significantly lower level of family quality

of life compared to families of children with typical development, with the Emotional Well-being domain being the worst rated. In an effort to understand differences in family quality of life, additional analyses were conducted on relationships with certain socio-demographic characteristics of families. *Conclusion.* The findings suggest that the quality of life of families of children with developmental disabilities is influenced by the average monthly income, family structure, and the use of family support services, while no relationship was found between the level of family quality of life and place of residence, the number of persons in the family providing for the family, the type of developmental disabilities and the age of the child with disabilities.

Keywords: family quality of life, family, parents, children with disabilities