

# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION ON THE ALTER PERCEPTION AT PREADOLESCENTS WITH MENTAL DEFICIENCIES

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*It is well known that teenagers pass through a lot of changes that raise a high level of pressure and involve for a proper social insertion social communication abilities. One of the major goals of special education is to facilitate a proper social insertion of deficiencies, but based on the type of deficiency is necessary that special education programs should be develop. In particular, at pupils with mental deficiencies we have to take in consideration the mental deficiency's features of personality in order to facilitate social interaction, between deficiencies and normal people. Therefore, we made an investigation that have had the aim to reveal at preadolescents with mental deficiencies the influences of social communication features on the Alter perceived act. Our investigation was done on 60 Romanian preadolescents with mental deficiencies and we have used the following psychological instruments, adapted for Romanian population: The Pierre Casse's Social Communication Aptitude Questionnaire, The Social Conversation Questionnaire, The Alter's perception test, The Social Perception for Affiliations Group Questionnaire. Our results showed some basic features of social communication at preadolescents with mental deficiencies, and how the Alter is perceived by these preadolescents. The conclusions that came through revealed a specific typology of the influences of social communication features and type of Alter social perceived act and social communication.*

**Keywords:** social communication process, Alter social perception act, mental deficiencies

## Theoretical background

The social communication is the fundamental way of person's social interaction and is done through the social's symbols and significations and determines specific behaviours.

During the process of social communications there are some information's exchange. Social communication presumes emission, transmission and reception of information and sometime it can be assume as a information's transmission. But, in reality, the process of information's

transmission only when the message is understood by the receiver and it is followed by a proper response.

Social communication's features influence the type of social interaction between people, and the way how Alter is perceived.

The social perception act is shaping self-image and outlines the other's impressions. People use in Alter social perception act the continuum model of impression. This model stipulates that the answers based on categories has priority towards the individual one and the movement from the categorised answers to the individual one is based on interpretation, motivation and attention. The answers involve assessment criteria that are permanent in a restructuring process and are influenced by the social communication features.

Because of the mental disabilities and the delay in biological normal development, the children have not the proper abilities to a proper response to social stimulus and will develop a social and school maladjustment. These not developed abilities are also in the social communication area and will increase the personal insecurity and in time, it can determine social isolation and a particular way of perceived Alter and social groups.

## Psychological research

Based on the theoretical background that we have presented in a short form, we have done a psychological research that has had the goal *to investigate at preadolescents with mental handicap* some social communication features reflected in the way of Alter social perception for developing proper training programs to facilitate the social integration of pupils with mental disabilities.

In our research we have had the following objectives: investigation of social communication aptitude; investigation of social conversation, investigation of Alter's social perception; investigation of Group's social perception.

Taking in consideration the aim and the objectives, in our research we have had the following assumption: *we presume that based on the mental deficiencies features, we will find at pupils with this handicap, a specific way of influences of social communication features on the Alter's social perception act depending on the level of mental handicap.*

We did our research on 60 subjects, aged 10-12 years old, 25 boys and 35 girls from Special School nr.5 Bucharest with I.Q. between 50- 77- medium level of mental handicap.

In our research we have used the following psychological instruments: The P. Casse social communication aptitude Questionnaire, adapted in 2009 by Urea (2002) for pupils with mental handicap. The Social conversation questionnaire, which was created in 2008 by Urea (2010) for pupils with mental handicap, The Alter social perception questionnaire, which was created in 2001 by Urea (2002) for pupils with mental handicap, The questionnaire of group's social perception, which was created in 2001 by Urea for pupils with mental handicap (Urea, 2002). The instruments were adapted and created for Romanian pupils with mental handicap. The coefficients of fidelity were: .675, and .7954. We will present the collected data, based on the instrument that has been used.

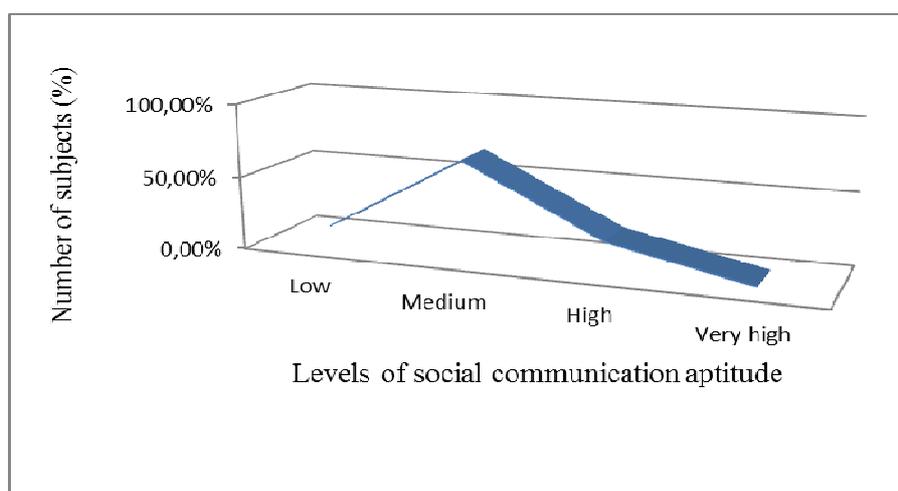
### Investigation of social communication aptitude

The collected data from the social communication aptitude questionnaire were evaluated on four levels: low, medium, high, very high. The data are presented in table 1. The dynamic of social communication aptitude levels is presented in figure 1.

Table 1. *The levels of social communication aptitude at our investigated subjects*

	Levels of evaluation			
	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Number of subjects (%)	13,30%	66,60%	20%	0%

Figure 1 *Variation of social communication aptitude at investigated subjects*



As we can see, the levels of social communication aptitude at our investigated subjects reflect a dominant medium level of social communication potential, and therefore our subjects should have a good level of social conversation. But this situation is a proper one at our investigated subjects?

### Investigation of social conversation

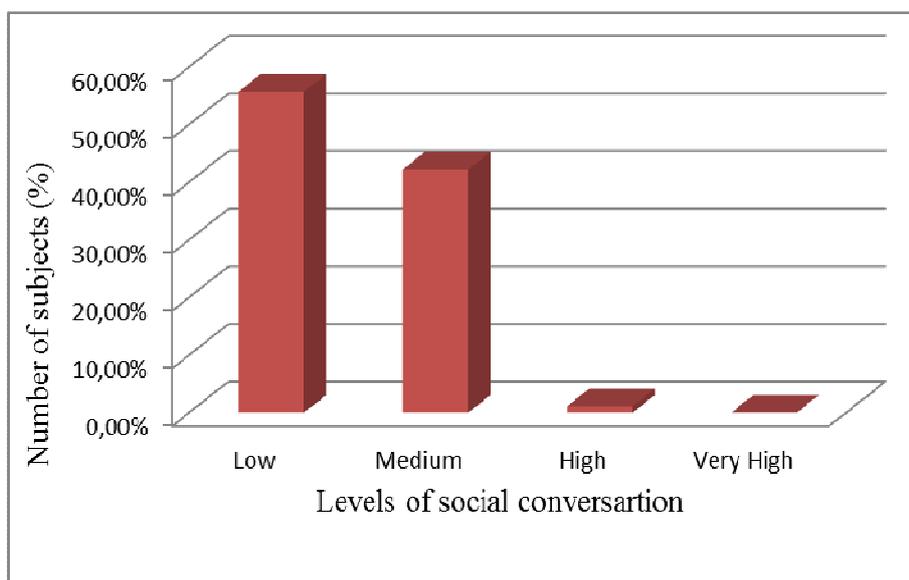
For answering the previous questions, we evaluated the collected data from the social conversation questionnaire on four levels: low, medium, high, very high.. The data are presented in table 2.

Table 2. *The levels of social conversation at our investigated subjects*

	Levels of evaluation			
	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Number of subjects (%)	55,7	42,2	1,1	0

The dynamic of social conversation at our investigated subjects is presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 *The dynamic of social conversation at our investigated subjects*



As we can see, most of our subjects have a low level of social conversation and can explain by the fact that the social conversation strategies are not operative due to a limited social experience communication.

The qualitative analyses of the subject's answers allowed us to see some nuances of the social conversation process: if the social conversation is done in school or if the social conversation's partners have the same status, the level of social conversation is medium because the type of messages that are between them is focus on daily activities; if the social conversation is done in large social groups where people have different social status, the level of social conversation is low.

The skewness coefficient (.397) revealed that the task was done by our subjects in an easy manner and the kurtosis coefficient (2.037) revealed that the features that we have found is relevant at our subjects as a group.

The correlation analyses revealed a direct correlation between the social conversation and the I.Q of our subjects ( $r = .364$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ).

*We can say, that the social conversation, at investigated preadolescents with mental deficiency is the expression of a the mental handicap personality's features and furthermore reflects a not stimulate social communication aptitude potential.*

### Investigation of Alter's social perception

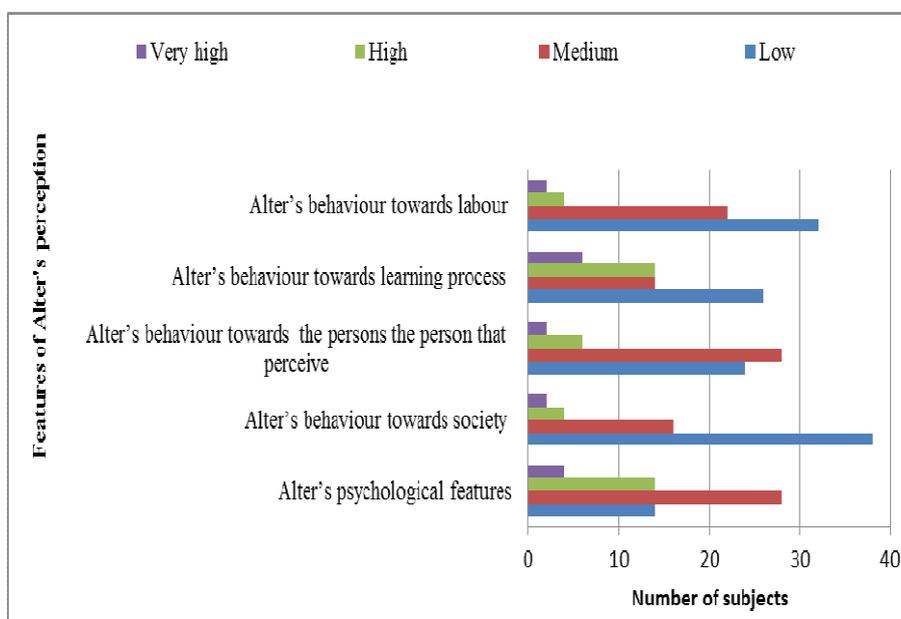
Seeing the level of social conversation we are wondering if this one is not an impediment in the process of Alter's social perception act. Using a specific instruments we use as criteria for Alter's social perception, the following Alter's assessment criteria: Alter's psychological features, Alter's behaviour towards society, Alter's behaviour towards the persons the person that perceive, Alter's behaviour towards learning process, Alter's behaviour towards labour

The collected data were evaluated on four levels: low, medium, high, very high. and are presented in table 3.

Tabel 3. *The levels of Alter's social perception features at our investigated subjects*

Elements of perception Number of investigated subjects	Levels of evaluation			
	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Alter's psychological features	14	28	14	4
Alter's behaviour towards society	38	16	4	2
Alter's behaviour towards the persons the person that perceive	24	28	6	2
Alter's behaviour towards learning process	26	14	14	6
Alter's behaviour towards labour	32	22	4	2

The dynamic of Alter's features social perception at our investigated subjects is presented in figure 3.

Figure 3 *Variation of Alter's social perception features*

Based on the data analyses we see that our subjects may not be aware of the consequences, especially the implications of social communication sphere in area of socialization. This is the result of pathological inertia of thinking, especially of the fragility of verbal behaviour. It will produces a

limited relationships both in time and space with specific communication structures, and communication will shade horizontally.

Also, we notice the preference to the psychological characteristics of the communication partner. This might suggest at first glance a characteristic real age (puberty), that aim to know what can and can not do everyone. In fact, knowledge in terms of communication partner's psychological characteristics is limited to those features that "are popular among the public" and which, in view of our subjects, have better social status automatically. Actually they are searching for and secure environment secure social communication, to protect him, not blaming him.

From collected data, we have found that the presence of other behaviours, as weight percentage on the others evaluated levels, shows that some subjects apply the principle of trial and error, but with minimal effort. We also notice the absence or reduced weight of the elements of generality, it is known that mental deficiency are self-centred.

The skeness coefficient (.257) revealed that the task was done by our subjects in an easy manner and the kurtosis coefficient (.1015) revealed that the features that we have found is relevant at our subjects as a group.

Based on the statistical analyses, we have found a direct and significant correlation the social conversation and the type of Alter's features social perception ( $r = .664, p = 0.05$ ).

*We can say that the way that a person is social perceived is determine by the social communication experience and has a level of efficiency if is done in a familiar environment.*

### Investigation of group's social perception

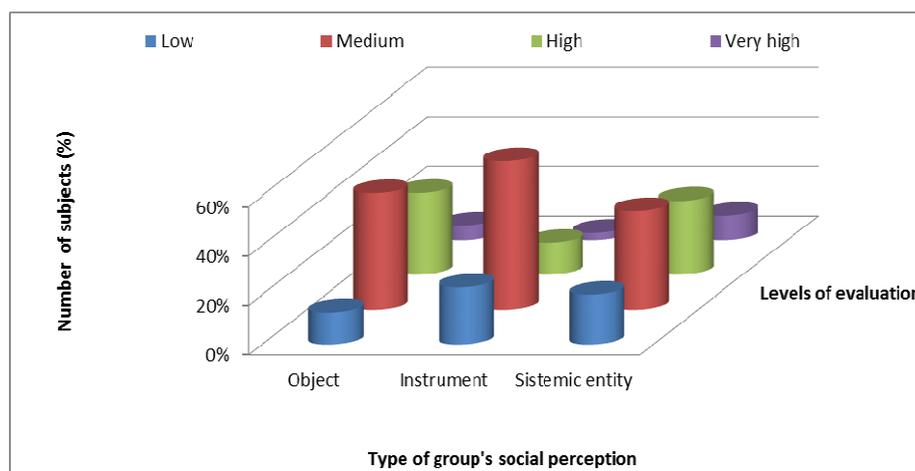
For investigated the group's social perception act, we have considerate the three possibilities for a group to be consider in different social situation: object, the group is used for personal interests; instrument- the subject is used by the group for his own interests; systemic entity- the group has common interests and common rules.

The collected data were evaluated on four levels: low, medium, high, very high and it is presented in table 4.

Table 4. *The levels of Group's social perception types at our investigated subjects*

Types of group's social perception	Levels of evaluation			
	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Object	13%	47%	33%	6%
Instrument	23%	60%	13%	3%
Sistemic entity	20%	40%	30%	10%

The dynamic of group social perception at our investigated subjects is presented in figure 4.

Figure 4 *Variation of group's social perception*

We have noticed that the group is perceived by most of the subjects with mental deficiencies as instruments, means that that subjects operate in terms of freedom of social action, lack of social rules. Also, mean that our subjects are aware of their social communication skills and choose to be part of groups where their inabilities are overlooked, where they are valued through a number of social criteria that are based on infantile elements who feed the self-centered type of personality.

We also can see that the group social perception as systemic entity reveal that those subjects evaluated the group through his activities, especially those one that guide these pupils to a vocational school. Under these conditions, the group becomes a way by which they plan to recognize the progress of the profession.

Based on statistical analyses, we found that the skeness coefficient (.107) revealed that the task was done by our subjects in an easy manner and the kurtosis coefficient (.569) revealed that the features that we have found is relevant at our subjects as a group.

Based on the statistical analyses, we have also found a direct and significant correlation the social conversation and the type of Group social perception ( $r = .697$ ,  $p = 0.01$ )

*We can say that the way that a social perception of a social group depend by the mental deficiency personality features and is determine by the social communication experience.*

## Conclusions

*The information that have been collected through this research allow us to say that the social communication abilities become for people with mental deficiencies the tools used and valued by for being a member of a social group.*

Based on the quantitative and quality analyses of the collected data we can say not only that the research objectives were reached and the assumption was validate, by we can also establish a specific typology regarding the influences of social communication features on the Alter's social perception act.

We have defined next types:

- Type A: is presented at subjects with mental deficiencies that have a medium social communication aptitude, low level of social conversation, use in Alter social perception act, the Alter's behaviour towards society, perceived the social group as instrument.
- Type B is presented at subjects with mental deficiencies that have a high social communication aptitude, medium level of social conversation, use in Alter social perception act, the Alter's psychological features, perceived the social group as object.

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