

Emotions and Social skills of Ethnic Minority Children in the Northern Areas of Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: In the content of child development and capacity building, the most important content is emotional education - social skills for children. Emotional competencies - social skills are the most important segments in forming personality for preschool children, contributing to promoting the positive development of young individuals and society. Emotional- social skills of preschool children play an important role, are a prerequisite for the comprehensive development of the child's personality, helping children to have feelings, moral standards, and experiences in knowing what to do and should not do in order to have a correct and standard manners. However, the performance of children in schools in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam is still at a low level. The article also reveals difficulties affecting children's emotional-social skills such as the lack of attention from parents, the environment for children to practice, the lack of experience and children's underdeveloped common language. This article is completed based on the survey results and face-to-face interviews to find out the most effective solutions to educate children in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam. The paper found that children's social and emotional skills need to be fostered by parents as well as by school because it plays an important role in their development.

KEYWORDS: Mountainous ethnic children, education, emotional- social skills, development, parents, school

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1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional- social skills of preschoolers are vibrations for surrounding things and phenomena; ability to apply knowledge and experience of children to deal with life situations (communication, behavior, handling of situations, etc.). These skills are the premises which can create conditions for children to adapt to life and comprehensive development.

Ethnic minorities here are people belonging to ethnic groups with a smaller population than the majority in the territory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. For example, the Tay, Nung, Dao, H'mong, Cao Lan, San Diu, San Chi, etc. For preschoolers, especially preschoolers, children 3-4 years old, education of emotional - social skills plays a very important role in affecting the child's personality development in the future [1].

Thus, it is very necessary to have research works on feelings - social skills of preschoolers 3-4 years old, ethnic minorities in the Northern mountainous areas, the situation of factors affecting the development children's emotional - social skills; from there, the development of emotional-social skills for ethnic minority preschoolers in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam need to

take into consideration in order to have appropriate solutions [2].

2. Research methodology

To find out about the emotional situation - social skills of children aged 3-4 from ethnic minorities, we directly carried out a survey of 211 children and indirectly 32 teachers at two kindergartens in Bac Kan province and Lich Son Kindergarten of Thai Nguyen Province. During the survey, we did research and in-depth interviews with 1 teacher and 1 kindergarten child who have the best emotional expression - the best social skills, 1 child who has worst emotional-social performance in class. Based on the information provided by the teachers, we have selected 100% of the ethnic minority children (Tay, Nung, Dao, H'Mong, Cao Lan, etc.) and all of them have normal mental development- physiology according to age [2].

3. Results and Discussion

To find out about the emotional situation - social skills of the 3-4 year old ethnic minority preschoolers in the Northern mountainous region of Vietnam, we use a combination of the following methods including survey by questionnaire, observation, in-depth interview and mathematical

statistical methods. The main method is the observation method.

We directly observe children when they participate in activities. We collaborate with teachers to grade

them at the beginning and end of the school year. The results of assessing children are presented in the following tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Assessment of preschool children's emotional development

Evaluation content	Evaluation levels			
	Formation levels			
	Not yet formed (0 points)	Fair (1 point)	Pretty good (2 points)	Good (3 points)
1. Children know emotional states such as happy, sad, surprised, annoyed, tired, etc.	Children are not aware of their feelings and do not know how to express themselves appropriately	Children are aware of one or two emotional expressions of themselves but do not know how to express themselves.	Children recognize and express some emotional states but are still shy.	Children can express their emotional states in many ways, can express their feelings differently.
2. Knowing some characteristics about themselves: names, genders, hobbies, clothes, etc.	Children do not know what characteristics they have.	Children know one or two characteristics.	Knowing some of their own characteristics and preferences, but not fully.	Children know all the basic characteristics of themselves and their interests.
3. Strongly sharing with friends about traits: name, gender, preferences, hair, clothes, feelings	Children have not been able to introduce their emotional features to other people.	Children can speak their own name and gender.	Children can say their preferences but not fully.	Children speak and fully demonstrate their own characteristics.
4. Learning how to dress in the correct position on the body.	Not knowing the position of clothing on the body and not knowing how to properly dress.	Knowing the position of the clothes on the body; do not know how to wear the right clothes.	Getting dressed properly but still slow, sometimes needs help.	Dressing up in the right way.
5. Children know the names of their classmates.	Children have not called the names of their classmates.	They know the names of a few friends they play with.	Children know and name many of their classmates.	Children look at their faces and name all of their classmates correctly.
6. Children enjoy playing in solidarity with their classmates	Children are afraid of contact, not actively playing with their friends	Children wishing to play with other friends but still afraid of contact.	Children play in solidarity with friends they love to play with.	Children play in solidarity and share with all of their classmates.
7. Knowing how to keep clothes neat and clean	Do not know how to preserve, leave toys in the wrong place.	Keeping toys and clothes untidy.	Knowing to keep toys and clothes in the right place, sometimes need reminders.	Children voluntarily put toys and clothes in the right place as prescribed, keep clothes clean.

8. They are happy to welcome New Year with relatives, feel the joy in the New Year holiday.	Children are not excited, interested, and happy when Happy New Year is coming.	Children do not understand the meaning of Happy New Year.	Children participate in some activities to welcome New Year but not actively.	Children are happy, excited and actively participating in New Year activities with everyone.
9. Children know the names and outstanding features of some places and landmarks of the homeland.	Children have not said and told the name of a place.	Children can speak the names of some famous places but have not yet said the characteristics.	They can tell the names and some features of certain places they live.	Children speak outstanding features of famous landmarks.
10. They love nature, motherland and country	Children do not know the name and address of the place where they live. They are not yet interested in the environment.	Children only love, care and protect plants and flowers they like.	Children express their love for their homeland, country and nature through a few poems and songs.	Children care and protect the environment. They know songs and poems about their homeland.

Based on the data, we can understand that children are aware of their emotional state, they are still not strong enough to express their emotions and their awareness of other people's emotional states is still poor [3]. It can be seen that children of ethnic minorities in the northern mountainous regions of Vietnam are quite shy; they are lack of confident since they are still influenced by environmental factors. Children who are ethnic minorities mainly

are living in mountainous, rural and remote areas [4]. These areas still have difficult economic conditions, so their chances to contact with the urban environment are limited. Some parents are illiterate, have little understanding or have little interest in developing their children's emotional-social skills, that is, these are the factors that have a great influence on children's emotional-social skills (Table 1).

Table 2. Assessment of developing preschool children

Content	Evaluation criteria			
	Not yet formed	Fair	Pretty good	Good
1. Children know the code of conduct when meeting other people.	Children do not know the rules of the area for dealing with strangers and do not know how to show the rules when meeting strangers (still confused, scared, running away when meeting strangers)	Children know some rules of conduct when meeting other people but cannot express clearly in words, gestures or do not know how to show it out.	Children know how to greet strangers politely, but when speaking, they are confused or shy.	Children are proficient in some codes of conduct when meeting strangers such as greetings politely and don't need the help of a teacher.
2. Children can recognize the roles of traffic lights.	Children have not yet recognized the colors, their uses and have not yet said the meaning of	Children know the colors of the traffic lights but do not know the exact use	Children know the use of each type of traffic lights but sometimes get	Children say exactly the use of each type of traffic light.

	each type of traffic light.	of each color.	confused.	
3. Children recognize and solve situations when in danger.	Children are not aware of dangerous situations and do not know how to handle dangerous situations.	Children are aware of some dangerous situations but do not know how to handle them.	Children know how to handle some dangerous situations but are still confused.	Children handle confidently, easily and effectively when facing dangerous situations.
4. Solidarity and cooperation with friends when working in groups	Children are not united, do not want to cooperate with friends.	Children are just happy, united, cooperating with young people they like.	Children unite, cooperate with some classmates, but are still shy.	Children are happy; they cooperate with all of friends.
5. Children practice taking care and watering plants	Children are not aware of the use of watering plants; do not know how to care for trees.	Children know trees need care but do not know how to take care of them properly.	Children practice watering plants, but do not know how to fertilize and take care of plants.	Children are proficient in techniques of caring for and watering plants.
6. Children can expressively read a poem, a story related to the environment.	Children do not memorize and can not read poems, stories related to the environment in a good way.	Children can read poems, stories at a limited level.	Children can read poems, stories at a appropriate level.	Children recite and expressively read poems, stories related to the environment.
7. Children throw garbage in the right place and know how to classify garbage.	Children have not identified the types of trash, do not know how to dispose of trash in the right place and do not know how to classify garbage.	Children know how to dispose of trash in the right place when prompted by adults.	Children know how to throw garbage in the right place.	Children know how to dispose of garbage in the right place and know how to classify garbage.
8. Children have skills to listen and follow what the teacher says.	Children do not understand what the teacher said and have not fulfilled her requests	Children understand what the teacher said, but are not agile and voluntarily follow her request.	Children comply with teacher's request but still confused.	Children listen, understand what the teacher said and quickly comply with her request.
9. Children can put toys in the right place.	Children can not put toys in the right places.	Children keep the toys in the right place but need teacher's assistance.	Children keep toys in the right place but not neat.	Children keep the toys neatly in the right place.

On the contrary, the expression relates to recognizing and expressing emotions, feelings for people, things and phenomena around and expressing affection for the homeland and the country reached a higher level. Through practical observations, we see that the environment that children are most exposed to is the natural environment, therefore children have more knowledge about the surrounding natural environment and can respond quickly to situations occurring in the natural environment [5]. In addition, the lives of ethnic minorities in general attach special importance to feelings, especially feelings for the homeland and the country. Children memorize many poems and songs praising the beauty of the homeland and the country. They are very happy and proud to read these poems (Table 2).

Based on the data we can see, children aged 3 to 4 years old have all signs of good social skills, however, the development of skills is different [6]. Comparing the two manifestations, it shows that the expression of social behavior and codes of conduct is at a lower level than the expression of concern for environmental protection [7]. The expression of concern for environmental protection is at a higher level because children live in rural areas, the environment where they are mainly exposed to nature, trees, etc. so they have a love for nature from a young age and formed in children skills to care for and water the plants. In contrast, behavioral expressions and social codes of conduct are at a

lower level because children living in rural areas are sparse, having less contact with and communicating with strangers and people around them, that is, they do not have good manners when meeting other people [8].

4. Factors affecting on emotional and social skills of preschoolers

To study the situation of factors affecting the children's emotional-social skills, we have given specific factors and teachers will choose one of three levels including “not effected”, “sometimes affected” and “mostly affected”. Through the survey and data processing, we obtained the following results:

Table 3. Factors affecting emotions - social skills of 3-4 year old preschoolers

School Content	Lich Son Kindergarten					Yen Thinh Kindergarten				
	Opinion quantity			General average	Average	Opinion quantity			General average	Average
	Not affected	sometimes affected	Mostly affected			Not affected	Someti mes affected	Mostly affected		
1. Living standards and family conditions.	0	5	15	2.8	4	0	3	9	2.8	4
2. Parents' awareness	0	7	13	2.7	5	0	6	6	2.5	8
3. The social environment, socio-political-social conditions of the locality	0	11	9	2.5	6	0	9	3	2.3	7
4. Economic and physical conditions of the school	0	4	16	2.8	5	0	2	10	2.8	5
5. Educational activities of the school	0	2	18	2.9	2	0	0	12	3.0	1
6. The qualifications and awareness of the teacher	0	3	17	2.9	2	0	4	8	2.7	5
7. The child's cognitive, physical, mental and physiological capacity	0	4	14	2.5	6	0	1	11	2.9	3
8. The child's activeness and initiative	0	0	20	3.0	1	0	0	12	3.0	1

Based on the data, it can be seen that there are many factors that affect children's emotions - social skills like the factors that we have surveyed above. Of all factor assessed by all teachers, the most impact on the child's emotional - social skills is the child's activeness and initiative. Therefore, adults, especially teachers, need to pay attention to the development of emotional and social skills for preschool children and in particular, we need to focus on activities to develop child activeness [9].

However, for ethnic minority children in the Northern mountainous areas of Vietnam, their language characteristics and living conditions have a great influence [10]. We interviewed 10 teachers in depth at 2 kindergartens. 10/10 teachers interviewed all affirmed that each ethnic group has its own language and cultural identity. The members of the same ethnic group live working and learning experiences through their own language [11]. For children who are ethnic minorities, children mainly use their own language and communicate mainly with the ethnic language every day, therefore their communication with those around them in popular Vietnamese language is still difficult and this leadsto their poor learning [12]. In addition, children are shy when communicating with surrounding people, especially strangers. That is also one of the factors that make it difficult to educate children on emotional and social skills [13]. At the same time, children from ethnic minorities in mountainous areas in the North of Vietnam live in rural, remote, and poor areas. They have little exposure to urban environment (dynamic and creative environment), therefore the child's social skills are limited (communication skills, behavioral skills in handling situations with people around, etc.). However, the factor which the children most exposed to is the natural environment, so children have more knowledge about the surrounding natural environment and have the ability to respond quickly to situations occurring in the natural environment [14]. In addition, the lives of people as well as children who are ethnic minorities living in mountainous areas focus on affection and that is a favorable factor to help educate children [15].

Thus, natural and social factors have positive and negative effects on the emotional and social skills development of 3-4 year-old preschoolers belong to ethnic minorities in mountainous Northern of Vietnam [16]. Therefore, teachers need to promote their emotional strengths and they can live in harmony with nature to develop their feelings.

However, teachers also need to expand communication relationships, increase experiential practices to create conditions for children to practice and develop social skills [12].

5.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At two kindergartens, we have found out that children have had signs of emotional and social skills, but not at a high level. Most of the manifestations the children achieved were at the average level and some of the symptoms were at quite good level. Through research, we found that there are many favorable factors that affect children's education and learning skills such as a staff of enthusiastic teachers, long-term experience in teaching, and teachers of both kindergartens. We found out that teachers all have quite full awareness of the role of emotional and social skills for children and have paid special attention to the issue of developing emotional and social skills for children. Besides, the school's facilities are quite complete. Therefore, we should give some recommendations for teachers and parents as follows. For teachers, they need to identify educational contents and clearly define the purposes of each activity. Besides, teachers need to select and use suitable teaching forms and methods, integrate advanced education - learning skills into activities; enhance activities of experience so that children have more conditions to practice social skills training. Then, they have to exchange and coordinate with families in educating the children the advanced skills. Children should be paid attention to and coordinated with the school in educating emotional and social skills. We should train children basic skills so that they can apply them in life. In particular, teachers, schools, parents and society need to take care of, educate and create the best conditions for children to develop their own abilities; thereby they have chances to develop emotional - social skills.

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in the paper.

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