# AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS IN THE BEHAVIOUR OF TEENAGERS AND ADOLESCENTS IN SLOVAKIA IN RELATION TO THEIR CREATIVITY AND SUCCESS IN THE SCHOOL

[a]MÁRIA ZAHATŇANSKÁ, [b]MELINDA NAGY

*[a] Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences, University of Prešov in Prešov, 17. November 1, 081 16 Prešov, Slovakia email: maria.zahatnanska@unipo.sk*
*[b] Faculty of Education, J. Selye University, Bratislavská cesta 3322, 945 01 Komárno, Slovakia, nagym@ujs.sk*

Abstract: The research focuses on identification of problems in the behaviour of contemporary teenagers and adolescents in relation to their creativity and school results. The sample of 232 respondents consisted of teenagers (8th grade pupils) and adolescents (3rd grade pupils) of primary and secondary schools from Prešov. We used the TTCT – Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking, in which the respondents replenished and completed thirty circles by using colour pencils. The tests were evaluated and respondents were sorted according to types of school and factors for creativity – fluency (number of filled circles), flexibility (number of themes; different solutions in circles), and originality (uniqueness of the subject in circles). After completing the TTCT test of creativity, respondents identified by brainwriting method problems and situations that are causing problem behaviour of young people.

Keywords: Creativity, success in the school, problems in the behaviour, teenagers, adolescents, Slovakia

## 1 Introduction

The study focuses on identification of problems in the behaviour of current teenagers and adolescents in relation to their creativity and school results. There are growing findings in schools for violation of school rules, code of conduct violation in school and classroom. We sought answers to some questions, related to creativity, school results and two distinctive periods, namely puberty and adolescence. Do primary and secondary school pupils realize the impact of their negative behaviour? Are they able to identify problems and are they able to propose adequate solutions at this age? We have drawn on thoughts of leading experts within creativity such as Guilford, 1950; Torrance, 1970, 1975; Hlavsa, 1978; Ďurič, 1980; Dargová 2001; Zelina a Zelinová, 1990, 1997, 2007, 2018; Lokšová a Lokša, 2003; Spilková, 2004; Németh & Pukánszky, 2004; Said, 2006; Tóthová, 2006; Königová, 2007; Vašutová, 2007; Szobiová, 2004, 2009, 2016; Kasáčová, 2011; Adair, 2011; Krajčovičová, 2012; Horváthová & Szőköl, 2013; Huda, Wan a Tareq, 2013; Slavík, Chrz, Štech a kol., 2014; Mrázek, 2014; Bain, 2016; Žák, 2017, and psychology experts Emmerová, I, 2014; Vágnerová, M. 2001, 2004, 2010, 2012, 2014; Končeková, 2005, 2014; Gajdošová, 2006; Ondrejkovič, 2001 and others.

Society, with its increasing changes is incessantly demanding on behaviour of an individual. The individual tries to adapt to these changes, to process the amount of information and knowledge necessary for their existence in varying ways and to integrate into society (Hangoni, Cehelská, 2014). Young generation is under constant pressure of a family, school, social environment and the mass media. Its performance is subordinate to standard measurements and its behaviour should meet certain requirements and norms. Upbringing and education within family and school environments are sometimes carried out in an atmosphere of strained relations, without trust and often without interest from parents and teachers. In schools, we increasingly encounter pupils who have problems at school and often they need to minimize or overcome these problems, especially with help of teachers, schools, parents and experts.

## 2 Theoretical definitions

Behavioural disorders caused by inappropriate educational influences or insufficient or improper upbringing, are manifested mainly by problems in the adaptation of pupils. It may be caused by inappropriate, underdeveloped, absent habits and skills; deficiencies in upbringing and sociocultural environment, which may negatively affect the pupil's school performance. These are educational difficulties and issues that affect the pupil's school performance. Problems arise when education either lacks appropriate incentives, patterns and methods shaping desirable ways of behaviour and skill development, or is the result of improper patterns or education methods. Thus, the child (pupil) embraces erroneous habits or fails to develop proper habits, attitudes and behaviours and does not reach an average level in some areas of personality development.

According to Vágnerová (2014), a distinction is usually drawn between three basic disorders that affect problem behaviour of children and adolescents. They can be observed when:

*a) children underachieve and do not perform desired results at school*

- in this case, the question therefore is whether the child is even capable of desired performance at all. Children with specific behavioural and learning disabilities are at a disadvantage. The teacher considers their abilities normal, however their motivation or volition is problematic. Often happens that a child is not able to influence, for example, attention by their volition.

*b) children are primarily affected by behavioural problems*

- they are aggressive towards other children and they are disrupting lessons by making a scenes. Behavioural peculiarities can be influenced by number of physical or mental causes.

*c) children have emotional problems*

- they show excessive anxiety, hypersensitiveness and also draw attention by their differences from other children. Formally, problem behaviour in childhood and adolescence can be divided into:
- non-aggressive violations of social standards, including defiance, falsehood, flight, roaming, etc.;
- aggressive behavioural disorders, including vandalism, bullying, failing grades, etc.

There are no exact boundaries therefore it may overlap.

Teachers in their practice very frequently encounter problem behaviour of children and youth at any level of education system. Behavioural problems or disorders, such as Končeková, 2014, Ondrejkovič, 2009, Pokorná, 2010, Vágnerová, 2010, 2012, 2014 and the others call them, may be of genetic or acquired origin. Thus, when specifying, the pupil's personality (overall picture, temperament, vulnerability, plasticity of the nervous system, received support, ability to adapt, the amount of anxiety, stress tolerance, etc.) must be taken into account. All manifestations of the pupil's behaviour should be appraised in relation to their development.

The problem behaviour of pupils at school has a disruptive effect on the teacher's learning process and it can also disturb other pupils. Problems with pupil's behaviour are often considered by beginning teachers as the most difficult aspect of education. Pupils, who manifest undesirable behaviour, always require special attention, which causes tension on teachers and decelerate the pace of their teaching. We have to acknowledge that teachers are not machines through which pupils are provided with education, but they are part of the active environment of the pupil, who expects them love, status and recognition (Sharma at all, 2013). Positive emotionality and positive emotions help to maintain good relations, foster creativity in thinking and interest in new activities (Diener, Baswas-Diener, 2008). According to Wolfgang and Glickman (1980), a teacher has a variety of models, techniques, methods and structures available to eliminate problem behaviour in classroom. To bring about the change in behaviour, the subject (pupil himself) needs to be involved into the process, because the change should be achieved with him. And this will happen only if the subject is willing to change. Therefore, the change from within is important. If we are to change behaviour from within, it means

changing the school itself as an educational institution and that is development of the pupil's creative personality, as well as changing the family and its influence on the individual. It is important to recognize signs of problem behaviour during upbringing and education in the school and family environment. In addition, to ensure their professional assessment and resolution as soon as possible, since the causation of problem behaviour may be different.

A problem pupil can be described as a pupil who over a long period and intentionally evokes conflicts. During pedagogical practice we encounter different types of pupils, who we consider to be problematic: distracting pupils, timid pupils and pupils without motivation (Kyriacou, 2005). Auger and Boucharlat (2005) categorize the problem pupil as the one, who refuses to cooperate and disrupts class. Janský (2014) under the designation 'problem pupil' means - failing, inattentive, hyperactive and impulsive pupil; pupil who steals, deceives and defies; pupil who shows hostile behaviour; aggressive pupil with violent behaviour; dejected pupil who suffers from depression, anxiety, neurotic behaviour, untidiness, filth, truancy, bullying and socio-pathological phenomena. To understand human behaviour it is necessary to understand forming mechanisms, states Drapela (2011). Some of them are intrapersonal and are related to our internal processes, and along with interpersonal determines our relationships with the people around us. These mechanisms are generally referred to as personality dynamics.

**3 Research**

The sample of 232 respondents, consisted of teenagers (8th grade pupils) and adolescents (3rd grade pupils) of secondary schools, hereof 58 pupils of the 8th grade from primary school in Prešov; 56 pupils of the 3rd grade from grammar school in Prešov; 58 pupils of the 3rd grade from the Hotel Academy in Prešov and 61 pupils of the 3rd grade of vocational school (former secondary apprentice school) in Prešov further explored the behavioural problems of teenagers and adolescents depending on their school results, age, type of school and creativity. At the first meeting we used *TTCT – Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* (1975), in which the respondents replenished and completed thirty circles using colour pencils. The tests were evaluated and respondents were sorted according to types of school and factors for creativity – fluency (number of filled circles), flexibility (number of themes; different solutions in circles), and originality (uniqueness of the subject in circles) into the table.

At the subsequent meeting, respondents identified behavioural problems, they delineated what is bothering them about behaviour of their peers, classmates, teachers, adults at school, at home, outside the school, and what they consider to be the most serious behavioural problem of young people. In this phase of the research, we used creative method brainwriting (Zelina, 2011). Each respondent wrote and identified at the sheet of paper as many behavioural problems as possible. Thereafter, respondents assigned numbers from 1-10 to individual problem, according to the seriousness of the problem. Number one was assigned to the most serious problem and number ten to less serious problem. The sheets were collected after given time period and order of the most frequently mentioned problems was drawn up according to individual grades and types of school, and also according to the seriousness of behavioural problems, as all respondents stated. Verification of normality and frequency distribution of individual factors for creativity were ranked according to individual types of school. Fluency, flexibility and originality were progressively appraised. For the variance analysis of four schools, the Shapiro-Wilk test and Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance were used. Significant differences were found between groups of respondents of individual schools by analysis of variance. These are shown in Table 1 with its names: ha - Hotel Academy, gy - grammar school, sou - secondary apprentice school, zš - primary school, x - significant difference between groups.

Table. 1: Fluency and its layout

| Group | Number | Average order | ha | gy | sou | zš |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hotel Academy | 58 | 79,8621 | | | x | x |
| Grammar school | 57 | 101,8596 | | | | x |
| Apprentice school | 61 | 127,3770 | x | | | |
| Primary school | 56 | 157,5000 | x | x | | |

Fluency confirmed a statistically significant difference (x) between all groups of respondents. Primary school respondents, who were better than those from grammar school, former apprentice school and those from the Hotel Academy, achieved the highest fluency score. Respondents of former apprentice school are located higher than Hotel Academy respondents, which mean that they are better in fluency even in comparison to grammar school respondents. All groups of respondents with higher fluency scores completed the largest number of circles in the TTCT test of creativity. Corresponding statistical methods were used on basis of a graphical demonstration of the data distribution.

Differences found between groups of respondents from the Hotel Academy, grammar school respondents and primary school respondents are related not only to the number of completed circles of TTCT - creativity test, but also point out that puberty is associated with authors such as Smith, Carlsson 1990, Szobiová, 1999, 2016, Končeková, 2014 etc.; period of confusion, low self-esteem, a decline of creativity factors that in adolescence appear in a more complicated and sophisticated form as it connected with development of abstract thinking and the complexity of emotional problems.

Statistically, significant differences (x) were confirmed with the flexibility factor, between groups of respondents of all school types, with the exception of two groups of grammar school (gy) and former apprentice school (sou). The Hotel Academy (ha) respondents achieved the lowest flexibility score, with the least variations in the TTCT test and it was worse than the group of grammar school respondents, group of apprentice school respondents and the worst in comparison with group of primary school respondents. The primary school respondents achieved the highest score, which means they were the best in terms of flexibility and also used the most diverse motives in the creativity test. The data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Flexibility and its layout

| Group | Number | Average order | ha | gy | sou | zš |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hotel Academy | 58 | 75,6638 | | x | x | x |
| Grammar school | 57 | 108,7544 | x | | | x |
| Apprentice school | 61 | 120,3525 | x | | | x |
| Primary school | 56 | 162,4821 | x | x | x | |

On the basis of the findings, it is noted that at primary school level, there is a greater possibility of creative work and development of creative and divergent thinking, whether the structure of school subjects allows it, or atmosphere and attitude of teachers to pupils and their behaviour. During this period behaviour and actions of the teenager need to be guided. Parents are responsible for teenager's behaviour and learning outcomes. From the adult viewpoint, the teenager is still considered to be a child who needs to be guided, commended and to have reasonably ensured leisure time activities as well as to know parent's opinion. Teenager spends a lot of time on hobbies - sport, dance, technical, art, music, etc., with a space for creative self-realization, which was also manifested in the research results. Poráčová (2010) states that if the school atmosphere is more relaxed, without fear and stress, it provides the opportunity develop pupils' creativity.

The Hotel Academy respondents with the lowest score have fewer subjects in their school subject structure that allow them to develop creativity. After negative experience in communication with adults, they were not even interested in completing TTCT test and they gave the impression of being bored. Respondents haven't been offered a drawing activity, which surprised them. The Hotel Academy graduates, apart from theoretical knowledge master practical skills, language skills and within only some subjects (such as table etiquette, etc.) have the opportunity to express themselves creatively. Preparation for their future profession mainly includes: technology of food preparation, hotel industry and communication with customers or flexible behaviour. During the assessment of the *originality* factor, significant differences were not observed. This was assumed from the flexibility assessment, in which very few respondents completed the TTCT test differently than other respondents.

Table 3: School results and Creativity

|  | School results | Fluency | Flexibility | Originality |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary school |  |  |  |  |
| school results | 1,000000 | 0,009735 | - 0,349604 | 0,019689 |
| fluency | 0,009735 | 1,000000 | - 0, 034962 | - 0,050841 |
| flexibility | - 0,349604 | - 0, 034962 | 1,000000 | - 0,060091 |
| originality | 0,019689 | - 0,050841 | - 0,060091 | 1,000000 |
| Grammar school |  |  |  |  |
| school results | 1,000000 | 0,138135 | - 0,074076 | - |
| fluency | 0,138135 | 1,000000 | 0, 393613 | - |
| flexibility | - 0,074076 | 0, 393613 | 1,000000 | - |
| originality | - | - | - | 1,000000 |
| Hotel Academy |  |  |  |  |
| school results | 1,000000 | 0,062639 | - 0,121637 | - 0,019845 |
| fluency | 0,062639 | 1,000000 | 0,286878 | - 0,007936 |
| flexibility | - 0,121637 | 0,286878 | 1,000000 | 0,091451 |
| originality | - 0,019845 | - 0,007936 | 0,091451 | 1,000000 |
| Apprentice school |  |  |  |  |
| school results | 1,000000 | - 0,012493 | - 0,292131 | - |
| fluency | - 0,012493 | 1,000000 | 0,334389 | - |
| flexibility | - 0,292131 | 0,334389 | 1,000000 | - |
| originality | - | - | - | 1,000000 |

Source: own creation

Dependence between school results and flexibility was observed among primary school respondents. The better school results of respondents were, the higher their flexibility was. It was proven by higher number of subjects in TTCT test circles. The dependence between school results and fluency was not confirmed in this group of respondents. The dependence between fluency and flexibility was confirmed among adolescent respondents, which means that they filled in TTCT test as many circles as possible with colour and at the same time they proposed high number of infrequent ideas. The better respondents were in terms of fluency and flexibility, the better school results they had. There was examined the modal preferences of the university students in Komarno, Slovakia (Fleming's model was applied). There is substantial evidence for the existence of modality-specific processing strengths and weaknesses (in visual, auditory, read/write or kinaesthetic/tactile dimensions) in people with various types of learning difficulty. The proportion of students with moderate modality preference was significant, mostly in reading and writing, and in the

kinaesthetic dimension, significant differences can be observed, especially for those attending secondary apprentice schools (Tóth, 2018).

**3.1 Problem identification**

During the next meeting, each respondent identified problems and situations that are causing the problem behaviour of young people by brainwriting method.

Teenagers, in comparison to adolescents, identified fewer problems and situations related to the problem behaviour of young people. The most serious problems they stated are: family problems, school problems, classmate relationships, teacher-pupil relationships, drugs and addictions, adult misunderstanding, love problems, stress, aggression and egoism, sloppiness, non-acceptance and truancy. In contradistinction to teenagers, adolescents consider drugs and alcoholism to be the most serious problem in behaviour, what points out their more responsible approach to life and health. While teenagers regarded addictions more as an opportunity to impress, show off, "to be cool" or to become a part of the group, adolescents emphasized the danger of addictions and its impact on loss of meaning in life, entitlement to self-realization, and employment. The adolescents identified the most serious problems - drugs, alcoholism and addiction, adult misapprehension, money and to be "cool" because of it, racism, aggression, falsity, falsehood and pretence, stress, fear to express own opinion, sex and love, school problems, groups of friends and peers, opportunity to be a part of these groups. The identified problems of adolescents reflect their age-related problems, however society-related problems that they perceive as negative and serious may be observed as well.

**4 Conclusion**

We are living in an era of rapid development, rapid change and adaptation to new conditions. Sometimes we are looking for ourselves in a "chaotic patchwork" of responsibilities, relationships and own ambitions. On this path of life, our actions and behaviour are influenced by quality of relationships and people, who we have met as well as people, who we have spent a shorter or longer period of time. The period of life called education should have a positive impact and help overcome obstacles and pitfalls of study and life. Teaching is based not only on knowledge transfer, but also on the quality of teacher and pupil relationship, on the understanding of pupil's problems, on the mutual empathy and willingness to listen and help. The teacher should be aware of pupils' interests, aspirations, opinions and ideas. Young people's attitude to life and their behaviour can be changed by willingness to be understood from adults.

It is important for pedagogy theory and practice to identify problem behaviour of teenagers and adolescents not only by teachers, parents and experts, but also teenagers and adolescents should be aware of these problems and point out possible solutions.

**Literature:**

1. AUGER, M. T., BOUCHRLAT, CH. *Učitel a problémový žák*. Praha: Portál, 2005. 128 s. ISBN 8071789070.
2. DIENER, E., BISWAS-DIENER, R. *Happiness: Unlocking the mysteries of psychological wealth*. Malden : Blackwell Publishing. 2008. ISBN 9781444305159. 290 pp. [online] [cit. 2019-11-18] Dostupné na: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2008-12878-000http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781444305159.
3. DRAPELA, V., J. *Přehled teorií osobnosti*. Praha: Portál. 2011. 176 s. ISBN 978-80-262-0040-6.
4. HANGONI, T., CEHELSKÁ, D. *Didaktika sociálnej práce*. Prešov: PU, PbF. 2014. 142 s. ISBN 978-80-555-1072-9.
5. HORVÁTHOVÁ, K. & SZŐKÖL, I. *Kontrola a hodnotenie žiackych výkonov: v národnostných školách na Slovensku*. 1. vyd. Komárno: Univerzita J. Selyeho, 2013. 119 s. ISBN 978-80-8122-083-8

6. JANSKÝ, P. *Dítě s problémovým chováním a náhradní výchovná péče ve školských zařízeních pro výkon ústavní a ochranné výchovy.* Hradec Králove: Gaudeamus. 2014. 292 s. ISBN ISBN 978-80-7435-534-9.

7. KONČEKOVÁ, Ľ. *Vývinová psychológia.* Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška. 2014. 295 s. ISBN 8096905368.

8. KYRIACOU, CH. *Řešení výchovných problému ve škole.* Praha: Portál, 2005. 151 s. ISBN 80-7178-945-3.

9. NÉMETH, A., PUKÁNSZKY, B. *A pedagógia problématörténete.* Budapest : Gondolat Kiadó 2004 , 555 s., ISBN: 9639567183

10. POKORNÁ, V. *Teorie a náprava vývojových poruch učení a chování.* Praha: Portál. 2010. 336 s. ISBN 9788073678173.

11. PORÁČOVÁ, J. 2010 Možnosti tvorivej výučby v škole. In: *Zborník príspevkov z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie – Integrácia teórie a praxe didaktiky.* Košice: FF UPJŠ. ISBN 978-80-7097-843-6.

12. SHARMA N. et all. Behavioral problems in school children as recognized by untrained teachers. In *Journal Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal,* Vol .2, No.2, 2013, pp. 26-28, ISSN 2091-2862 eISSN 2350-8949 [online] [cit. 2019-10-21] Dostupné na: https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/JPAN/issue/view/638

13. SMITH, G. J. W., CARLSSON, I. The creative process: a functional model based on empirical studies from early childhood to middle age. *Psychological Issues.* 1990 (57):1-243.

14. SZOBIOVÁ, E. *Tvorivosť – poznávanie tajomstiev.* Praha: Vydavateľstvo Aleš Čeňek. 2016. 388 s. ISBN 9788073806132.

15. TORRANCE, E. P. Creativity Research in Education. Still Alive. In *Perspectives in Creativity.* Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975, n. 15, s. 278-296.

16. TÓTH, P. A tanulmányi előmenetel háttérváltozói felsőoktatás-pedagógiai nézőpontból. *Zborník 10. medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie Univerzity J. Selyeho - 2018: Predmetová pedagogika* - 1. vyd. - Komárno : Univerzita J. Selyeho, 2018., s. 105-125, ISBN 978-80-8122-252-8

17. VÁGNEROVÁ, M. *Psychológie osobnosti.* Praha: UK. 2010. 468 s. ISBN 978-80-246-1832-6.

18. VÁGNEROVÁ, M. *Vývojová psychologie.* Dětství a dospívání. Praha: UK. 2012. 536 s. ISBN 978-80-246-2153-1.

19. VÁGNEROVÁ, M. *Současná psychopatologie pro pomáhající prefese.* Praha: Portal. 2014. 816 s. ISBN 9788026206965.

20. WOLFGANG, CH. H., GLICKMAN, C. D. *Solving Discipline Problems: Strategies for Classroom Teachers.* 1980. 276 s. ISBN ISBN-0-205-06888-X.

21. ZELINA, M. *Stratégie a metódy rozvoja osobnosti dieťaťa.* Bratislava: IRIS. 2011. 241 s. ISBN 9788089256600.

**Primary Paper Section:** A

**Secondary Paper Section:** AM