THE EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Laura Bochiş [1]

University of Oradea
Romania

Daniela Roman [2]

University of Oradea
Romania

Carmen Popa [3]

University of Oradea
Romania

Abstract
The goal of this study is to pinpoint the demographic variables that influence the climate of the inclusive classroom. The focus is on the influence that the integration of a SEN child has on the classroom climate, when variables like gender and social background are controlled. The study was conducted on a number of 148 primary school children, from rural and urban areas, among whom there were 15 SEN children. Our research tool was The Classroom Life Instrument designed by Johnson et al. (1983) and adapted for the Romanian population by Popa (2010). The results for the subscales of the research tool partially validated the hypothesis of the study. The integration of a SEN child in a classroom influenced classroom climate, but only under certain aspects that involved teacher support for learning activities and cooperation level of children during school activities. The results for the multiple regression analysis allowed us to understand that the integration of a SEN child has a low influence on classroom climate. But the relation of association between the variables showed an opposite distribution of the two, thus drawing the attention on certain difficulties that arise when integrating a SEN child in inclusive education. They do not feel they have the same amount of teacher support and feel less involved in cooperative learning activities as compared to their colleagues; especially the girls in urban area receive more teacher support and involvement in cooperative learning activities. The study opens the path to further research that aim to study various other different factors that can explain the educational climate of an inclusive classroom, and also to implement activities which would lead to a better integration of SEN children in inclusive classes.

Keywords: classroom climate; inclusive class; SEN children; demographic variables; multiple regression analysis

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[1] Lecturer, PhD, Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Social and Humanistic Studies, University of Oradea, Romania; E-mail: totlaura@yahoo.com
[2] Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social and Humanistic Studies, University of Oradea, Romania; E-mail: daniela13_roman@yahoo.com
[3] Professor, PhD, Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Social and Humanistic Studies, University of Oradea, Romania; E-mail: carmen_berce@yahoo.com