School environment and peer relations vs. social competences of Polish adolescents

INTRODUCTION

National Study of Polish Adolescents was performed in November 2009. This representative survey was conducted on a sample of approximately 4000 individuals. The survey was a second wave of longitudinal study of adolescents. In this step the 16 and 17 year-old students from various types of schools (General upper secondary school basic-vocational secondary school and vocational school) were examined.

This part of the study concerns results of relationship between peer relations, school environment and social competences of Polish adolescents.

VARIABLES

- Assertiveness - the scale refers to competence conditioning the behaviour effectiveness in situations requiring assertiveness. Internal consistency, based on Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.8054
- Coping with Social Exposition - the scale refers to competence conditioning the effectiveness in the situations of social exposition. Internal consistency, based on Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.8870
- Management of close Peer Interactions - the scale refers to competence conditioning the effectiveness in the intimate situations (close interpersonal contact). Internal consistency, based on Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.7894
- School Environment - this is an index that indicates positive social norms toward learning on class level. Pupils were asked various questions about the importance of learning and other rival activities. Then individual responses were scaled using IRT models, after that indexes were aggregated (mean) to class level
- Peer Relationships - this index is related to classrooms ties of friendship. Various questions were asked to indicate whether the ties are strong or weak. Then the individual responses were scaled using IRT models, after that indexes were aggregated (mean) to class level. This variable describes social capital in the classroom.

METHOD

The study was conducted in November 2009 in 197 schools. The group study was conducted in an anonymous manner. A standardized Polish tool “Social Competences Questionnaire” (Matczak, 2007) was used in the study, as well as a new instrument that measures school environment and peer relations “Peer Relation Questionnaire” (Pokropek, Ogrodzka, 2009).

Participants

The study was conducted in Poland on a sample of 4041 (1929 female and 2112 male) pupils, who are studying at upper secondary schools: 100 general upper secondary schools, 59 vocational secondary schools: 3 and 4 year full-time schools and 48 basic vocational schools. The study was performed as a representative group of students born in 1993 that in the school year 2008/2009 were students of the first year of upper secondary schools.

RESULTS

1. Sex is a predictor of management of close interactions and assertiveness in all types of upper secondary school.

   - Management of close peer interactions: F (3, 4037)= 11.74, p<.00001, R²= 0.008
   - Coping with Social Exposition: F (3, 4037)= 34.19, p<.00001, R²= 0.024

2. The differences between particular types of schools are statistically significant in the declared social competences:

   - F (3, 3698)= 918.01, p<.00001, R²=0.4056 in the compared schools

CONCLUSION

1. The study revealed that there are statistical differences within the variables: peer classroom relations index in particular types of schools.

   - F (3, 3698)= 194.55, p<.00001, R²=0.1263 and positive attitudes towards learning (as an indicator of school environment)

   - F (3, 3698)= 918.01, p<.00001, R²=0.4056 in the compared schools

2. The differences between particular types of schools are statistically significant in the declared social competences:

   - F (3, 4037)= 11.74, p<.00001, R²=0.008
   - Management of Close Peer Interactions: F (3, 4037)= 11.74, p<.00001, R²=0.008

3. Management of close peer interactions is the strongest predictor in comparison with other variables.

4. Sex is a predictor of management of close interactions and assertiveness in all types of upper secondary school.

REFERENCES

Pokropek, A., Ogrodzka, A. (2009). Peer Relation Questionnaire. The tool prepared within the project: “The study concerning development of the methodology of estimation of the educational added value index (EWD)” co-financed by the European Social Fund. Warszawa, IFiS.

CONTACT

mmsmud@wp.pl  artur.pokropek@gmail.com