Psihološka obzorja / Horizons of Psychology, 9, 4, 7-23 (2000)

Znanstveni empirično-raziskovalni prispevek

The Slovenian version of the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale – Preschool Edition (OLSP): the second preliminary validation

Maja Zupančič[1*], Alenka Gril[2] and Tina Kavčič[1]

[1]*University of Ljubljana, Department of Psychology, Ljubljana, Slovenia*
[2]*Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia*

Abstract: The contribution presents the first part of the second validation study on the Slovenian version of the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale – Preschool Edition (OLSP). The study was implemented with a sample of 95 Slovenian kindergarten children aged from 2;6 to 6;5 years, uniformly sampled by age and gender. OLSP was filled out by the childrens' kindergarten teachers as well as their assisstants. The obtained results show that internal consistency and interrater reliability of the eight basic and the four composite scales of OLSP are satisfactory. No significant gender differences were obtained for any of the scales. The Dependent-Autonomous scale was positively related to the childrens' age, while the Internalizing Problems and General Adaptation composite scales related to age in the expected direction with medium effect sizes. However, the age differences on the latter did not reach statistical significance mainly due to small sample size.

Key words: preschool children, social competence, reliability, age differences, gender differences

Slovenska oblika Ocenjevalne lestvice socialna prilagojenost predšolskih otrok (OLSP): druga pilotska validacija

Maja Zupančič[1], Alenka Gril[2] in Tina Kavčič[1]

[1]*Univerza v Ljubljani, Oddelek za psihologijo, Ljubljana*
[2]*Pedagoški inštitut, Ljubljana*

Povzetek: V prispevku predstavljamo prvi del druge pilotske študije s slovensko obliko Ocenjevalne lestvice socialna prilagojenost predšolskih otrok (OLSP). Raziskavo smo izvedle na vzorcu 95-ih slovenskih otrok, ki obiskujejo vrtce. Stari so bili med 2;6 in 6;5 let in glede na svojo starost ter spol enakomerno zastopani v vzorcu. OLSP so izpolnile ločeno otrokove vzgojiteljice in njihove pomočnice. Rezultati kažejo na zadovoljivo notranjo konsistentnost osmih temeljnih in štirih sestavljenih lestvic OLSP ter na visoko zanesljivost ocen med dvema neodvisnima ocenjevalkama. Dečki in deklice se med seboj niso razlikovali v doseženih rezultatih na nobeni izmed lestvic. Rezultati na lestvici Odvisen-Samostojen so bili pozitivno povezani z otrokovo starostjo, medtem ko so bili rezultati na lestvicah

[*]*Naslov / address: izr. prof. dr. Maja Zupančič, Univerza v Ljubljani, Oddelek za psihologijo, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija, e-mail: maja.zupancic@ff.uni-lj.si*

Težave ponotranjanja in Splošno prilagajanje sicer povezani z otrokovo starostjo v pričakovani smeri, a niso dosegli ravni statistične pomembnosti. Ker je bil učinek starosti na slednji spremenljivki srednje visok, sklepamo, da razlike med starostnimi skupinami ne dosegajo kritičnih vrednosti zaradi majhnega števila otrok v posameznih skupinah.

Ključne besede: predšolski otroci, socialna prilagojenost, zanesljivost, razlike med starostnimi skupinami, razlike med spoloma

CC=2840 2220

The Slovenian version of the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation – Preschool Edition (OLSP) is the preliminary Slovenian translation and adaptation of the original SCBE (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The SCBE is an instrument, already standardized in the USA (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995), Quebec and France (Dumas, LaFreniere, Capuano & Durning, 1997) and in preparation for standardization in Slovenia, designed to assess patterns of social competence, affective expression, and adjustment difficulties in kindergarten children aged 30 to 78 months. Its primary objective is to encompass childrens' behavioral tendencies for the purposes of socialization and education, rather than classify them into diagnostic categories. The information is obtained by kindergarten teachers, who assess the childrens' behavior with respect to everyday life situations in kindergarten. The instrument provides a standardized description of behaviors that is contextual, reliable, valid, objective, easy to administer and interpret, and is useful to early childhood specialists. It focuses on the presence or absence of positive as well as problem behaviors in three areas of childrens' everyday life in a kindergarten setting: their affective characteristics, interaction with peers and interaction with adults. Therefore, it allows the child specialist to pinpoint a child's specific competencies as well as vulnerabilities.

The SCBE was translated and preliminarily adapted for the purpose of its use with Slovenian kindergarten children. Its first preliminary validation was implemented with a sample of 95 Slovenian kindergarten children, aged 64 to 75 months (Zupančič, Gril & Kavčič, 2000a; 2000b). The results of this study show that each of the OLSP's basic and composite scales has a high degree of internal consistency, substantial convergent and discriminant validity as estimated through the correlations with the Questionnaire of Behavioral Reactions (Horvat, 1985). Only a few items had to be modified from the first to the second Slovenian version of SCBE due to their relatively low correlations with correspondent scales (Zupančič, et al., 2000b).

The present study was designed to validate the second Slovenian version of SCBE (OLSP) on a sample of a broader age range of Slovenian kindergarten children with respect to its internal consistency, interrater reliability, gender and age effects on childrens' behaviors in everyday life situations in kindergarten, as assessed by his/her teachers.

Gender effects for the basic and composite scales of SCBE, obtained in the

USA and Quebec on a broad age range of preschool children, yielded the following results: boys were assessed more negatively than the girls for Externalizing Problems, and for each of the four scales associated with this factor (Angry-Tolerant, Aggressive-Calm, Egotistical-Prosocial, Oppositional-Cooperative), Social Competence and General Adaptation. The boys were scored as more anxious than the girls in the Quebec sample (Dumas, et al., 1997). Fewer and smaller gender differences for the first version of the OLSP scales were obtained with a Slovenian sample of older preschool children. The boys were scored higher on anxiety and anger, while the girls were assessed as more socially competent (Zupančič, et al., 2000a).

Other recent European studies on gender differences in related fields of child development also showed only a few and small gender effects on childrens' behaviors. Kindergarten teachers longitudinally assessed boys (age 5;8 to 7;5 years) as more anxious, manifesting more behavioral problems and less social adjustment compared to the girls (Puklek & Gril, 1999). Parental descriptions of their childrens' personalities (age 3 to 12 years) provided no support to well-documented findings (e.g. Block, 1983; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974) of girls scoring higher on anxiety and boys higher on assertiveness. Girls were described as more dominant, independent and sociable than the boys who were ascribed more activity, curiosity, less conscientiousness, immaturity for age, having more school problems and expressing more gender appropriate behaviors (DeFruyt, Van Hiel & Buyst, 1998). Using the same assessment procedures, Kohnstamm, Mervielde, Besevegis and Halverson Jr. (1995) found very few differences in parental descriptions of their 3-, 6- and 9-year-olds: girls were only described as more sociable and boys as more active compared to the girls. Except for a few tendencies (boys were ascribed less extraversion and less diligence than girls) the parental descriptions of their infants' and toddlers' personalities do not differ with respect to the child's gender (Zupančič, 2000).

The gender effects on the OLSP scales were expected to be low with boys scoring somewhat higher on scales of problem behavior and girls scoring higher on social competence.

Despite a rapid general development and growing social experiences with peers as well as with adults in early childhood, an age effect on the SCBE scales was found to be low. Positive correlations of age with SCBE measures, obtained on US samples, only indicate a trend towards increased social competence and fewer behavioral problems with older children (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The highest correlations were obtained for the Aggressive-Tolerant, Oppositonal-Cooperative and Dependent-Autonomous (which was the highest) scales. The age effect with the Quebec sample was even smaller. Age explained up to 4% of the variance (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The authors attribute low and even negligible correlations to the teachers who tend to evaluate each child with reference to his/her age group as previously established by Behar and Stringfield (1972). In addition, no gender differences in the correlations between age and SCBE measures were evident in the US, Quebec and French studies (Dumas, et al., 1997; LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). No

significant age effect on anxiety, behavioral problems and socialized behavior was found with three age groups of Slovenian kindergarten children, aged from 5;8 to 7;5 years. A year later the group who remained in kindergarten, instead of starting school, had increased behavioral problems, while the children who started school had decreased problems and increased socialized behavior (Gril & Puklek, 1999).

Low age effects were expected in the present study, and no age x gender interaction, with older children scoring somewhat higher on Social Competence, especially Dependent-Autonomous, and lower on problem behaviors.

Method

Participants

Twenty kindergarten teachers (all females) and thirteen assistant teachers (twelve females and one male) participated in the evaluation of 95 children after a written consent by the childrens' parents was obtained. All of the teachers and their assistants were working in five different kindergartens of Ljubljana and assessed the children participating in their group for at least three months continuously. The children were recruited from twenty different kindergarten groups. Two of these groups were age-heterogeneous, with the others composed of age-homogeneous groups of children.

Table 1. The frequency distribution of children by their age and gender

AGE/ GENDER	2;6 – 3;5 years	3;6 – 4;5 years	4;6 – 5;5 years	5;6 – 6;5 years	TOTAL
Boys	13	15	11	11	50
Girls	14	14	11	6	45
TOTAL	27	29	22	17	95

There was not a significantly higher proportion of boys than girls (χ^2=0.26, df=1, p=0.608), the children were proportionally distributed by their age (χ^2=3.65, df=3, p=0.301) and by age x gender (χ^2=1.28, df=3, p=0.733).

Instrument

The second Slovenian preliminary version of OLSP (Zupančič, Gril & Kavčič, 2000c) – the Slovenian Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale – Preschool Edition (SCBE). The questionnaire, designed to be evaluated by the child's kindergarten teacher, presents a translated and adapted version of the original SCBE (LaFreniare & Dumas, 1995) and was further developed upon the first Slovenian validation (Zupančič, et al., 2000b).

The second version of OLSP offers eight basic scales and four summary scales. Each basic scale consists of 10 items – brief statements describing a child's behavior on the rating form (1- almost never occurs - to 6 – almost always occurs). Five of the items within each of the basic scales describe successful adjustment and another five describe adjustment difficulties. The first three of the eight basic scales describe a child's characteristic manner of emotional expression, and are defined by negative and positive poles: Depressive-Joyful, Anxious-Secure, and Angry-Tolerant. The next three scales describe social interactions with peers: Isolated-Integrated, Aggressive-Calm, and Egotistical-Prosocial. Finally, two scales assess teacher-child relations: Oppositional-Cooperative and Dependent-Autonomous. The internal consistency of the first OLSP version of the basic scales, validated with older Slovenian preschool children, ranges from 0.77 to 0.90, and their construct validity was estimated as satisfactory (Zupančič, et al., 2000b).

The four summary (composite) scales were developed on the basis of extensive statistical analyses and have been proven in practice (Dumas, et al., 1997; LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995; Zupančič, et al., 2000b). The first composite scale, Social Competence, consists of 40 items which assess the positive qualities of the child's adaptation (good adjustment, flexibility, emotional maturity, prosocial behavior). The second scale, Internalizing Problems, comprises 20 items reflecting anxious, depressed, isolated, and withdrawn behaviors (the higher the score the fewer problems manifested). The third scale, Externalizing Problems, comprises 20 items and reflects angry, aggressive, selfish, and oppositional behaviors (the scoring is reversed) in a child. The last summary scale, General Adaptation, includes all 80 items and makes it possible to compare children on a single index.

Procedure

Five kindergartens in Ljubljana were selected to participate in the study on the basis of previous intensive cooperation between them and the Division of Developmental Psychology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. The children were selected randomly within each of the kindergartens and all of their teachers/assistant teachers agreed to participate after the consent of the kindergarten masters was obtained. The parents of the selected children were given the statements of agreement to be signed. 95 out of 100 written agreements were obtained and the teachers/assistant teachers assessed only the children with written parental consent.

The teachers/assistant teachers of each of the five kindergartens were given group instructions about the administration of OLSP: (a) a very general description of the purpose of the study (no reliability, interrater agreement or group differences were mentioned); (b) to assess individual children successively, not a group of children simultaneously per item; (c) to read carefully each of the items; (d) to assess each child by the rank order of items as much as possible; (e) to assess all of the items; (f) to assess what they think of a child without any consultations with others;

(g) to keep questionnaires, either non-filled or filled out, confidential from the moment they receive them to the time they return them to the researchers. They had two weeks to assess their group of children.

50 of the whole sample of children were randomly selected to be assessed by two raters – the teacher and the assistant teacher independently. These teachers and their assistants were given additional instructions to evaluate the children independently without any communication on the child's behavior as described in quastionnaire items before they finish their participation in the study.

The obtained data were analysed with respect to internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha), interrater reliability (Pearson's r), age and gender effects (two-way ANOVA and Scheffe's post hoc test), and with respect to relations between age and OLSP scales (Pearson's r) to obtain a more direct comparison of the present study with others using the SCBE.

Results

The interrater agreement between kindergarten teachers and their assistants proved to be relatively high. The internal consistency of the four composite scales is estimated as high as well as the homogeneity of the seven basic scales. Alpha of the Dependent-Autonomous scale was obtained as lower (0.66, with alpha standardized=0.72) than the alphas of the other scales. The distribution of this scale was found to be symmetrical, but leptokurtic (IK = 3.17).

The two-way ANOVA yielded no significant main effect of gender on the basic and composite scales of OLSP. However, two tendencies appeared. The girls tended to be assessed as more cooperative ($F_{(1,94)} = 2.52$, $p = 0.12$, $MS_{gender} = 213.55$) and socially competent ($F_{(1, 94)} = 1.91$, $p = 0.17$, $MS_{gender} = 1831.05$) than the boys. Eta squared, as recommended by Clark-Carter (1997) who converted Cohen's (1988) measures of effect size into values for h^2, was used to determine the effect size of

Table 2. Interrater Agreement and Internal Consistency of Eight Basic and Four Composite OLSP Scales

SCALES	Interrater Agreement	Cronbach's Alpha
Depressive-Joyful	0.69	0.80
Anxious-Secure	0.69	0.84
Angry-Tolerant	0.73	0.79
Isolated-Integrated	0.74	0.89
Aggressive-Calm	0.81	0.85
Egotistical-Prosocial	0.82	0.82
Oppositional-Cooperative	0.88	0.86
Dependent-Autonomous	0.73	0.66
Social Competence	0.89	0.93
Internalizing Problems	0.69	0.84
Externalizing Problems	0.76	0.93
General Adaptation	0.87	0.95

gender. In our case, h^2 are 0.03 and 0.02 respectively; thus gender explains 2.8% of the overall variance on the Oppositional-Cooperative scale and 2.2% on the Social Competence composite scale, which are small effect sizes. The power of the test computed using alpha = 0.05 is 0.35 for Oppositional-Cooperative and 0.28 for Social Competence. In other words, the probabilities of committing a Type II error are 0.65, and 0.72 respectively. Therefore, there is a 65%, and 72% chance respectively, that we reject the gender differences when they actualy exist. Referring to the power tables (Clark-Carter, 1997), approximately 400 participants would be needed to give the test the power of 0.80. Since the effect sizes here are small and the sample size required is vast it would not make sense to replicate the study with an enlarged sample just to (perhaps) obtain statistical significance.

The significant main effect of age was obtained on the Dependent-Autonomous scale. Older children were assessed as more autonomous than the younger children ($F_{(3, 91)} = 6.40$, $p = 0.00$, $MS_{age} = 541.08$). Age explains 18.1% of the total variance ($h^2 = 0.18$). This value according to Clark-Carter estimates a large effect size. Schaffe's post hoc test showed that the 4;6 to 5;5 year-old group of children was assessed to manifest significantly more autonomous behaviors in relation to their teachers compared to the two younger groups – 2;6 to 3;5 years olds (Md = 9.61, p = 0.01) and 3;6 to 4;5 years olds (Md = 10.22, p = 0.00) as presented in Figure 1.

No other significant effects of age were obtained. However, two tendencies are worth mentioning because of their medium effect size. With increasing age, the

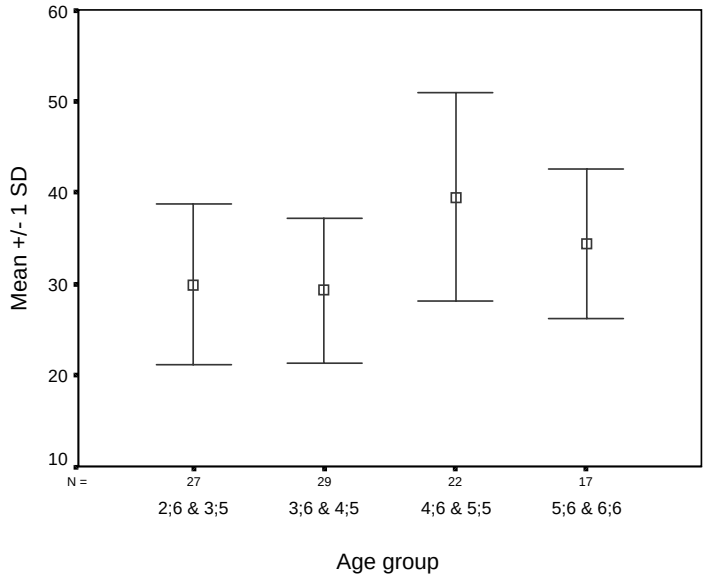

Figure 1. Means scores and standard deviations on Dependent-Autonomous Scale by childrens' age

children tend to be assessed as decreasing internalizing problems ($F_{(3, 91)} = 2.31$, $p = 0.08$, $MS_{age} = 602.48$) and increasing general adaptation ($F_{(3, 91)} = 2.03$, $p = 0.12$, $MS_{age} = 5912.88$). Age explains 7.4% of the overall variance (with the power of 0.56) on the Internalizing Problems scale and 5.6% of the variance on the General Adaptation Index (with the power of 0.50): These effect sizes are estimated as medium according to Clark-Carter (1997). Thirty and fourty-five participants respectively in each of the age groups would need to participate in order to support the eventual age differences with respect to these two variables, which still seems reasonable. Scheffe's post hoc test revealed no significant differences between pairwise age group comparisons. There was only a tendency of 4;6 to 5;5 year-old group to be assessed as having fewer internalizing problems and better general adaptation than the other age groups.

Consistent with the results of the two-way analysis of variance, only the results of the Dependent-Autonomous scale are significantly positively related with the childrens' age. The older children are estimated to be more autonomous than the younger who show more dependence on the kindergarten teacher. There are also slight tendencies of internalizing problems to decrease with age, and of cooperativeness with peers, social competence and general adaptation to increase. These correlations, however, are low and do not reach statistical significance. Compared to the US results, the correlations with a smaller Slovenian sample of kindergarten children of the same age are generally lower except for the Dependent-Autonomous and Internalizing Problems scales.

Discussion

For the purpose of assessing the reliability of OLSP scales, interrater agreement and internal consistency were the most important and therefore reported within the first

Table 3. Comparison of the Correlations (Pearson's r) between Age and OLSP Scores with the Slovenian and Two US Samples (obtained by LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995)

Scale	Correlation (N=94)	Probability level	US Correlations (2 samples - N=824; 439)
Depressive-Joyful	-0.02	0.838	0.14; 0.20
Anxious-Secure	0.09	0.375	0.12; 0.22
Angry-Tolerant	0.05	0.650	0.26; 0.23
Isolated-Integrated	0.09	0.369	0.09; 0.23
Aggressive-Calm	0.04	0.710	0.23; 0.23
Egotistical-Prosocial	0.05	0.635	0.18; 0.23
Oppositional-Cooperative	0.15	0.150	0.24; 0.23
Dependent-Autonomous	0.32	0.002	0.20; 0.32
Social Competence	0.13	0.213	0.17; 0.31
Internalizing Problems	0.18	0.091	0.20; 0.20
Externalizing Problems	0.03	0.791	0.24; 0.15
General Adaptation	0.13	0.201	0.23; 0.29

phase of the second preliminary study of the instrument. As shown in Table 2, this phase has demonstrated high internal consistency and interrater agreement of the basic and the composite scales with a somewhat lower, albeit still acceptable homogeneity of the basic Dependent-Autonomous scale. The reliability estimates in the relatively small Slovenian sample of kindergarten children are comparable to the US (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995), the Quebec and the French results (Dumas, et al., 1997). A comparison of the first validation of the first Slovenian OLSP version (Zupančič, et. al, 2000) with older preschool children and the present study with an independent mixed age group of preschool children reveals that the internal consistency of a majority of the scales remained very similar to the internal consistency obtained in the first study. The homogeneity coefficients of the three scales (the basic scales Aggressive-Calm, Oppositional-Cooperative and consequently, the composite scale Externalizing Problems) were slightly improved from the first study. However, the homogeneity of three other scales somewhat decreased (Depressive-Joyful, Dependent-Autonomous and consequently, the composite scale Internalizing Problems). Regardless of the latter, the reliability of the scales is estimated as satisfactory. Whether we decide to improve the Dependent-Autonomous scale depends on the results to be yet obtained at the end of the second phase of this preliminary study. This is designed to evaluate test-retest reliability and temporal stability of the OLSP scales as well as their concurrent criterion validity with respect to peer sociometrics using a typological approach.

Gender differences were assessed for the eight basic and the four composite OLSP scales. The gender effect on social behaviors was small, as expected, but non-significant. Boys and girls did not differ with respect to any of the evaluated variables. However, the girls tended to be assessed as more cooperative and socially competent than the boys with gender explaining only between 2 to 3 percent of variance. The direction of the obtained tendencies is consistent with the US (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995), Quebec and French (Dumas, et al., 1997) studies, but the effect sizes are smaller with the Slovenian sample. In addition, the above-mentioned studies, using the SCBE, also obtained other consistent gender differences in all three societies (USA, Quebec and France) with larger samples of preschool children, but with small effect sizes. The boys were scored as more angry, aggressive, egotistical, oppositional and having more externalizing problems than the girls, while the girls were assessed higher on Social Competence scale and the General Adaptation Index than the boys.

Compared to recent Slovenian studies (Gril & Puklek, 1999; Zupančič, et al., 2000a) where the older preschool children were evaluated by their kindergarten teachers, the results of the present study show consistency with respect to the direction of gender differences in oppositional behaviors and social competence, but the effect sizes are smaller. However, in comparison to these Slovenian studies, no gender differences in angry, aggressive and anxious behaviors occurred in the present study. Since the children participating in the present study covered a relatively broad age

range (two and a half to six and a half years) and were divided into four small age groups, we presume that in spite of the absence of a significant age x gender effect some, albeit small, differences between the genders might first become evident during the late preschool period, at least in the present generation of Slovenian preschoolers. Recent Slovenian studies on younger preschool children suggest no or negligible gender differences with regard to many aspects of early child development. These aspects include motor, fine motor, language development, socialization index, sophistication of play, behaviors during toy-play, personality characteristics as described by the child's parents (e. g. Zupančič, 1999; 2000) and early family socialization measured through indicators of mother-child interaction, contents of interactive toy-play, parental ethno-theories of child development and the use of play objects (e. g. Kosaber, 1998; Krapež, 1999; Gril, Cecić Erpič & Kavčič, 2000; Gril & Puklek, 1999; Zupančič, 1999).

Summing up, the literature on gender differences in cognitive, social and personality development suggests that boys and girls are more similar than is commonly believed (for overview see Berk, 1997; Ruble, 1988). There is a general consensus among the researchers that individuals (children as well as adults) possess both masculine and feminine characteristics. During the 70s and the 80s of the past century as summarized by Ruble (1988), boys and girls began to show different interests and activity preferences early in development, and such gender differentiation remained throughout the life span, probably due to the shaping of gender roles through the social learning process and childrens' internal motivations to exhibit gender-appropriate behavior because of emerging cognitive structures or gender schemes with biological bases of gender roles could not be excluded. Recently, adult gender roles have begun to change, at least in technologically-developed countries which certainly has had an impact on the development of androgynous gender roles, especially in Sweden (Berk, 1997), and it seems to be the case in Slovenia as well (Zupančič & Metzing, 1994). We do not claim that traditional gender typing is eradicated in Slovenia, but progress has been made towards gender equality in the last decade. The latest Slovenian studies suggest that this might be reflected in mothers' non-differential treatment of their infants and toddlers by their gender as well as in the mothers' attitudes towards child development and child rearing practises.

In our opinion, the most plausible of the alternative explanations for the obtained negligible gender differences in the present study might be the evaluators' tendency to assess the childrens' social behavior with reference to their gender groups. This possibility could be verified through direct observation of children during their activities in a kindergarten setting. But, as long as all of the kindergarten teachers assess the children with respect to their gender group, this has no implication for the standardization procedure of OLSP.

Similar to the absence of significant gender effects, only few age effects were revealed. Age had a significant effect of a large size on the Dependent-Autonomous scale, while two non-significant age effects of a medium size were found on the

Internalizing Problems scale and the General Adaptation Index. The significant main effect of the age which has been obtained on the scale Dependent-Autonomous requests some more reservations due to the relatively low internal consistency of the scale. Correlations of the scales with chronological age were computed to compare the results with other studies using the same instrument. The correlation estimates on a smaller, but in its stucture similar sample of Slovenian preschool children are in general lower than those reported in the USA (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995) and France (Dumas, et al., 1997), and higher than those found in Quebec (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The determination indexes obtained in each of the countries, including Slovenia, show that no more than 10% of the variance on the scales could be explained by the child's age. The relations between age and the teachers' estimations of the child's social behaviors are generally the highest, or at least among the highest, for the Dependent-Autonomous scale. The child's dependence on the kindergarten teacher decreases with age. The Slovenian correlation between age and the Internalizing Problems scale is also similar to the one obtained on the US samples (the childrens' anxious, depressed, isolated and withdrawn behaviors in kindergarten decrease with age), while others are considerably lower, resembling the correlation estimates in the Quebec study (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995).

Considering the rapid social development during early childhood one would expect much higher relations between the child's age and his/her social behaviors in a kindergarten setting as well as in general. Despite individual differences and a moderate stability of social behaviors in the preschool period, it was well-established that children become more tolerant and prosocial towards others, integrated into their peer group, cooperative with adults and autonomous (for review see Berk, 1997; Papalia & Olds, 1992). Compared to results obtained by direct observations of the childrens' behaviors and their answers on interviews, the relations between the childrens' age and their social behaviors as assessed by their teachers was found to be considerably lower. Behar and Stringfield (1972) supported the hypothesis that the teachers assess the children with reference to their age group which contributes to a reasonably low differentiation of children by their age. This explanation was also accepted by LaFreniere and Dumas (1995) using the SCBE as a measure of social competence. We assume that the Slovenian kindergarten children were scored in the framework of their chronological age as well, even in age heterogeneous groups. A closer look at the relations between age and the OLSP scales in the age homogeneous and the two heterogeneous groups, as well as between the gender and the OLSP scales, showed a surprising similarity of results (Zupančič, Gril & Kavčič, 2000d) which suggests that the teachers perceive individual differences in childrens' social behaviors largely with respect to chronological age and not with reference to the group they work with. There is of course an alternative explanation. Namely, that the younger children in the age heterogeneous groups are led to the zone of proximal development by the older children. Nevertheless, few of the obtained age differences suggest that separate norms of OLSP will have to be constructed for younger

and older children around the age of four years as indicated by the results of Scheffe's post hoc analysis. However, it is important to notice some restrictions of the present study, since they limit any extensive generalizations of the established results. They were obtained with relatively small age groups of Slovenian preschool children, living in the city of Ljubljana.

Conclusions

Internal consistency and interrater agreement of the second OLSP version are satisfactory. Convergent validity was already supported (Zupančič, et al., 2000b) while the procedures of test-retest reliability, temporal stability and criterion validity are still in process.

Gender effects on the scales of OLSP are small and non-significant. Taking into account the results of the first OLSP study (Zupančič, et al., 2000a) which included a larger sample of older preschool children and power analyses of the first and the present study, we presume that some gender differences might exist in the Slovenian preschool children, but they are probably small, explaining less than 5% of the variance. Several contemporary European studies on gender differences in preschool children (e.g. DeFruyt, et al., 1998; Gril & Puklek, 1999; Kohnstamm, et al., 1995; Zupančič, 1999; 2000) suggest that contemporary European societies increasingly stimulate androgynous gender-role development according to the changing adult gender roles which is also reflected in the early socialization. We do not completely exclude an alternative explanation, namely that the kindergarten teachers tend to evaluate boys and girls with reference to their gender groups. Therefore the statistical effect of gender on the assessed social behaviors is minimized in spite of the fact that some gender differences might actually exist. Regardless of these possibilities, the results suggest that the Slovenian version of SCBE (OLSP) might not need separate norms for boys and girls.

Except for the Dependent-Autonomous scale no significant age effects were obtained. We attribute this fact to the kindergarten teachers' tendency to assess each child with reference to his/her age group as previously established by Behar and Stringfield (1972) and LaFreniere and Dumas (1995). The age differences in autonomous behavior are probably so pronounced that the significant age effect on this variable was obtained in all of the countries using the SCBE. Taking into account the effect sizes of age on other children's social behaviors in kindergarten, the study suggests that there might be a significant age decrease with respect to the Internalizing Problems and an increase in the General Adaptation, thus requiring separate age norms for younger (2;6 to 4;5 year) and older preschool children (4;6 year and up).

The 4;6 to 5;5 year old age group, as evaluated by the kindergarten teachers, appeared in some aspects to behave distinctively from all the other age groups. This suggests a further in-depth study which could reveal whether there are any major

developmental changes unfolding at this age or merely the teachers' bias is for some reason responsible for the obtained age differences.

References

Behar, L. & Stringfield, S. (1974). A behavior rating scale for the preschool child. *Developmental Psychology, 10(5)*, 601-610.

Berk, L. E. (1997). *Child development*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Block, J. H. (1983). Differential premises arising from differential socialization of the sexes: Some conjectures. *Child Development, 54*, 1335-1354.

Clark-Carter, D. (1997). *Doing quantitative psychological research*. Hove: Psychology Press.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

De Fruyt, F., Van Hiel, A. & Buyst, V. (1998). Parental personality descriptions of boys and girls. In G. A. Kohnstamm, C. F. Jr. Halverson, I. Mervielde & V. Havill (Eds.), *Parental descriptions of child personality: Developmental antecedents of the Big Five?* (pp. 155-167). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dumas, J. E., LaFreniere, P. J., Capuano, F. & Durning, P. (1997). *Profil socio-affectif. Évaluation des compétences sociales et des difficultés d'adaptation des enfants de 2 ans ˝ŕ 6 ans.* Paris: ECPA.

Gril, A., Cecić Erpič, S. & Kavčič, T. (2000). *Early play interaction in relation to gender stereotyped toys.* Paper presented at the 12th Psychology Days, Zadar.

Gril, A. & Puklek, M. (1999). Mothers' beliefs about infant's learning, playing and upbringing. *Etŕ evolutiva, 63,* 53-60.

Horvat, L. (1985). *Vprašalnik vedenjskih reakcij [Questionnaire of Behavioral Reactions]*. Ljubljana: Katedra za razvojno psihologijo.

Kohnstamm, G. A., Mervielde, I., Besevegis, E. & Halverson, C. F. Jr. (1995). Tracing the Big Five in parents' free descriptions of their children. *European Journal of Personality, 9*, 283-304.

Kosaber, L. (1998). *Igrača in struktura malčkove igre z mamo [Toys and the structure of infants' play with their mothers].* Unpublished graduate thesis, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani, Ljubljana.

Krapež, T. (1999). *Vsebina malčkove igre pri interaktivni igri z igračami [The content of toddler's interactive play with toys].* Unpublished graduate thesis, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani, Ljubljana.

LaFreniere, P. J. & Dumas, J. E. (1995). *Social competence and behavior evaluation, Preschool edition (SCBE)*. Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services.

Maccoby, E. E. & Jacklin, C. N. (1974). *The psychology of sex differences*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Papalia, D. E. & Olds, S. W. (1992). *Human development*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Puklek, M. & Gril, A. (1999). Socioemocionalne in vedenjske značilnosti otrok ob vstopu v šolo [Socio-emotional and behavioral characteristics of children starting school]. In M. Zupančič (Ed.), *Razvojnopsihološke značilnosti različno starih otrok ob*

vstopu v šolo (str. 43-66) [Psychological characteristics of children starting school at different ages]. Ljubljana: i2.

Ruble, N. D. (1988). Sex-role development. In M. H. Bornstein & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), *Social, emotional and personality development (pp. 411-460).* Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Ltd., Publishers.

Zupančič, M. (1999). *The development of object-play in the first two years of a child's life.* Ljubljana, Lugano: i2, Centro Studi Universitari Internazionali.

Zupančič, M. (2000). *Tracing the FFM in parents' free descriptions of their infants/ toddlers.* Paper presented at the 12th Psychology Days, Zadar.

Zupančič, M., Gril, A. & Kavčič, T. (2000a). *Predstavitev rezultatov prve OLSP študije v Sloveniji [Presentation of results of the first OLSP study in Slovenia].* Ljubljana, Interno gradivo katedre za Razvojno psihologijo.

Zupančič, M., Gril, A. & Kavčič, T. (2000b). Predstavitev prve poskusne oblike Ocenjevalne lestvice socialna prilagojenost predšolskih otrok (OLSP) ter njena konstruktna veljavnost [Presentation of the first pilot version of the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scales – Preschool Edition (OLSP) and its construct validity]. *Psihološka obzorja, 9 (3)*, 45-66.

Zupančič, M., Gril, A. & Kavčič, T. (2000c). *Ocena socialne prilagojenosti predšolskih otrok (OLSP) – 2. poskusna oblika [Evaluation of social competence and behavior of preschool children (OLSP) – 2nd preliminary version].* Ljubljana: Center za psihodiagnostična sredstva.

Zupančič, M., Gril, A. & Kavčič, T. (2000d). *The scale of Social Competence and Behavior – validation with Slovenian preschool children.* Paper presented at 12th Psychology Days, Zadar.

Zupančič, M. & Metzing, A. (1994). *The concept of human nature: A comparative study in Slovenia and Croatia.* Proceedings of Alps-Adria Symposium on Psychology (pp. 262-268). Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta.

Prispelo/Received: 05.06.2000
Sprejeto/Accepted: 05.10.2000

Appendix

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of OLSP Scores[1] by Age Groups and Gender

Age group	Scale	Gender	M	SD
2;6 – 3;5	Joyful-Depressive	Boys	37.54	6.39
		Girls	38.14	8.48
	Secure – Anxious	Boys	34.69	8.75
		Girls	36.29	11.00
	Tolerant-Angry	Boys	29.31	11.52
		Girls	32.50	9.04
	Integrated – Isolated	Boys	34.54	9.96
		Girls	35.50	13.39
	Calm-Aggressive	Boys	31.92	11.14
		Girls	37.43	8.83
	Prosocial-Egotistical	Boys	27.54	10.37
		Girls	32.71	9.66
	Cooperative-Oppositional	Boys	33.08	13.65
		Girls	40.07	6.09
	Autonomous-Dependent	Boys	29.15	8.79
		Girls	30.57	9.09
	Social Competence	Boys	110.15	33.41
		Girls	124.43	32.22
	Absence of Internalizing	Boys	75.08	13.81
		Girls	76.21	20.23
	Absence of Externalizing	Boys	72.54	24.91
		Girls	82.57	14.18
	General Adaptation	Boys	257.77	61.10
		Girls	283.21	54.58
3;6 – 4;5	Joyful – Depressive	Boys	37.73	6.24
		Girls	34.00	9.18
	Secure – Anxious	Boys	35.53	7.70
		Girls	33.29	8.22
	Tolerant – Angry	Boys	29.53	10.27
		Girls	26.71	7.83
	Integrated – Isolated	Boys	37.53	6.92
		Girls	35.21	9.48
	Calm – Aggressive	Boys	34.00	9.11
		Girls	34.71	9.12
	Prosocial – Egotistical	Boys	32.47	7.30
		Girls	28.86	6.10
	Cooperative – Oppositional	Boys	36.13	10.51
		Girls	37.79	5.35
	Autonomous – Dependent	Boys	31.33	7.62
		Girls	27.07	7.79
3;6 – 4;5	Social Competence	Boys	122.60	28.82
		Girls	114.86	23.39
	Absence of Internalizing	Boys	78.20	11.87
		Girls	70.07	16.74
	Absence of Externalizing	Boys	73.47	20.21
		Girls	72.71	15.68
	General Adaptation	Boys	274.00	52.09
		Girls	257.00	37.82

[1]*The poles of the scales are here reversed for easier interpretation*

4;6 – 5;5	Joyful - Depressive	Boys	37.91	8.57
		Girls	40.55	8.78
	Secure - Anxious	Boys	38.91	7.79
		Girls	40.09	10.99
	Tolerant – Angry	Boys	31.55	9.85
		Girls	35.18	9.41
	Integrated - Isolated	Boys	38.09	8.73
		Girls	40.91	8.55
	Calm - Aggressive	Boys	36.09	8.88
		Girls	38.45	11.18
	Prosocial - Egotistical	Boys	29.18	10.38
		Girls	35.82	12.13
	Cooperative - Oppositional	Boys	40.09	7.22
		Girls	40.27	9.47
	Autonomous - Dependent	Boys	40.91	13.29
		Girls	38.09	9.60
	Social Competence	Boys	130.09	27.46
		Girls	139.91	37.91
	Absence of Internalizing	Boys	84.91	19.78
		Girls	86.00	14.71
	Absence of Externalizing	Boys	77.73	20.93
		Girls	83.45	18.97
	General Adaptation	Boys	292.73	48.31
		Girls	309.36	62.07
5;6 – 6;5	Joyful - Depressive	Boys	36.82	8.42
		Girls	37.17	7.28
	Secure - Anxious	Boys	36.27	7.77
		Girls	36.50	9.20
	Tolerant – Angry	Boys	29.82	7.87
		Girls	31.83	5.78
	Integrated - Isolated	Boys	34.27	9.82
		Girls	38.17	6.74
	Calm - Aggressive	Boys	33.18	16.49
		Girls	36.00	8.00
	Prosocial - Egotistical	Boys	30.36	10.64
		Girls	31.67	8.96
5;6 – 6;5	Cooperative - Oppositional	Boys	37.55	10.31
		Girls	41.17	6.94
	Autonomous - Dependent	Boys	34.73	6.93
		Girls	33.67	10.86
	Social Competence	Boys	115.73	36.08
		Girls	135.83	23.46
	Absence of Internalizing	Boys	81.73	14.47
		Girls	75.17	15.97
	Absence of Externalizing	Boys	75.55	20.38
		Girls	75.17	13.48
	General Adaptation	Boys	273.00	19.30
		Girls	285.50	19.07

Total	Joyful - Depressive	Boys	37.52	7.12
		Girls	37.31	8.72
	Secure - Anxious	Boys	36.22	7.92
		Girls	36.31	9.96
	Tolerant – Angry	Boys	29.98	9.79
		Girls	31.27	8.78
	Integrated - Isolated	Boys	36.16	8.72
		Girls	37.09	10.35
	Calm - Aggressive	Boys	33.74	11.31
		Girls	36.64	9.25
	Prosocial – Egotistical	Boys	30.00	9.50
		Girls	32.13	9.38
	Cooperative - Oppositional	Boys	36.52	10.76
		Girls	39.56	6.84
	Autonomous - Dependent	Boys	33.62	10.02
		Girls	31.73	9.73
	Social Competence	Boys	119.50	31.38
		Girls	126.76	30.96
	Absence of Internalizing	Boys	79.64	14.93
		Girls	76.56	17.83
	Absence of Externalizing	Boys	74.62	21.13
		Girls	78.73	16.06
	General Adaptation	Boys	273.68	56.13
		Girls	281.76	53.05