

Emotions in Students with Mild Intellectual Disability in Primary Schools

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POVZETEK – V prispevku je prikazana analiza izražanja čustev pri učencih z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju, ki obiskujejo osnovne šole s prilagojenim programom z nižjim izobrazbenim standardom ($N = 63$). Osredotočili smo se na vrsto in pogostost njihovih čustev ter na situacije, ki jih sprožijo – za ugotavljanje teh vidikov čustev smo uporabili opazovalno shemo. Rezultati kažejo, da so učenci izražali različna čustva, prevladovala pa so pozitivna. Med vsemi čustvi je bilo najpogosteje izraženo veselje, sledila je jeza. Učenci so izražali pomembno več pozitivnih kot negativnih in osnovnih kot kompleksnih čustev. Fantje so izražali pomembno več pozitivnih in osnovnih čustev kot dekleta. Situacije, ki so sprožile vsako čustvo, so bile različne. Večinoma so čustva sprožile situacije, povezane z učenjem, učnim uspehom, disciplinskimi težavami ter odnosi s sošolci in učitelji. Rezultati naše raziskave so lahko uporabni za vse pedagoge, ki delajo z učenci z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju.

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ABSTRACT – The article presents an analysis of the expression of emotions in students with mild intellectual disabilities who are attending primary schools with an adapted programme with lower educational standards ($N = 63$). An observation scheme was used to focus on the type and frequency of the students' emotions, as well as the situations that trigger them. The results show that the students expressed a variety of emotions, with positive emotions prevailing. Joy was the most frequently expressed emotion, followed by anger. The students expressed significantly more positive than negative emotions, and more basic than complex emotions, with boys expressing significantly more positive and basic emotions than girls. The situations triggering each emotion varied, but emotions were mainly triggered by situations related to learning, academic performance, disciplinary problems, and relationships with classmates and teachers. The results of the study may be applicable to all education professionals working with students with mild intellectual disabilities.

1 Introduction

The present study investigates the characteristics of the emotions expressed by students with mild intellectual disabilities (ID) in adapted primary school programmes with lower educational standards (AP with LES), and analyzes the situations that trigger the expressed emotions. For the teachers in these programmes, the expression of emotions is the most important clue in identifying students' emotions and guiding their response to them. It is therefore important to examine students' emotional expressions and recognise them in the natural setting of the classroom.

Individuals with ID exhibit neurodevelopmental deficits characterised by limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour that develop before the age of 18 years (Lee, 2019). They have lower competence in social, conceptual and practi-

cal skills compared to the normative population (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, n. d.). Social skills include social responsibility, interpersonal relationships, social problem solving, ability to follow rules, etc.; conceptual skills include the ability to understand time, finances and language; and practical skills include the ability to perform activities of daily living, interact with others, use tools, etc. Interestingly, emotional skills are not specifically mentioned in the above list of skills, despite representing an important area of the individual's functioning. Although this area has received some attention in the normative population, it has to date been studied far less in individuals with (mild) ID.

If we want to explore emotions, we need to understand their characteristics. Emotions are complex psychophysiological processes that involve specific sequences of physiological changes, cognitive processing, verbal and nonverbal expressions, and behaviours (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). They can be understood as a person's subjective response to events to which she or he attaches meaning in a particular social context (Lazarus, 1991). The cognitive processing of individuals with mild ID is different to that of the normative population (Buchnat & Jasielska, 2017), which may lead to some differences in their experience and expression of emotions, as well as the situations that trigger them.

Emotions may be categorised as "positive" or "negative" (e.g. Oatley & Jenkins, 1996), with positive emotions (e.g. joy, pride) occurring when we achieve a subjectively important goal or expectation, and negative emotions (e.g. anger, fear) occurring when we fail to meet those expectations. Both positive and negative emotions serve as adaptive functions in situations that the individual considers important to them (Lazarus, 1991). We also distinguish between basic and complex emotions. Basic emotions (e.g. joy, anger) occur early in the developmental process, their expression is very similar across cultures, and they are characterised by specific patterns of brain activity, typical adaptive functions and facial expressions that make them easier to recognise (Panksepp, 1994; Plutchik, 1980). Complex emotions (e.g. pride, shame), on the other hand, occur later in the development and their expression is less typical (Harris, 1996). Therefore, recognising complex emotions is more difficult and sometimes ambiguous.

Through development, children learn to express emotions in ways appropriate for certain sociocultural contexts (Harris, 1996; Jevtić & Petrović, 2016). The results of a meta-analytic study (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013) indicate small but significant gender differences in the expression of emotions: girls are more likely to express positive emotions than boys. Among the specific emotions, sadness, fear and shame are more common in girls, while anger is more common in boys.

As mentioned above, emotions have been studied less in children with (mild) ID (Ryökkynen et al., 2021). On average, general emotional behaviour problems occur in 30–60% of children and adolescents with ID (Dekker et al., 2002). Dekker et al. (2002) found that children with borderline to moderate ID were at increased risk of experiencing a variety of emotional and behavioural problems, such as depression, anxiety and aggressive behaviour. One of the reasons for the scarcity of studies focusing on emotions in individuals with (mild) ID may be the fact that such individuals are often less able to report their own experiences and expressions accurately. It is therefore desirable to use the reports of others (e.g. parents, teachers or other observers) as external informants. These informants tend to report more anger, depression, stress and aggressive be-

haviours in individuals with mild ID compared to self-assessment (Bramston & Fogarty, 2000; Pavlović et al., 2013).

As children spend a lot of their time in school, where emotions are often present (e.g. Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Kozmus, 2016), it is important to examine their specificities in this context. Emotions contribute to the quality of teacher-student interactions and shape classroom atmosphere (Košir, 2012; Meyer & Turner, 2007), which also applies to children with (mild) ID.

At school, students often experience and express different emotions, from joy to anger and pride (e.g. Saarni, 1999; Smrtnik Vitulić, 2006). The experience and expression of emotions in school are usually triggered by learning, academic performance, disciplinary problems or relationships with classmates and teachers. For example, students often experience and express *joy* due to their achievements, pleasant daily interactions with their classmates (e.g. playing football, painting and singing), teachers' praise (e.g. for an activity well done), etc. (Karjalainen et al., 2019; Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012). Students often experience and express *anger* when situations do not go their way: when their classmates do not include them in activities, provoke them or behave aggressively towards them or other children (e.g. take away/destroy their toys); when they notice an injustice (e.g. when they find out that a classmate has cheated on a test); or when they fail to successfully complete a school assignment (Bolko, 2019; Saarni, 1999). Students often experience and express *sadness* in relation to their academic performance and social relationships (e.g. rejection by classmates) (Fekonja & Kavčič, 2009). Students experience *fear* due to threats from classmates, including teasing, and because of the expectation of failing in academic performance (Uddin Kalar et al., 2013). *Shame* in students is frequently triggered by low academic performance, interactions within peer groups, teasing and bullying by peers, high demands from teachers, etc. (Monroe, 2008), while *pride* may appear when students achieve high academic performance and other types of above-average success (Bolko, 2019).

In this article, we describe one of the first studies on the characteristics of emotions and situations that trigger them in students with (mild) ID, as some specificities in this area might be expected. The observations in our study aimed to determine

- the expressed emotions and the frequency of such expressions in students with mild ID in the first five grades of the primary school with an adapted programme with lower educational standards, and
- the situations that trigger these emotional expressions.

2 Method

Sample

In Slovenia, students with mild ID are usually included in primary schools with an adapted programme with lower educational standards. Students enrolled in this programme need more guidance and are taught in a more concrete way with a variety of tools. Our study included 63 students from 7.2 to 11.8 years of age ($M_{\text{age}} = 9.56$ years,

SD = 1.18), including individuals with mild ID. The participants were from the first (n = 4), second (n = 9), third (n = 29), fourth (n = 12) and fifth (n = 9) grades, including 21 girls (33.3%) and 42 boys (66.7%). Five special primary schools for students with mild ID from different Slovenian regions were included in the study. Among the students, some were classified as having autistic spectrum disorders (n = 13), emotional-behavioural disorder (n = 4), chronic illness (n = 2), speech and language disorders (n = 2), movement disorder (n = 1) and ADHD (n = 1).

Observational scheme and data collection

The observational scheme *Emotions in the Classroom* (Prosen et al., 2020) was used to observe and record the children's emotional expression in the classroom. For the purpose of the present article, the type of emotion displayed and the description of the situation in which the emotion appeared were analysed. The children were observed by three final-year postgraduate special and rehabilitation education students from the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana. These three students participated in a special two-hour training course at the faculty on the use of the aforementioned observational scheme.

Each of the three postgraduate students undertook their observations in primary schools with the adapted LES programme for children with mild ID after written consent had been obtained from the parents of all of the observed children.

The postgraduate students visited the selected classroom at least twice and observed the children's emotions for five hours in one school day during their last visit. Each observed child was randomly selected and all of the observed emotions were recorded in chronological order when they occurred. If a certain emotion appeared more than once, it was recorded each time.

The data collected by the postgraduate students were checked by the authors of the article, after which analyses were conducted regarding the type of observed emotions and the situations triggering them. The study was reviewed and approved by the local university ethics review board (No. 13/2022).

3 Results and discussion

In this section, the type, frequency and percentage of the emotions displayed by the observed primary school students with mild ID and the situations that triggered them are presented and discussed.

Type, frequency and percentage of the students' emotions

The results show that the students with mild ID expressed different emotions in the classroom and that these varied greatly in frequency.

Table 1

Type, frequencies and percentages of the students' expressed emotions

Emotions	Girls	Boys	∑ (% of all)
Positive			
Joy	167 (15.4%)	416 (38.4%)	583 (53.8%)
Pride	75 (6.6%)	31 (2.7%)	106 (9.3%)
Positive surprise	9 (0.8%)	9 (0.8%)	18 (1.6%)
Negative			
Anger	62 (5.4%)	184 (16.1%)	246 (21.5%)
Shame	39 (3.4%)	22 (1.9%)	61 (5.3%)
Embarrassment	17 (1.5%)	23 (2.1%)	40 (3.6%)
Fear	8 (0.7%)	12 (1.0%)	20 (1.7%)
Sadness	6 (0.5%)	13 (1.1%)	19 (1.6%)
Maliciousness	4 (0.3%)	8 (0.6%)	12 (1.0%)
Jealousy	1 (0.1%)	4 (0.4%)	5 (0.5%)
Disgust	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.1%)
∑ Positive	251 (22.8%)	456 (41.9%)	707 (64.7%)
∑ Negative	138 (12.0%)	266 (23.3%)	404 (35.3%)
∑ Basic	253 (23.0%)	634 (57.4%)	887 (80.4%)
∑ Complex	136 (11.9%)	88 (7.7%)	224 (19.6%)
∑ All	389 (34.8%)	722 (65.2%)	1111 (100.0%)

Note: N of all children = 63; N_{girls} = 21 (33.3%); N_{boys} = 42 (66.7%).

Eleven different emotions were recorded during the observations. Among the positive emotions were joy, pride and positive surprise, while the negative emotions were anger, shame, embarrassment, fear, sadness, maliciousness, jealousy and disgust (Table 1). There were significant differences between the positive and negative emotions ($\chi^2(1) = 9.00$, $p = 0.00$), with positive emotions ($f = 707$) being expressed more frequently than negative emotions ($f = 404$). The overall ratio between positive and negative emotions was approximately 2:1. Fredrickson (2008) recommends a ratio of 3 : 1 in favour of positive emotions, as negative emotions influence the emotional balance more powerfully. Since positive emotions in teacher-student interactions may contribute to a pleasant atmosphere, supporting students' competence and autonomy (Meyer & Turner, 2007), teachers should support students' expression of positive emotions and help them regulate negative emotions (Larsen, 2009).

Of all the positive and negative emotions, joy was expressed most frequently ($f = 583$), occurring approximately ten times in each student. Among the positive emotions, students also expressed *pride* ($f = 106$) and *positive surprise* ($f = 18$). The second most frequently expressed emotion was *anger* ($f = 246$). Among the negative emotions, anger was followed by *shame* ($f = 61$), *embarrassment* ($f = 40$), *fear* ($f = 20$),

sadness ($f = 19$), *maliciousness* ($f = 12$), *jealousy* ($f = 5$) and *disgust* ($f = 1$). The results are partly similar to the findings of Prosen and Smrtnik Vitulić (in review) in a study that included a normative sample of primary school students, where joy and anger were again the two most frequently expressed emotions. In the normative population, however, other emotions were also expressed (e.g. gratitude, disappointment, guilt) or, in the case of sadness, were expressed more frequently.

In the present study, the students were found to express the basic emotions of joy, anger, pride, fear, sadness, positive surprise and disgust, as well as complex emotions such as pride, shame, embarrassment, maliciousness and jealousy. The students expressed significantly more basic ($f = 887$) than complex ($f = 224$) emotions ($\chi^2(1) = 36.00$, $p = 0.00$), which may be partly due to the fact these emotions are easier to recognise via the students' distinctive facial expressions than the complex ones.

The results show that there were significant differences between girls and boys in expressing positive emotions ($\chi^2(1) = 5.55$, $p = 0.02$) and basic emotions ($\chi^2(1) = 14.45$, $p = 0.00$), with boys expressing more positive and basic emotions than girls. However, there were no significant gender differences in the expression of negative ($\chi^2(1) = 3.46$, $p = 0.06$) and complex emotions ($\chi^2(1) = 0.37$, $p = 0.80$). These results are not in line with those obtained by Chaplin and Aldao (2013), who found that girls were more likely to express positive emotions than boys. This difference may be due to the fact that the present study included students with mild ID, while Chaplin and Aldao (2013) were observing a normative population.

Situations triggering emotions

The descriptions of the situations that triggered emotions in the students with mild ID in their classrooms were analysed by classifying the descriptions into several response categories for each emotion. The following section describes the results in terms of the situations that triggered emotional expressions and their frequency.

The experience and expression of emotions in school are usually triggered by learning, academic performance, disciplinary problems or relationships with classmates and teachers (Prosen & Smrtnik Vitulić, in review), which is also true for the students with mild ID in our study. Among the positive emotions, the situations that triggered *joy* ($f = 583$) included pleasant activities ($f = 152$, i.e., movement, announcement of a pleasant activity, playing, singing, dancing), social interactions with classmates ($f = 83$, i.e., nonverbal and verbal social interactions), humour/funny events ($f = 76$), interesting learning material/method ($f = 61$), achievement ($f = 58$, i.e., success, reward, completion of the task), sensory stimuli ($f = 44$, i.e., self-stimulation, pleasant stimuli, pleasant memory), receiving attention ($f = 37$), classmates' provocative behaviour ($f = 31$), having a choice ($f = 10$), seeking attention ($f = 7$), food ($f = 6$), and a few other situations ($f = 18$). The results are in line with those of other authors (e.g. Karjalainen et al., 2019), who found similar triggering situations of joy (e.g. success, social interaction, pleasant activities) in a normative population. One difference that can be observed between the normative population of students and the students with mild ID in our study is the relatively high frequency of joy triggered by pleasant sensory stimuli. This could be connected to the specificities of the population studied, especially as many of them

have a co-occurring diagnosis such as autism spectrum disorders (which is also the case in our sample) characterised by sensory sensitivity (Corbett et al., 2009).

Pride ($f = 106$) occurred when students with ID achieved success ($f = 38$), received teacher praise ($f = 47$), got a reward ($f = 9$), praised themselves ($f = 5$), remembered something pleasant ($f = 3$), got something new ($f = 2$) and in two other situations. This is in line with Bolko's (2019) results based on the normative population. *Positive surprise* ($f = 18$) was triggered in situations including unexpected positive events ($f = 10$) and the emergence of something new ($f = 8$).

The situations that triggered the students' *anger* ($f = 246$) were the teacher's demand/critique ($f = 69$), classmates' inappropriate behaviour ($f = 57$, i.e., something taken away, naughtiness, disruption of activity), lack of consideration ($f = 35$), lack of success ($f = 20$), classmates' aggressive behaviour ($f = 17$, i.e., physical aggression, teasing), sensory sensitivity ($f = 10$), inner frustration ($f = 8$), copying the teacher ($f = 7$), competition ($f = 7$), an accident ($f = 6$), missing/non-working material ($f = 4$), an unpleasant memory ($f = 4$) and not understanding a joke ($f = 2$). Our observations of situations that triggered anger are similar to those of other authors (e.g. Bolko, 2019), who report anger in the normative population of students when their classmates excluded them or behaved aggressively towards them, for instance.

Shame ($f = 61$) was observed in students with ID in situations when the teacher scolded the student ($f = 35$), when the student did not perform well academically or when undertaking a specific duty ($f = 23$) and when classmates commented upon the student's work ($f = 3$). In the normative populations of students (Monroe, 2008; Prosen & Smrtnik Vitulić, in review), shame is similarly triggered by low academic performance, interactions within peer groups or teachers' critique.

Embarrassment ($f = 40$) was triggered in situations involving the student's exposure in front of others ($f = 20$), an unknown person ($f = 11$), lack of knowledge ($f = 8$) and praise by the teacher ($f = 1$). Fear ($f = 20$) was triggered when the student experienced academic underachievement ($f = 10$), irrational fears ($f = 4$), classmates' aggressive behaviour ($f = 2$), the teacher's negative reaction ($f = 2$) and two other situations. All of these situations are similar to those reported in the normative population of students (Uddin Kalar et al., 2013), e.g. aggressive behaviour of classmates or the expectation of failing in academic performance.

The students expressed sadness ($f = 19$) in situations when their wish was not fulfilled ($f = 6$), when they did not reach a goal that their classmates had already achieved ($f = 5$), when they did not have or had lost/damaged an important object ($f = 4$) and when the teacher scolded them ($f = 4$). Fekonja and Kavčič (2004) reported that students in the normative population similarly felt sadness in relation to their academic performance and social relationships. However, the students with mild ID observed in our study expressed sadness less frequently than students in the normative population included in a study by Prosen and Smrtnik Vitulić (in review). Certain other emotions were also expressed by the students with mild ID: *maliciousness* ($f = 12$) was expressed in situations connected to a classmate's lack of success; *jealousy* ($f = 5$) was triggered in situations when the teacher attended to another classmate ($f = 3$) and when the teacher rewarded a classmate with a good grade ($f = 2$); and *disgust* was expressed by one student who did not like a specific food mentioned by his classmate.

4 Conclusions

The present study focuses on emotional expression in students with mild ID who attend primary schools with the adapted LES programme. It represents one of the first studies focusing on emotions within a “natural” school context, especially in this population.

The observed students expressed eleven specific emotions, which differed considerably in their frequency, with the two most frequently expressed emotions being joy and anger. More positive than negative emotions, and more basic than complex emotions were expressed by students with mild ID, with boys expressing more positive and basic emotions than girls. The situations triggering each emotion were different. These results are similar to the findings of Prosen and Smrtnik Vitulić (in review) in a study including a normative sample of primary school students. Some differences can, however, be outlined. Contrary to the normative population, students with mild ID did not express certain emotions (e.g. gratitude, disappointment, guilt) and expressed sadness less frequently. In addition, more positive than negative emotions were expressed by students with mild ID, whereas this difference did not appear in the normative population. Lastly, in comparison with girls, boys with mild ID expressed fewer negative emotions than their peers in the normative population. These differences support the need for further exploration of emotions in the population with mild ID in order to understand their specific needs in this area.

The observational approach used in the present study allows for an external view of emotions. This may be seen as a strength of the study, as observation can be regarded as a more objective way of looking at emotions. However, observation may also be limited in its ability to provide an in-depth view of students’ emotional experience. A combination of data-gathering techniques (e.g. interviews) could therefore be used in future studies.

Although the participating students attended different schools, the sample was rather small, with boys outnumbering girls. Future studies should therefore aim for larger numbers of participants and equal representation of both genders. In addition, a more detailed analysis could be performed regarding the ways in which students with mild ID express their emotions.

The results of the present study offer some application possibilities, as they provide information pertaining to education professionals’ work with children with mild ID. Knowing the specificities of the emotions of the children they work with may help education professionals to focus their attention on, for example, further encouragement of prevalingly positive emotional expression, especially in girls. Moreover, education professionals could teach children about different emotions, both basic and complex.

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Čustva učencev z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju v osnovnih šolah

V prispevku analiziramo čustva, ki jih učenci z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju (MDR) izražajo v osnovnih šolah s prilagojenim programom z nižjim izobrazbenim standardom (PP z NIS). Za učitelje v teh programih je izražanje čustev najpomembnejši pokazatelj učenčevega doživljanja.

Čustva so kompleksni procesi, ki vključujejo značilno zaporedje fizioloških sprememb, kognitivnega procesiranja, besednih in nebesednih izrazov ter vedenja (Oatley in Jenkins, 1996). Lahko jih kategoriziramo kot "pozitivna" ali "negativna" (npr. Oatley in Jenkins, 1996), pri čemer se pozitivna (npr. veselje, ponos) pojavijo, ko dosežemo subjektivno pomemben cilj, in negativna (npr. jeza, strah), ko pomembnih ciljev ne dosežemo. Tako pozitivna kot negativna čustva so koristna, saj so namenjena prilagoditvi posameznika na zanj pomembno situacijo (Lazarus, 1991). Ločimo tudi osnovna in kompleksna čustva. Osnovna čustva (npr. veselje, jeza) se pojavijo zgodaj v razvoju, njihovo izražanje je med kulturami zelo podobno, zanje pa so značilni tipični vzorci možganskega delovanja, prilagoditvena funkcija in značilna obrazna mimika, zaradi katere jih je lažje prepoznati (Plutchik, 1980). Po drugi strani pa se kompleksna čustva (npr. ponos, sram) pojavijo kasneje v razvoju in je njihovo izražanje manj tipično (Harris, 1996). V izražanju čustev se lahko pokažejo razlike med spoloma, o katerih sta poročala tudi Chaplin in Aldao (2013). Rezultati njune metaanalitične raziskave so pokazali, da dekleta pogosteje kot fantje izražajo pozitivna čustva. Med specifičnimi čustvi dekleta pogosteje izražajo žalost, strah in sram, fantje pa jezo.

Posamezniki z MDR kažejo nevrorazvojne težave, za katere so značilne omejitve v intelektualnem delovanju in prilagoditvenem vedenju, ki se razvijejo pred 18. letom (Lee, 2019). Posamezniki z lažjimi MDR imajo v primerjavi z normativno populacijo težave v socialnih, konceptualnih in praktičnih spretnostih (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, n. d.). Ker je kognitivno procesiranje posameznikov z lažjo MDR drugačno v primerjavi z normativno populacijo (Buchnat in Jasielska, 2017), to lahko vodi do nekaterih razlik v njihovem doživljanju in izražanju čustev.

Otroci (tudi z lažjo MDR) veliko časa preživijo v šoli, kjer so čustva pogosto prisotna (npr. Hosotani in Imai-Matsumura, 2011). V Sloveniji so učenci z lažjimi MDR vključeni v osnovno šolo s PP z NIS (Prilagojen izobraževalni program z nižjim izobrazbenim standardom, 2012), kar je veljalo tudi za naš vzorec učencev. V naši raziskavi je sodelovalo 63 učencev, starih od 7,2 do 11,8 leta ($M = 9,56$ leta, $SD = 1,18$), ki so bili vključeni v pet osnovnih šol s PP z NIS iz različnih slovenskih regij. Bili so iz prvega ($n = 4$), drugega ($n = 9$), tretjega ($n = 29$), četrtega ($n = 12$) in petega razreda ($n = 9$). Med njimi je bilo 21 (33,3%) deklet in 42 (66,7%) fantov. Nekateri učenci so imeli diagnosticirane tudi posamezne motnje: avtistično motnjo ($n = 13$), čustveno-vedenjsko motnjo ($n = 4$), dolgotrajno bolezen ($n = 2$), govorno-jezikovne motnje ($n = 2$), gibalno oviranost ($n = 2$) in ADHD ($n = 1$). V vseh sodelujočih šolah je bilo za sodelovanje v raziskavi predhodno pridobljeno pisno soglasje staršev opazovanih otrok.

V raziskavi smo podatke o učencih zbrali z opazovalno shemo Čustva v razredu (Prosen idr., 2020). Za namen pričujočega prispevka smo analizirali vrsto izraženega čustva in opis situacije, v kateri se je čustvo pri učencih pojavilo. Učence so opazovale tri študentke zaključnega letnika podiplomskega študija specialne in rehabilitacijske pedagogike Pedagoške fakultete UL. Vsaka od študentk je v razredu pet šolskih ur opazovala naključno izbranega učenca z lažjo MDR. Študentke so sprotno beležile vsako od čustev, ki so ga pri učencu prepoznale.

Rezultati so pokazali, da so učenci z lažjo MDR izrazili enajst različnih čustev. Med pozitivnimi čustvi so izrazili veselje, ponos in pozitivno presenečenje, med negativnimi čustvi pa jezo, sram, zadrego, strah, žalost, škodoželjnost, ljubosumje in gnus. Učenci so pokazali pomembno več pozitivnih ($f = 707$) kot negativnih ($f = 404$) čustev ($\chi^2(1) = 9,00$, $p = 0,00$). Skupno razmerje med pozitivnimi in negativnimi čustvi je bilo približno 2 : 1. Fredrickson (2008) priporoča razmerje 3 : 1 v prid pozitivnih čustev, saj negativna čustva močneje vplivajo na čustveno ravnovesje.

Od vseh čustev je bilo najpogosteje izraženo veselje ($f = 583$). Med pozitivnimi čustvi so učenci izrazili tudi ponos ($f = 106$) in pozitivno presenečenje ($f = 18$). Drugo najpogosteje izraženo čustvo je bila jeza ($f = 246$). Med negativnimi čustvi so jezi sledili sram ($f = 61$), zadrega ($f = 40$), strah ($f = 20$), žalost ($f = 19$), škodoželjnost ($f = 12$), ljubosumje ($f = 5$) in gnus ($f = 1$). Dobljeni rezultati so delno skladni z ugotovitvami avtoric Prosen in Smrtnik Vitulic (v recenziji), ki sta raziskavo opravili z normativno skupino učencev, ki so v razredu prav tako najpogosteje izražali čustvi veselja in jeze, a so izrazili tudi posamezna druga čustva, ki jih v naši raziskavi nismo zaznali (npr. hvaležnost, razočaranje, krivdo).

V naši raziskavi so učenci z lažjo MDR izrazili temeljna (veselje, jeza, ponos, strah, žalost, pozitivno presenečenje in gnus) in kompleksna čustva (ponos, sram, zadrega, škodoželjnost in ljubosumje). Učenci so izražali pomembno več temeljnih ($f = 887$) kot kompleksnih ($f = 224$) čustev ($\chi^2(1) = 36,00$, $p = 0,00$). Razlog za omenjene rezultate je morda tudi v tem, da je temeljna čustva lažje prepoznati kot kompleksna.

Rezultati so pokazali, da obstajajo pomembne razlike med dekleti in fanti v izražanju pozitivnih ($\chi^2(1) = 5,55$, $p = 0,02$) in temeljnih čustev ($\chi^2(1) = 14,45$, $p = 0,00$): fantje so obojih izražali več kot dekleta. Ti rezultati niso v skladu s tistimi, ki sta jih pridobila Chaplin in Aldao (2013) z raziskovanjem normativne populacije otrok, kjer so pozitivna čustva pogosteje izražala dekleta kot fantje.

Opise situacij, ki so sprožile čustva pri učencih z lažjimi MDR v razredu, smo razvrstili v več kategorij (razlogov za čustva). Veselje ($f = 583$) so v učencih sprožili: prijetne dejavnosti ($f = 152$, npr. gibanje, napoved prijetne dejavnosti, igra, petje, ples), socialne interakcije s sošolci ($f = 83$, neverbalne in verbalne socialne interakcije), humor/smešni dogodki ($f = 76$), zanimivo učno gradivo/metoda ($f = 61$), dosežki ($f = 58$, npr. uspeh, nagrada, dokončanje naloge), senzorni dražljaji ($f = 44$, npr. samostimulacija, prijetni dražljaji, prijeten spomin), pridobljena pozornost ($f = 37$), izzivalno vedenje sošolcev ($f = 31$), možnost izbire ($f = 10$), pozornost ($f = 7$), hrana ($f = 6$) in nekaj drugih situacij ($f = 18$). Naši rezultati so v skladu z ugotovitvami drugih avtorjev (npr. Karjalainen idr., 2019), pri katerih so se podobne sprožilne situacije veselja pokazale v normativni skupini otrok. Učenci z lažjimi MDR v naši raziskavi pa so v primerjavi z raziskavo Karjalainen idr. (2019) razmeroma pogosteje izražali veselje, ki so ga sprožili

prijetni senzorni dražljaji. Morda je to mogoče povezano s posebnostmi te populacije, med katero so tudi posamezniki, za katere je značilna senzorna občutljivost, npr. posamezniki z avtistično motnjo (Corbett idr., 2009).

Ponos ($f = 106$) se je pojavil, ko je učenec z lažjimi MDR dosegel uspeh ($f = 38$), ko je učitelj učenca pohvalil ($f = 47$), ko je učenec dobil nagrado ($f = 9$), ko se je učenec pohvalil ($f = 5$), ko se je spomnil nečesa prijetnega ($f = 3$), ko je dobil nekaj novega ($f = 2$) in v dveh drugih situacijah. To je v skladu z rezultati avtorice Bolko (2019), ki je raziskovala izražanje ponosa v normativni skupini učencev. Pozitivno presenečenje ($f = 18$) se je sprožilo v situacijah z nepričakovanimi pozitivnimi dogodki ($f = 10$) in ob pojavu nečesa novega ($f = 8$).

Situacije, ki so pri učencih z lažjo MDR sprožile jezo ($f = 246$), so bile: učiteljeva zahteva/kritika ($f = 69$), neprimerno vedenje sošolcev ($f = 57$, npr. nekaj odvzetega, nagajivost, motnja pri dejavnosti), neupoštevanje ($f = 35$), neuspešnost ($f = 20$), agresivno vedenje sošolcev ($f = 17$, npr. fizična agresija, zbadljivke), senzorna občutljivost ($f = 10$), notranja frustracija ($f = 8$), posnemanje učitelja ($f = 17$), tekmovanje ($f = 7$), nesreča ($f = 6$), manjkajoče/nedelujoče gradivo ($f = 4$), neprijeten spomin ($f = 4$), nerazumevanje šale ($f = 2$). Situacije, ki smo jih opazili in so sprožile jezo, so podobne tistim, ki jih ugotavljajo drugi avtorji (npr. Bolko, 2019) v normativni skupini učencev.

Sram ($f = 61$) je bil pri učencih z lažjimi MDR opažen, ko je učitelj grajal učenca ($f = 35$), ko učenec ni bil uspešen ali ni opravil določene dolžnosti ($f = 23$) in ko so sošolci komentirali njegovo delo ($f = 3$). Podobno so tudi v normativni skupini učencev (Prosen in Smrtnik Vitulić, v recenziji) sram sprožili nizka učna uspešnost, interakcije znotraj vrstniške skupine ali kritika učitelja.

Zadrega ($f = 40$) se je pojavila v situacijah, ki so vključevale izpostavljanje učenca pred drugimi ($f = 20$), prisotnost neznane osebe ($f = 11$), pomanjkanje znanja ($f = 8$) in pohvalo učitelja ($f = 1$). Strah ($f = 20$) se je sprožil, ko je učenec izkusil slabši učni uspeh ($f = 10$), ob iracionalnih razlogih ($f = 4$), ob agresivnem vedenju sošolcev ($f = 2$), ob učiteljevi negativni reakciji ($f = 2$) in še v dveh drugih situacijah. Vse te situacije so bile podobne tistim, o katerih so Uddin Kalar idr. (2013) poročali pri normativni populaciji učencev: agresivno vedenje sošolcev ali pričakovanje učnega neuspeha.

Učenci so izrazili žalost ($f = 19$) v situacijah, ko se jim želja ni izpolnila ($f = 6$), niso dosegli cilja, ki so ga njihovi sošolci že dosegli ($f = 5$), ko česa niso imeli ali so kaj izgubili/poškodovali ($f = 4$) in ko jih je učitelj grajal ($f = 4$). Fekonja in Kavčič (2004) poročata, da so učenci v normativni populaciji podobno čutili žalost v zvezi s svojim učnim uspehom in socialnimi odnosi. Učenci z lažjimi MDR iz naše raziskave so izražali razmeroma manj žalosti v primerjavi z učenci iz normativne populacije, ki so bili vključeni v raziskavo avtoric Prosen in Smrtnik Vitulić (v recenziji).

Rezultati predstavljene raziskave pedagoškimi delavcem, ki delajo z otroki z lažjimi MDR, dajejo informacije o njihovem izražanju posameznih čustev in so osnova za kakovostno delo z njimi. V prihodnjih raziskavah pa bi bilo opazovalni pristop, ki smo ga uporabili v naši raziskavi, smiselno kombinirati z drugimi načini zbiranja podatkov, ki bi nam omogočali dostop do (notranjega) doživljanja čustev učencev. V raziskavo bi lahko vključili tudi večji vzorec otrok, ki bi bil bolj izenačen po spolu.

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