Study Regarding the Sociability Degree of SEN (Special Education Needs) Students

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Abstract

Our research is focused to confirm the fact that the practice of democratic-participative management at the level of the educational entity and the transfer of the managerial style at the micro – pedagogic level of the relationship professor – classroom, due to the secured socio-emotional climate established and also to the increased frequency of the situations in which students had the possibility to participate in informal activities thus widening the sphere of social interactions, leads to the generation of visible beneficial effects also in what concerns the students’ degree of sociability, this being a basic formative priority for persons manifesting special educational requirements.

Keywords: socialization, sociability, special educational requirements, school performances;

1. Introduction

Considering the specific of the educative-formative of the education units which train students with special educational requirements, in our research we focused on the possible influences which the implementation of the democratic-participative management at the concrete level of the students class has on the degree of sociability of this categories of subjects. Surveys carried out so far acknowledge that socialization is a challenge of the contemporary society, a necessity of knowledge from the perspective of the educational phenomenon and a process which incorporates positive human interrelationships (Baechler, 1997).

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2. Research Methodology

The research—a longitudinal action, has the following hypothesis: the practice of democratic-participative management at institutional level and its application at the level of a class of students triggers the registration of high scores of the SNE children’s socializing degree. The unifactorial design indicates as independent variable—democratic-participative management— and the level of the pupils’ socializing degree is constituted in the dependent variable of the research.

In order to highlight the effects which the construction of a relationship professor—class inspired by the principles of the democratic—participative management had on the students’ level of sociability we used the sociometric matrix and the analysis of the documents related to the situation of the periodicity of institutionalized students’ leave for the family.

The data offered by the use of the sociometric matrix completed by the analysis of school documents and the comparison of such data with those of the students of mass regular schools of the same city, show us the fact that there are no statistically significant differences between the students of the two categories, the said categories being comparable. Such state of fact indicates the fact that the degree of sociability of the students of the inclusive type educational entity and that of the students of mass schools is approximately identical.

Subsequent to the investigation we have ascertained the fact that the importance of interpersonal relationships of sympathy, which is higher with the students of the special education training entity and the importance of the interpersonal relations of indifference which is higher with the students of mass schools, may be explained by the reduced number of students in the classrooms and also by the psycho-affective peculiarities of the children with special educational requirements, a situation which allows for and easy establishment of positive interrelations.

By his nature man is a sociable person, as Aristotle spoke of man’s innate tendency to search for the presence of his kind. Considering the specific of the instructive-formative activities in school units that teach students with SEN, the current research investigates the potential influence that the implementation of the democratic-participative management at the level of the class has upon the degree of students’ sociability.

To emphasize the effects that the building of a teacher-student relation inspired from the management principles had upon the sociability level of the students we used two methods:

- The sociometric matrix;
- The analysis of the documents regarding the situation of the frequency of SEN students’ going to a family.

Regarding the achievement of an initial ascertaining research we consider this would be superfluous and consequently we assumed as basic premise the fact that there are significant differences from the point of view of sociability and pro-social behavior in SEN schools and mass-school students, the latter category being superior to the former from this perspective.

In the case of the sociometric matrix we must mention that it was applied in 2010 to students in grades V-VIII (76 students) and, to have a comparative element, to a similar number of student (81) from High School "Petru Rareș", Elementary School "Liviu Rebreanu" and Elementary School "Grigore Silași", all in the same urban location.

Essentially, students were asked, under the auspices of anonymity, to note the names of the colleagues they like, of those they dislike and of those towards they have indifferent interpersonal relations (Blanchard, 2002).

We state here the fact that every students in both lot categories gave an average of 6-7 opinions related to the preferences, dislikes or neutral relations towards their colleagues.

3. Presentation and analysis of results

The data obtained as a result of the application of the sociometric matrix to the students of the School Center for Inclusive Education are presented in table 1.
Table 1. The typology of interpersonal relations at the level of SNE students (grades V-VIII, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interpersonal relationship</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive interpersonal relations</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative interpersonal relations</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral interpersonal relations</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in the previously shown table, in the case of SNE students, 65% of the total expressed refers to positive, liking interpersonal relations, 27% show negative, rejecting interpersonal relations and 8% represent neutrality and indifference relations.

The results of the application of the sociometric matrix to the witness lot (students randomly chosen from the three mentioned schools) are shown in table 2.

Table 2. The typology of interpersonal relations at the level of students in the witness lot (grades V-VIII, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interpersonal relationship</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive interpersonal relations</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative interpersonal relations</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral interpersonal relations</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can observe, due to the data in table 2 the fact that there were basically similar answers to those offered by SNE students; 52% represent appreciation interpersonal relations, 29% are negative opinions and 19% are indifference interpersonal relations. It must be mentioned at this stage the fact that the answer structures of these two categories of students do not indicate major difference statistically speaking. ($\chi^2=1.069$, $p > 0.05$), being rather comparative. The fact that students in the two categories of lots give the same number of answers (6-7) and that the answer matrix present obvious similarities allow the affirmation that there are no statistically major differences in the students’ sociability.

Moreover, a thorough analysis of the data in graphs 1 and 2 show that SNE students mark a higher share of positive interpersonal relations (65%) as compared to 52% shown by the witness lot, while the neutrality relations represent a mere 8% in contrast to the former case of 19% belonging to the witness lot. Through statistically insignificant, the difference register in favor of the SNE students regarding the higher share of appreciation interpersonal relations and the reduced percentage of the indifference relations can be explained by the reduces number of students in classes, but also by the psycho-affective particularities that SNE students have, situation that allows an easy establishment of positive nature relations (Ghergul, 2007).

Table 3. Comparative presentation of the situation of SNE students who leave school to go home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer option/Duration</th>
<th>pre-testing, 2006</th>
<th>post-testing, 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave for home only at the end of the semester, but they are accompanied by parents or tutors</td>
<td>44 students 51.76%</td>
<td>15 students 15.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for home frequently(every 1-3 weeks), but they are accompanies by parents or tutors</td>
<td>31 students 36.47%</td>
<td>38 students 39.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for home unaccompanied, with written acceptance from parents (daily or weekly)</td>
<td>10 students 11.77%</td>
<td>43 students 44.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>85 students 100%</td>
<td>96 students 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another investigation method used in the analysis of the sociability degree in SNE students was the analysis of documents concerning their leave back to the family and the manner in which this leave is performed (accompanies or unaccompanied). The data referring to this aspect, register in pre-testing and post-testing, are shown in table 3.

We mention the fact that throughout 2006-2010 at the level of the inclusive school unit there was the practice of democratic-participative management both at macro level (institutional level) and at microlevel (level of class).

Based on the indicators included in the table above we can observe that in the post-testing stage 44.8% of the students are in the situation of leaving for home unaccompanied, everyday or at weekends, while in the pre-testing stage only 11.77% could benefit from that opportunity. To have a clearer image upon this situation we represented graphically the data in table 1, which can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. The frequency of SNE students who leave for home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pre-testing percentage</th>
<th>Post-testing percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave for home only at the end of the semester</td>
<td>51.76 %</td>
<td>15.62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for home frequently(every 1-3 weeks)</td>
<td>36.47%</td>
<td>39.58 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for home unaccompanied</td>
<td>11.77 %</td>
<td>44.80 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significant differences ($\chi^2=12.226$, $p<0.05$) registered between the pre-testing stage and the post-testing stage regarding student who go home to the family are a relevant indicator of the increase in the sociability degree. The fact that in post-testing stage we can see a substantial increase in the number of students who have parental approval to return home unaccompanied, many of them being commuters, is also proof of a higher trust level of the tutors in their capacities of establishing adequate social interactions and of managing in an optimal manner the situations that can be generate din the way back.

4. Interpretation of results

The analysis of the data provided by the parents’ answers regarding their children’s behavior from the point of view of the relation capacity with the others (from school documents, respectively minutes and official records from teacher-parents meeting and encounters in the mentioned period, 2006-2010, as the period of manipulation of the independent variable), corroborated to the indicators offered by the se of the sociometric matrix and the analysis of the documents regarding the frequency and situation of students who leave school to go to support families (accompanied or not), allow us to appreciate that their abilities to socially interact had a significant development.

The data obtained from the use of the sociometric matrix (Boco, 2007), completed by the analysis of school documents and the comparison of these data to the information referring to students in mass education system, indicates the fact that there are no statistically significant differences between the answers given by the pupils in the two categories, but rather, the answers are comparative.

This shows the fact that the sociability degree of the students in inclusive SNE institutions and that of mass-education students is nearly identical. Likewise, the mathematical-statistical analysis of comparative type of the frequency in leaving school to go home to the family for the pupils in the School Center for Inclusive Education in post-testing and pre-testing showed the fact that there are consistent differences, in favor of the stage following the experimental intervention, respectively the implementation of the democratic-participative management.

Therefore, we observed that at the end of the investigation, there was an increase in the number of students for whom parents agreed to return home unaccompanied, even in the conditions in which most of them were commuters, which is valid proof that the parents ascertained the higher degree of the children’s social capacities
and their potential to face inherent situation that might occur on the road home. Another explanation for the increased frequency of returning home registered in the post-testing stage is related to the existence of better school-family communication throughout this period, communication focused on counseling parents regarding the understanding of their children’s behavior (Dumitru, 2008).

5. Conclusions

Our study, at the end of the intervention period, respectively the implementation of a democratic-participative type of management at the level of the inclusive school unit, indicates a similarity from the point of view of the pro-social behavior of the sociability degree at the level of the two groups of subjects, Group A-students with SNE, group B-students in mass education.

In conclusion, it can be said that the practice of democratic-participative management at the level of SNE institutions and the application of this management style at the micro-pedagogic level of teacher-class relations, due to the socio-emotional secured climate of the institution and also due to the increased frequency of nonformal activities in which student took part (trips, visits, shows, contests), broadening their social interaction sphere (Stan, Manea, 2011), there were visible benefic effect regarding the sociability degree of students, as a basic formative priority for people who have special educational needs.

References