

Original scientific paper
Accepted: 26th June 2020

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TRADITIONAL PLAY AND CONTEMPORARY CURRICULUM - PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' OPINIONS⁴

Abstract: *Changes in social interactions in contemporary society limit the transmission of the traditional play as a significant segment of cultural intangible heritage. It is assumed that the introduction of the traditional play in the institutional Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) would contribute to its preservation. The opinions of teachers and parents of children of early and preschool age on the importance and purposefulness of the application of traditional play in the educational process were examined. The importance of traditional play was assessed more significantly by participants of older than younger age, and those highly educated than those less educated. The place where the participants grew up was related to the assessment of the limitations of the traditional play. Assessing outdoor play without adult supervision positively correlates with assessing children's preoccupation with the virtual world. Conducting action research on the possibility of implementing traditional play, along with longitudinal research on children's development, could possibly indicate the importance of traditional play.*

Keywords: *early and preschool child, contribution, outdoor play, intergenerational transmission, intangible cultural heritage, limitations*

INTRODUCTION

The play is an expression of children's social experience, community culture and spatial-material conditions (Lindon, 2001; Visković et al., 2019). It encourages the development of children's personality - creativity, imagination, motor,

⁴ The paper entitled Traditional play in early and preschool education is a thesis defended in 2019 at the University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Early and Preschool Education, under the mentorship of Ivana Visković, Ph.D., Assistant Professor.

sensorimotor and communication skills, perseverance, self-confidence and a positive self-image (Duran, 2001; Mahmutović, 2013; Klarin, 2017; Visković, 2016). Rajić and Petrović-Sočo (2015) interpret children's play as a research and development stimulus that reflects their desires, thoughts and emotional experiences.

The play is an optimal way of learning and developing social, cognitive and science-mathematical competencies, as well as initiative and entrepreneurship (Wu et al., 2012; Fisher et al., 2013). Through play, the child develops prosocial and caring behaviours, empathy and altruism, and emotional regulation (Jurčević-Lozančić, 2016; Milošević, 2018).

The National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (NKRPOO, 2014) advocates children's play as one of the ways of learning, research and constructive problem solving.

Global economic changes and consequent changes in community culture have caused changes in children's play and toys, the play environment and the time frame of play, and the way adults are involved in children's play (Klemenović, 2013). In the not-so-distant past, children primarily played outdoors, in the company of their peers, with unshaped and natural materials (SpajićVrkaš, 1996). In contrast, today's generations are increasingly playing individually, indoors, most often in the family home, manipulating products of modern technology (Balci & Ahi, 2017).

The play, especially the motor one, encourages motor development - fine motor skills and oculomotor skills, basic forms of movement, balance, coordination, strength and speed (Bastjančić et al., 2011). At the same time, active play relieves the child of tension, relaxes him and contributes to the development of concentration (Pihač, 2011). Playfulness and greater motor activity of children in the first year of life correlate with better motor skills in later periods (de Campos et al., 2010). The attitudes of adults with whom a child grows up are reflected in children's play and the development of children's motor skills (Trawick-Smith, 2018). Playing in nature and outdoors, adults often identified with risky play (Schepers & Liempd, 2010).

Although adults recognize the importance of outdoor play, their fears (of child injuries, traffic, strangers) and distrust of children's abilities and capabilities are often limiting factors (Prott, 2010; Veitcha et al., 2010). Restricting a child impairs his autonomy and deprives him of the opportunity to exercise and explore his own possibilities (Tomljanović, 2012). Active outdoor play is becoming less common, so some research finds that children spend more time in front of screens than in active outdoor play (Myers et al., 2015). At the same time, cooperative and caring behaviors and mutual respect in favor of consumerism are neglected (Miliša & Spasenovski, 2017). Children's exposure to mass media redefines children's play and forms of learning (Labaš & Marinčić, 2016). Consequently, it has an impact on the formation of values, attitudes, opinions, habits and behaviour of

children (Visković&Višnjić Jevtić, 2017). Inappropriate and excessive exposure of children to the media impairs their attention, verbal communication, socialization (Klarin 2017), and can also encourage a tendency to violent behaviour (Bilić, 2010; Labaš&Marinčić, 2018). The research of Blanuša Trošelj and Srića (2014) on the influence of the media notices the transfer of models of media content, characters and relationships, but also artifacts on the play of children of early and preschool age.

Media exposure, consumerism, and adult fears result in a number of different restrictions on children's outdoor play. The play is more often individual and less mobile. Consequently, health problems are more common: physical (obesity, diabetes) and mental (disorganization, poor concentration, low self-esteem) (Mårtensson, 2010; Trawick-Smith, 2018).

TRADITIONAL PLAY

Culture can be interpreted as a way of life of an individual, community or society. It includes a set of knowledge, values, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and norms that are expressed through customs, rituals, language, ways of communication, behavior and material artifacts of community members (Spajić Vrkaš, 2009). Tradition embodies the intergenerational transmission of certain aspects of culture, experience and cultural heritage (Croatian Encyclopedia, 2020).

Tradition as a cultural heritage is transmitted through education, development and shaping of a specific way of life of a certain community, and oral or written transmission and application (Matasović et al., 2003). The process of globalization, migration and mass media, leads to the creation of a global culture while eradicating the diversity of cultures of certain communities (Cifrić, 2007; Jagić & Vučetić, 2012). It is therefore justified to advocate the preservation of one's own cultural identity (Korbar-Moler et al., 2011; Jagić & Vučetić, 2012).

Traditional play exists as one of the expressions of cultural identity and the way of transmitting cultural elements - values, norms, language, behaviour and artifacts (Visković, 2020). It transmits intergenerationally, but, just like tradition, it modifies by the social and spatial-material context. Although the content and terminology may differ depending on the geographical place in which it develops, the basic settings and values of a particular traditional play may be identical for all people and communities (Estes, 2019).

In the not-so-distant past, children played far from adults, hiding (Kozić, 1980; Kunac, 2007). They mostly played in nature, manipulating natural and unshaped materials (Matoković, 2003). The type and content of the games was related to the season - the available space and naturals as toys. Play was determined by the sex and children's age. Mixing children of different sexes was unacceptable, most often due to the religious attitudes of the parents (Kunac, 2007). Children who played games intended for the opposite sex were given derogatory names, making

them the object of ridicule (Spajić Vrkaš, 1996). After the Second World War, with the change of social consciousness, strict divisions according to sex were gradually lost, and the common play of children developed. Today a separate play according to the children's sex is not a consequence of customs but of personal choice (Kovačević & Opić, 2014). At the same time, differences in play by age have remained partially to this day (Kožić, 1980; Kunac, 2007).

Each traditional play has specific rules whose acceptance and adoption is necessary to participate in it. While some of the rules were basic and unchangeable, some traditional playing contained agreed behaviours that were tailored to the current specifics, needs, desires, and capabilities of the players (Duran, 2001). Kovačević and Opić (2014) emphasize that the players of traditional playing paid significant attention to the rules and acting in accordance with them. Regardless of the originality, the rules had to be followed. Violation of the rules resulted in exclusion from playing. From the earliest experience, children noticed the importance of respecting the rules as well as the possibility of agreeing on them. This was also a further starting point for spontaneous learning of social norms necessary for proper functioning in the community (Kovačević & Opić, 2014). Traditional play was thus a tool for transmitting basic values, social norms and acceptable behaviours, ways of distributing power and solving problem situations (Visković, 2020). Although the names and ways of the playing may differ depending on the culture in which it developed, the traditional playing always conveys basic cultural rules (Pavlušec, 2017; Estes, 2019). Almost every traditional playing promotes togetherness, cooperation and connection among children.

In modern society, the play is increasingly individualized and socially poor, and we rarely meet children in outdoor play together (Margetić, 2009; Kovačević & Opić, 2014; Vasileva et al., 2018).

The analysis of the traditional play indicates a lack of ready-made toys (Spajić Vrkaš, 1996). Natural and unshaped materials that children found in nature: pebbles, sticks, pinecones, branches, reeds, wood and twigs were the original children's toys (Kožić, 1980). The food was precious and rarely used as a toy, such as chestnuts, walnuts and almonds. All these materials provided children with opportunities to develop imagination (Korbar-Moler et al., 2011; Klemenović, 2013). The children knew how to make their toys on their own or with the help of their parents from the remains of processed wood, fabric, thread, buttons, socks, rope or wool. Due to poverty, these materials, and consequently toys, were very few (Spajić Vrkaš, 1996). The art of making wooden toys in the north of Croatia (from the area of Hrvatsko Zagorje), which has survived to this day, was inscribed on the UNESCO *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in 2009, thus confirming their value globally (Biškupić Bašić, 2013).

Traditional play offers the child the opportunity to discover and explore the nature and culture of the community and their own capabilities (Pulkkinen, 2008;

Vasileva et al., 2018). Unfortunately, in modern society, traditional play, especially group playing in nature, are less and less represented. Kovačević and Opić (2014) cite changes in the way of life and the emergence of increasing alienation among members of the community as possible reasons for the disappearance of the traditional play. However, some research (Kovačević & Opić, 2014; Trajković et al., 2018) indicate the possibility of application and importance of traditional play in the modern curriculum, both for the children and for the overall development of the community.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH GOAL

This paper presents the findings of an empirical research of the opinions and attitudes of teachers and parents of preschool children about the importance of traditional play. The goal of the research is to gain insight into the opinions of parents and teachers on the importance, purposefulness, limitations and applicability of traditional play in the educational process. Knowing the perceptions of process participants can be an important predictor of future change. Based on the theoretical analysis of the available literature, it is assumed that:

H_0 : There is a statistically significant correlation between the status of the participants (age, education and place where they grew up) with the assessment of various aspects of the traditional play (importance, limitations and contribution to the educational process).

H_1 : It is assumed that there is no statistically significant difference in the opinions of the subsamples on aspects of the play in the institutional context of the ECEC.

H_2 : It is assumed that there is a statistically significant correlation between the participants' assessment of outdoor play and children's preoccupation with the virtual world.

PARTICIPANTS

The convenient sample included 124 participants, of which 51 teachers (41,5% of the sample) and 72 parents of preschool children, included in the Kindergarten "Biokovsko zvonce" in Makarska. Only 12,9% ($N = 16$) are men (fathers). Participation in the research was voluntary, with anonymity guaranteed. The average age of the participants in the sample was 38,97 years of age ($SD=8,31$), ranging from 24 to 60 years of age. Mothers' age ranges from 25 to 53, fathers from 29 to 46, and teachers from 24 to 60 years of age. In the area of Makarska coast, 66,1% of participants ($f=82$) grew up, 12,1% of participants ($f=15$) grew up in the Dalmatian hinterland, while others ($f=7$, 21%) grew up somewhere else.

Table 1. Level of education of the participants in the sample

subsample f - %	High school	Bachelor degree	Master degree	total
mothers	27 48,2%	16 28,6%	13 23,2%	56 45,1%
fathers	6 46,2%	8 61,5%	2 15,4%	16 12,9%
teachers	-	39 75%	13 25%	52 41,9%
total	33 26,6%	63 50,4%	28 23%	124 100%

INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaire of the opinion of teachers and parents of preschool children on the importance of traditional play in ECEC (UP-MORTI) was constructed for research purposes, based on the analysis of relevant literature. It contains 7 independent and 5 dependent variables (36 items). In the introductory part, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants and anonymity was guaranteed. A five-point Likert scale with a zero point was used to evaluate the statements, where 1 means *it has no significance* or *I do not agree at all*, and 5 means *extremely significant* or *I completely agree*. Participants had the opportunity to supplement statements or arguments.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha and for the whole instrument is $\alpha = ,82$, which is acceptable for this type of research. For the subscale of assessing the significance of traditional play it is $\lambda = ,85$, for the subscale of assessing the limiting factors of the application of traditional play in modern society it is $\alpha = ,82$, while for the subscale of assessing the changes that would contribute to the quality of educational work in ECEC $\alpha = ,81$.

RESEARCH DATA

The survey was conducted in March 2019. The collected data were processed using the *Statistical Program for Social Scientists 20* (SPSS20). For the purposes of general description, measures of central tendency (arithmetic mean, mode) and measures of scattering (standard deviation, frequencies) were calculated. The correlation was considered through the Pearson correlation coefficient, and the significance of the estimation according to the subsamples was investigated by *t-test* and *one-way* analysis of ANOVA variance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the most significant value of traditional play, the participants (the whole sample) point out the stimulus to *the overall child development* ($M=4,73$; $SD=0,58$). They evaluate the promotion of *traditional values as significant outcomes of*

traditional play ($M=4,58$; $SD=0,54$), *encouraging children to use natural resources* ($M=4,58$; $SD=0,59$) and *to preserve their mother tongue* ($M=4,51$; $SD=0,73$). For these statements, none of the participants expressed a negative assessment of importance. From the processed data, using the *t-test* for independent samples, it is clear that there is no statistically significant difference in the assessment of the importance of certain aspects of traditional play between parents and teachers.

The high assessment of the importance of certain aspects of the traditional play can be explained by the tendency to give desirable answers or the actual belief of the participants. The findings are correlated with relevant research on the importance of traditional play (Spajić Vrkaš, 1996; Korbar-Moler et al., 2011; Klemenović, 2013; Kovačević&Opić, 2014; Trajkovik et al., 2018).

Table 2. Difference in assessing the importance of certain aspects of the traditional play

aspects of the significance of the traditional play	Subsample	M	SD	t	p
preservation of tradition	Parents	4,51	0,71	0,871	,386
	Teachers	4,39	0,75		
preserving the original play	Parents	4,55	0,63	0,151	,881
	Teachers	4,54	0,57		
promoting traditional values	Parents	4,64	0,54	1,448	,150
	Teachers	4,50	0,54		
spontaneous learning of social norms	Parents	4,40	0,61	-0,428	,669
	Teachers	4,45	0,51		
use of natural materials	Parents	4,63	0,54	1,026	,307
	Teachers	4,52	0,63		
universality	Parents	4,22	0,69	-1,219	,225
	Teachers	4,38	0,67		
recognition	Parents	4,27	0,73	-0,846	,399
	Teachers	4,38	0,65		
enhancing the holistic development of children	Parents	4,79	0,48	1,227	,222
	Teachers	4,66	0,69		
preservation of the mother tongue	Parents	4,57	0,72	0,915	,362
	Teachers	4,45	0,74		
mother tongue comprehension	Parents	4,48	0,76	0,236	,814
	Teachers	4,45	0,68		

The possibility of supplementing the statements was used by two participants. They recognize the values of traditional play as quality leisure time, away from TV and mobile phones, the possibility of staying in nature, interacting with peers and stimulating the imagination. Participants assess the progress of technology and mass media ($M=4,25$; $SD=0,86$) and consumerism ($M=4,13$; $SD=0,87$) as possible limitations, visible and latent factors, applications of traditional play in modern society. This opinion is in line with the views on the pedagogical implications of consumerism (Miliša&Spasenovski, 2017).

A statistically significant difference in assessment ($p \leq ,01$) according to subsamples was observed to assess the danger of outdoor play without adult supervision. Teachers, more than parents, estimate that this is a more significant limiting factor. No statistically significant difference was observed for other assessment items (Table 3).

Table 3. Difference in the assessment of the limitations of the application of traditional play in modern society

applicatory limitation of the traditional play	subsample	M	SD	t	p
danger of playing outdoors	parents	3,03	1,08	-2,726	,007
	teachers	3,57	1,11		
preoccupation with the virtual world	parents	4,19	0,94	-0,738	,462
	teachers	4,31	0,74		
lack of intergenerational communication	parents	3,87	0,79	-0,173	,863
	teachers	3,89	0,95		
changes in social values	parents	3,78	0,87	-1,494	,138
	teachers	4,02	0,92		
overcrowding of children's schedule with additional activities	parents	3,99	0,91	0,017	,986
	teachers	3,98	0,94		
consumerism	parents	4,12	0,77	-0,149	,882
	teachers	4,14	0,98		
distrust of children's abilities	parents	3,39	1,11	0,502	,616
	teachers	3,29	1,15		
migrations that contribute to the loss of identity	parents	3,37	0,85	-0,952	,343
	teachers	3,54	1,04		

Assuming the justification of the implementation of traditional play in the institutional context of ECEC, participants were asked to assess the contribution of traditional play to the quality of the educational process. The most significant

benefits for the child are *the possibilities of more outdoor play* ($M=4,62$; $SD=0,58$), *play with natural resources* ($M=4,55$; $SD=0,53$) and *the development of children's autonomy* ($M=4,43$; $SD=0,53$).

The importance of using natural resources in children's play is recognized by all research participants. A statistically significant difference in assessment ($p \leq ,02$) was found among the subsections to assess the contribution of traditional play to kindergarten. Teachers appreciate the contribution to the application of the traditional play significantly much more than parents (Table 4).

However, none of the participants disagreed with the statement that the inclusion of traditional play in the curriculum would contribute to the quality of the educational process. One of the participants mentioned the possibilities of visiting villages near by. That would contribute to *the quality of the educational process through closely nurturing the tradition, contributing to the understanding of rural life as well as revitalization of the village by childrens' visitations*.

Table 4. Possible contributions of the application of traditional play to the development of the quality of the educational process in the institutional context

	subsample	M	SD	t	p
incorporating the traditional play into the curriculum	Parents	4,25	0,56	-2,357	,02
	Teachers	4,48	0,51		
involving parents as play demonstrators from their childhood	Parents	4,33	0,59	0,511	,612
	Teachers	4,27	0,73		
involving grandparents as play demonstrators from their childhood	Parents	4,21	0,64	0,942	,348
	Teachers	4,09	0,76		
more outdoor play	Parents	4,55	0,66	-1,378	,171
	Teachers	4,70	0,46		
enabling the so-called risky games	Parents	4,10	0,82	-0,484	,629
	Teachers	4,18	0,87		
use of natural resources	Parents	4,55	0,53	-0,014	,989
	Teachers	4,55	0,54		
encouraging children's autonomy	Parents	4,42	0,53	-0,379	,706
	Teachers	4,45	0,54		

Although attitudes are the most difficult to explore, participants were asked to assess the significance they attach to individual statements about play. The assessment (partially) reflects the attitudes of the participants (Table 5). Parents and teachers disagree with claims that *traditional play are uninteresting to children, that didactic play contribute more to children's development than spontaneous play, that competitive play are not acceptable because they encourage rivalry among children and that mixing cultures leads to losing traditional play*.

A statistically significant difference in assessment ($t=-1,912$; $p\leq,05$) was observed for the claim *Competitive play is justified because they prepare children for life*. Interesting is the opinion of teachers who more significantly than parents value the importance of competition as a *preparation for life*. No statistically significant difference in assessment was found for other claims. Interestingly, participants agree with the statement that traditional play is important for respecting traditional identity, which coincides with some recent research (Kovačević & Opić, 2014). At the same time, the findings of this research coincide with individual programs focused on intercultural education, such as the *Education Program for Accepting and Respecting the Diversity of Personal Cultures and Traditions of Preschool Children* (Korbar-Moler et al., 2011). It is justified to believe that traditional play enables children to get to know and understand the culture of the community, which in turn can contribute to building cultural identity, ethics, tolerance, solidarity, acceptance and respect for diversity.

Table 5. Attitudes of teachers and parents about the (traditional) play, and the requirements and phenomena of the modern age (agreement with the claims)

Claims (items)	Subsample	M	SD	t	p
All in good time, so it goes with the children's play.	Parents	3,43	0,92	0,129	,897
	Teachers	3,41	0,97		
Going back in time, children's play will not contribute to children's development.	Parents	2,24	0,98	1,748	,083
	Teachers	1,96	0,74		
The modern age requires new competencies.	Parents	3,49	0,86	-1,757	,081
	Teachers	3,75	0,74		
Traditional play is uninteresting to children.	Parents	2,02	0,87	-0,548	,585
	Teachers	2,11	0,98		
Didactic play contributes more to children's development than spontaneous play.	Parents	2,37	0,87	0,590	,556
	Teachers	2,29	0,76		
Traditional play is important for respecting traditional identity.	Parents	4,04	0,56	-0,583	,561
	Teachers	4,11	0,62		
Competitive play is not acceptable because they encourage rivalry among children.	Parents	2,31	0,94	1,047	,297
	Teachers	2,15	0,81		
Competitive play is justified because they prepare children for life.	Parents	3,87	0,79	-1,912	,048
	Teachers	4,13	0,69		
Mixing cultures leads to the loss of the traditional play.	Parents	2,48	0,93	0,515	,608
	Teachers	2,39	0,88		
Interculturalism contributes to learning new kinds of play.	Parents	3,88	0,68	-0,245	,807
	Teachers	3,91	0,67		

Applying the Pearson correlation coefficient, a statistically significant, mild and positive correlation ($r = .22$; $df = 123$; $p \leq .05$) was found between the age of the respondents and the results of the assessment of the significance of the traditional play. It is possible to assume that the significance that participants associate with traditional play is related to significance they felt in their childhood. This is confirmed by the argumentative statement of one of the participants who states: *Today's children do not know how lucky we were to find time to play together. We went to school, helped mother and father, sometimes grandmother, and then we played a little until the Hail Mary evening prayer. It was to us then, as if now someone is giving us all the money of this world. Today's children do not know what they have lost.*

For other variables - *limitations of the application of traditional play in the modern world and contribution to the quality of the educational process in the institutional context*, no statistically significant correlation of assessment with the age of the participants was found.

A statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) difference in the assessment of the importance of traditional play was found in relation to the level of education of the participants (Table 6). Post-hoc analysis, using the Bonferroni procedure, found a statistically significant difference in assessment between participants with high school and associate degree education in relation to a subsample of master and higher educated participants ($F = 3.56$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .05$).

Table 6. Difference of assessment according to the level of education of the participants

			df	M	F	Sig.
score importance of traditional play	between subsamples	123,668	2	61,834	3,564	,031
	within subsamples	2081,958	120	17,350		
	total	2205,626	122			
score limitations	between subsamples	70,737	2	35,368	1,413	,252
	within subsamples	2978,222	119	25,027		
	total	3048,959	121			
score contribution	between subsamples	8,594	2	4,297	0,462	,632
	within subsamples	1106,914	119	9,302		
	total	1115,508	121			

It is interesting that the application of Pearson's correlation coefficient showed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r=.63$, $p\leq.00$) of assessing the significance of traditional play and assessing the contribution of traditional play to the quality of the educational process in the institutional context. This can be interpreted by the assumption that individuals, who have an affirmative opinion about the traditional play, also have an affirmative opinion about the possibilities of implementing the traditional play in the educational process. The justification of such an attitude is also suggested by research on the benefits of the application of traditional play in the educational process (Kovačević & Opić, 2014; Trajković et al., 2018).

Using a one-way ANOVA test, a statistically significant difference was found in assessing the importance of traditional play according to subsamples ($F=3.33$; $df=2$; $p\leq.05$) (Table 7). Post-hoc analysis, using the Boferroni procedure, found a statistically significant difference in assessment ($p\leq.05$) between teachers and fathers compared to mothers. It is possible to assume differences in the perception and manner of children's play. While fathers prefer more physical, motor games such as various sports, tickling, throwing in the air and similar activities, mothers try to occupy children's attention and establish interaction with them through toys (Visković&SumićFlego, 2012; Đekić, 2016). While parents prefer certain types of play, teachers should, assuming an understanding of the importance of play, encourage all forms of children's play (Visković, Sunko&Mendeš, 2019).

Table 7. Difference in the estimate of individual dependent variables according to the subsample

			df	M	F	Sig.
score importance of traditional play	between subsamples	116,159	2	58,081	3,336	,041
	within subsamples	2089,467	120	17,412		
	total	2205,626	122			
score limitations	between subsamples	46,105	2	23,053	0,914	,402
	within subsamples	3002,854	119	25,234		
	total	3048,959	121			
score contribution	within subsamples	27,272	2	13,636	1,491	,231
	between subsamples	1088,236	119	9,145		
	total	1115,508	121			

Some research in Croatia indicates that Dalmatia, along with eastern Croatia, is more strongly marked by traditional values. Ilišin and Gvozdanović (2016)

comparing data from five longitudinal empirical studies (ranging from 1986 to 2013), conducted on a representative sample of young people in Croatia aged 14 to 30 years, point out that young people in Dalmatia (and eastern) Croatia value traditionalism more significantly than young people in the rest of Croatia. The authors interpret traditionalism as the connection of family, nation and religion.

Therefore, the possible connection between the assessments of the research participants on certain aspects of the traditional play in relation to the place where participants grew up was investigated. Using a one-way ANOVA test, no statistically significant difference was found in the assessment of the score of the dependent variables according to the place that participants of the research grew up (Table 8). Traditional play can be interpreted as one of the traditional values, which explains the affirmative assessment of the traditional play of the participants who grew up in Dalmatia.

A statistically significant difference ($F=4,372$; $df=2$, $p\leq,05$) was observed between the assessment of emerging social values as a limiting factor in the application of traditional play in the modern world. The difference was observed with regard to the place where participants grew up, as indicators of experience. Post-hock analysis, using the Bonferroni procedure, found a statistically significant difference in assessment between individuals who spent their childhood in the Dalmatian hinterland or elsewhere in relation to a subsample of participants who grew up on the Makarska coast ($F=4,37$; $df=2$; $p\leq,02$). Participants who grew up on the Makarska coast more significantly assess the change in social values as one of the limitations of the application of traditional play in modern society than other participants.

This is a possible data that partially fits into previous research (Ilišin & Gvozdanović, 2016).

Table 8. Difference in the assessment of individual dependent variables according to the place where participants grew up

			df	M	F	Sig.
score importance of traditional play	between subsamples	3,568	2	1,784	,097	,907
	within subsamples	2202,058	120	18,350		
	total	2205,626	122			
Score limitations	between subsamples	72,799	2	36,400	1,455	,237
	within subsamples	2976,160	119	25,010		
	total	3048,959	121			
score contribution	within subsamples	2,968	2	1,484	,159	,853
	between subsamples	1112,540	119	9,349		
	total	1115,508	121			

Global social and economic changes are undeniably changing the way the community lives. As a result, children's play also changes. The assessment of the research participants on the danger of playing outdoors without adult supervision is positively correlated with the assessment of children's preoccupation with the virtual world ($r = .35$; $p \leq .00$), which confirms the initial assumption. The positive correlation of assessment is consistent with research by Myers, Gibbons, Arnup, Volders, and Naughton (2015) on the basic features of children's play in contemporary society. The relationship between virtual media preoccupation and the assessment of the dangers of children's outdoor play can be interpreted as an outcome of urbanization and technological progress. Urbanization has caused a reduction in open, green and safe areas for children to play. Adults' own fears and distrust of children's abilities according to Prott (2010) are factors that limit children's free play outdoors without adult supervision. As a result, children are spending more and more time indoors, surrounded by products of modern technology. This confirms the findings of numerous studies on children's play, which is increasingly an individual's play indoors with virtual media (Visković et al., 2019). However, these assessments can also be interpreted by the interest of young people in the virtual world (Matijević et al., 2016).

Research participants agree in assessing certain aspects of the traditional play - the significance, limitations and contribution to the quality of the educational process. A significant difference between the subsamples was observed to assess the dangers of outdoor play, the contribution of traditional play to the kindergarten curriculum, and the justification of competitive play. The assumption that there is no statistically significant difference in the opinions of the subsamples on aspects of traditional play in the institutional context of the ECEC is partially accepted.

Finally, the processed data of this research indicate the connection between the age and education of the participants with the assessment of the significance of the traditional play. The connection between the assessment of the limiting factors of the traditional play and its contribution to the educational process with the age and education of the participants has not been established. The place where the participants grew up did not prove to be a significant predictor of the assessment of the significance and contribution of the traditional play as well as its limitations. The general hypothesis of the connection between the status of the participants (age, education and place where they grew up) with the assessment of various aspects of the traditional play (importance, limitations and contribution to the educational process) is partially accepted.

It is possible to conclude that all participants highly value the importance of traditional childhood play. The family and the educational institution, as two fundamental communities in the life and development of the preschool child, should recognize the true value of play, and thus traditional, for the overall development of the child. Children's play, including traditional play, is justifiably interpreted as

a child's current and long-term well-being. The added value of traditional play is the transmission and preservation of tradition and traditional values that characterize the culture in which the child lives.

CONCLUSION

Children's play is a childhood phenomenon present in all societies and time periods. It is important for the overall development of the child. Although play and contextual environment are changing, play remains an indispensable part of growing up and has significant educational potential. The importance and irreplacability of the developmental impact of children's play points to the necessity of systematic research. The focus on outcomes (which the game has for children) as a result of a series of social interactions and the personality of the individual, does not diminish the importance of children's play as a process.

The traditional play exists as part of the cultural identity of the people, community and individual. The desire to preserve cultural heritage and, possibly more than just identity, justifies efforts to revitalize the traditional play and its implementation in the modern educational curriculum.

Traditional play is specific primarily in the transfer of cultural patterns - values, value orientations, norms (as unwritten social rules). It can be concluded that traditional play is a component of education for values. Traditional play latently (as social regulation) transmits forms of behaviour recognizable by the ways of distribution of power and authority, problem solving and (self) regulation. In the conditions of direct group interactions, it also presupposes the exclusion of adults from children's play. It is attributed to a gender dichotomy ("female" and "male" play), unusual in social situations with the direct influence of adults (e.g., in situations of keeping animals together on pasture). These dimensions of the traditional play are recognizable in all cultures in different modalities.

Emphasizing the affirmative values of the traditional play, its rare and sporadic representation in contemporary society is questionable. A possible reason is globalization, changes in social values (primary encouragement of consumerism) and, consequently, changes in toys and the playing environment. But it is possible that this is the primary consequence of the absence of intergenerational, family and other, social interactions, connections and attachments.

Understanding the purpose of traditional play justifies its implementation in the modern educational curriculum of both preschool and school institutions. The findings of relevant research indicate the contribution of traditional play to the development of prosocial behaviours - the development of empathy, cooperation and self-regulation. At the same time, through an understanding of national cultural identity, it contributes to the development of personal identity and respect for general values.

This research included teachers and parents of children of early and preschool age. All of them, regardless of age, level of education and place where they grew up, recognize the importance of children's play. Fear of changed living conditions (for example, the risk of playing outdoors, in nature) does not justify excluding traditional play from everyday childhood.

The possibility of including traditional play in children's daily lives is questionable by adult interventions and the correlation with modern technologies. Modern pedagogy advocates the inclusion of adults in children's play, which was not represented in traditional play. Transmitting traditional play in conditions of limited opportunities and social interactions, the involvement of adults makes it necessary. Adults present models (who introduce children to traditional play) and facilitators, and if necessary, teammates in traditional play. Modifying and redefining the rules can be left to children. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that a greater preoccupation with active play in nature would reduce playing time with modern technologies and communication media.

The inclusion of traditional play in the institutional educational process can be interpreted as the current and long-term well-being of both, children and the community. Current well-being is recognizable in child satisfaction and constructive social interactions. Long-term well-being is visible in the adoption of fundamental values and prosocial behaviours and, possibly more, in the construction of personal and national identity.

Understanding the importance and significance of traditional play is a way to preserve a unique segment of intangible cultural heritage. It is reasonable to assume that the revitalization of traditional play would contribute to the understanding of one's own culture, the promotion of traditional values, the spontaneous learning of social norms, and the original children's play. Involving older people, such as grandparents (as potentially native players), could possibly contribute to the understanding and preservation of the mother tongue and local dialect. Outdoor play would possibly give the necessary distance from consumerism and direct children's attention to the importance and richness of the natural environment.

To explore the complex and long-term outcomes and effects of traditional play on children, systematic action and longitudinal research is needed. Systematic monitoring of children in traditional play would possibly indicate the connection between traditional play and children's development, its applicability to behaviours in terms of caring and prosocial habits, and activities and ways of communication among children.

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