

## THE EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION ON THE CAUSES AND FREQUENCY OF CONFLICTS AMONG STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper was to explore the effects of implementing a program based on nonviolent communication and the influence of the causes and frequency of conflict behaviour of younger school age children. A quasi-experimental research was carried out, including 180 fourth-grade primary school students. The classes were divided into the control and experimental group by using the randomization method. The groups were matched for gender, age and frequency of conflicts, as demonstrated in the pre-test stage. The research model was quasi-experimental, combining the intra- and inter-group design. For the purposes of this quasi-experimental research, a special scenario composed of 15 workshops that directly dealt with the topics related to nonviolent communication was developed, as well as a survey questionnaire, designed to assess the general modalities of nonviolent communication. The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions with different response formats, and its internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was satisfactory ( $\alpha=0.76$ ). In the analysis of the data, the methods of descriptive statistics as well as the methods of nonparametric inferential statistics were used. In order to examine the inter-group differences, two Mann-Whitney U tests (nonparametric substitute for the independent samples t-test) and two Wilcoxon signed-rank tests (nonparametric substitute for the dependent samples t-test) were conducted, followed by four  $\chi^2$  tests.

The results of the post-test point to the positive effects of implementing the contents of nonviolent communication, with the respondents from the experimental group (average rank=99.12) achieving lower scores than the respondents from the control group (average rank=81.88), suggesting that the students from the experimental group had shown a reduced tendency towards conflict behaviour. The results related to the frequency of conflict causes, for all four quasi-experimental situations, emphasize, as the most frequent causes of conflict: insults and derogatory name-calling (in all four quasi-experimental situations – 22.44% to 44.44%), saying inappropriate things about one's family (experimental group – initial assessment and both assessments in the control group; 26.11% to 30.00%), as well as persuading other children not to socialize with the respondent (experimental group – final assessment; 24.44%). The post-test, which assessed the frequency, confirmed the positive effects of the NVC program on the students from the experimental group in relation to the students from the control group.

**Key words:** nonviolent communication, conflict; quasi-experimental design, conflict causes, conflict frequency.

## ЕФЕКТИ РЕАЛИЗАЦИЈЕ ПРОГРАМА НЕНАСИЛНЕ КОМУНИКАЦИЈЕ НА УЗРОКЕ И ФРЕКВЕНЦИЈУ КОНФЛИКАТА ИЗМЕЂУ УЧЕНИКА

### Апстракт

Циљ рада био је испитивање ефеката примене програма утемељеног на ненасилној комуникацији и утицаја узрока и фреквенције конфликтних понашања ученика млађег школског узраста. Примењено је квазиекспериментално истраживање у којем је учествовало 180 ученика IV разреда основне школе. Одељења су у контролну и експерименталну групу сврстана употребом метода насумичности. Групе су биле уједначене према полу, старости, те фреквенцији конфликта, што је показано у предтест фази. Нацрт истраживања је квазиекспериментални, при чему је комбинован унутаргрупни и међугрупни дизајн. За потребе овог квазиексперименталног истраживања конструисан је посебан сценарио сачињен од 15 радионица које директно обрађују теме из области ненасилне комуникације и анкетни упитник чија је намена да процени опште модалитете ненасилне комуникације. Упитник се састоји од 14 питања са различитим форматом одговора, а поузданост по типу интерне конзистенције (Кронбахов  $\alpha$ -коэффициент) задовољавајућа је ( $\alpha = 0,76$ ). За анализу података употребљене су методе дескриптивне статистике, као и непараметријске инференцијалне статистике. Како би се испитале међугрупне разлике, примењена су два Манн–Whitney U теста (непараметријска замена за т-тест за независне узорке) и два Wilcoxon signed-rank теста (непараметријска замена за т-тест за зависне узорке), а потом и четири  $\chi^2$ -теста.

Резултати посттеста указују на позитивне ефекте примене садржаја ненасилне комуникације, где испитаници експерименталне групе (просечан ранг = 99,12) постижу ниже резултате од испитаника из контролне групе (просечан ранг = 81,88), што наводи на закључак да је код ученика експерименталне групе испољена мања конфликтност. Резултати који се односе на фреквенцију узрока конфликта за све четири квазиексперименталне ситуације издвајају као најзаступљеније узроке конфликта: вређање и називање погрдним именима (у све четири квазиексперименталне ситуације – 22,44 % до 44,44 %), говорење непримерених ствари о породици (експериментална група – почетно мерење и оба мерења код контролне групе; од 26,11 % до 30,00 %), као и подстицање друге деце да се не друже са испитаником (експериментална група – завршно тестирање; 24,44 %). На посттесту којем је мерена фреквенција (учесталост) потврђени су позитивни ефекти програма ННК на ученике експерименталне групе у односу на ученике контролне групе.

**Кључне речи:** ненасилна комуникација, конфликт, квазиекспериментални дизајн, узроци конфликта, фреквенција конфликта.

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process that takes place between the source of information and the recipient, i.e. between the speaker and the listener (Ivanović, 2002). Kare (2006), states that, to communicate in a non-violent manner, means not to judge what others do or say, but to pay special attention to what we feel and to express our needs. Nonviolent communication (further

in the text – NVC), represents an easy path towards successful and peaceful communication which emphasizes pleasure, empathy and an absolute respect for the diversity of all participants in the communication.

The concept of NVC emerged from the tradition of humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers (1951), as one of the recognized cooperative practices that has a clear connection with Gordon (1975), with mediation and constructive conflict resolution in the presence of a moderator. In addition to Rogers, the development of the concept of empathic appreciation of feelings and needs (NVC model) was also influenced by Marshall B. Rosenberg (1982), who based NVC on the theoretical conceptions of Fritz Perls (1951) regarding the raising of awareness about feelings and needs and the model of conflict resolution by Rudolph Dreikurs (1931) and philosopher Mahatma Gandhi (Mohandas Gandhi) (Stanković-Đorđević, 2009).

The main focus, during the implementation of NVC, is placed on language, i.e. the manner in which words are used, on the one hand, and listening on the other (Rosenberg, 2006). Leu (2006) considers that the basis of NVC lies in recognizing the universal needs that are common to all beings. According to Rosenberg (2006), in its development, the process of NVC is transformed and goes through the following four stages:

- observations as concrete actions which we register or observe, which directly affect us;
- feelings, following the observation of the actions which affected us;
- needs (desires, values, etc.) and the facts about what it is we want, following the "triggered" feelings and
- request (plea) formulated as concrete actions that we want the other person to perform in order to fulfil our needs (desires).

The path of NVC is affirmed starting from the definition of problems and expression of emotions, through an analysis of real and factual needs, which must be separated from wishes and clearly expressed attitudes and expectations.

Contrary to NVC is communication which is based on moral accusations, denial of responsibility and demonstration of power, on evaluating and comparing behaviours and actions. Such communication results in labelling and judging, it blocks compassion, creates a rift between the participants and opens a possibility for new conflicts (Rosenberg, 2006).

The type of communication that will be primary and dominant in everyday life, i.e. within a school and in interactions between students as well as between students and teachers, largely depends on the attitude and role of the teacher, but also on the interest of students in learning about communication, tolerance and successful cooperative relationships. The emergence and the resolution of conflicts, both between peers and between teachers and students, depends, among other things, on the choice of the manner of communication. NVC may be implemented on all levels of communication and in various cultures, activities, groups, and situations,

such as those which are interpreted in families, schools, institutions, during business negotiations, diplomatic discussions, relationships characterized by emotions, therapy and counselling, conflicts, quarrels, and the like. In certain cases, communication may alienate one from life, because it originates from hierarchical societies, but also supports them (Rosenberg, 2006).

Conflict, in its entirety, is unconscious. The contradictory tendencies that are at play within it are not recognized, but are instead deeply suppressed (Hornay, 2005). As such, conflict may be defined as the result of a conflict of behaviour, motivation, needs, interests, opinions or contrary evaluations. Piaget (1926) believes that frequent conflicts between children are a necessary and very significant condition for cognitive development in its entirety (Piaget, 1926, according to: Botvin & Murray, 1975). The first systematic studies of conflicts were performed by Pavlov in the 1920s within his experimental neurosis research. A dynamic approach to the research of conflicts began in the 1930s in the United States with the works of Lewin (1931), and it can be said that his findings are still relevant today.

The model of successful communication was developed by Gordon (1975). A central place in this model belongs to the concept of communication based on YOU and I statements and active listening. I-statements can also be called responsibility statements, for two reasons: teachers stating I-statements take responsibility for their inner state (they are listening to themselves) and the responsibility to be open enough to share this with the students and, I-statements place the responsibility for their own behaviour towards students (Gordon, 2006).

I-statements are a manner of conversing, through which we can influence the change in the behaviour of the child without placing blame, attacking, inflicting harm. They allow children to modify their behaviour without harming their self-esteem (Holcer, 2009). An integral part of nonviolent communication is active listening, which manifests itself through the use of I-statements. Even the most carefully composed I-statement may cause students to feel hurt, surprised, embarrassed, ready to defend themselves and argue, and even cry (Gordon, 2006). When there is a lack of active listening, communication can be significantly altered and devastated. Namely, the persons participating in the communication process turn to accusations or withdraw and therefore completely cease with communication, while using YOU-statements. This is when conflict enters the scene.

When resolving conflicts (*conflict resolution*) between students, the majority of teachers apply the two, common winner-loser methods. One of them implies that students fully accept suggestions made by primary school teachers (teachers), and the other that they absolutely reject the proposals and suggestions made by teachers, which consequently results in the persistence of unacceptable behaviour in students (Gordon, 2006). The third, desirable result, but also one that occurs much less frequently, is the possibility of a

compromise, in other words an amicable termination of a conflict (*conflict settlement*). However, a compromise is not always achievable, nor is it always the most desirable manner of conflict resolution. According to Burton (Burton, 1990), in addition to the three mentioned models, students need to be made aware of the fourth model of constructive conflict resolution as well, in which both sides benefit (*win-win solution* – I win/you win). The goal of this model is to achieve an acceptable and a positively sustainable solution, without the presence of a competitive approach. Management of conflicts (*conflict management*) favours a de-escalation of the conflict itself, with an aim to establish positive relations and relationships between the conflicted parties, which pave the way to the possibility of beginning the process of conflict resolution.

Many studies have shown that the frequency, duration and intensity of peer conflicts decrease with age and experience (according to Petrović, 2010). Depending on the manner in which a conflict is manifested in, its nature and dynamics, i.e. its frequency of occurrence, Adams and Laursen (2001) emphasize and differentiate between reasons for triggering conflict situations themselves, the tone that accompanies them, as well as the strategies that are used to overcome them. The significance of conflicts in childhood and adolescence has been recognized and explored by practitioners Johnson and Johnson (1996), as evidenced by different programs aimed at constructive conflict resolution by using peer mediation (e.g. Farrell, Meyer & White, 2001; Ignjatović-Savić, Stojanović, Krstanović, Mihajlović, Koruga, Vranješević, 1996; Ilić, Jerotijević, Petrović, Popadić, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Kreider, 1990; Mrše, Petrović, Ilić, Plut, Jerotijević, Bogdanović, Krivačić, 2008; Sandy & Boardman, 2000; Uzelac, 1997, 2000; Van Gurp, 2002).

When it comes to determining the frequency, i.e. the rate of frequency of conflicts between peers in early adolescence, the results of individual studies (as listed by Raffaelli, 1997; according to Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006), confirm that the average frequency of conflicts is one occurrence weekly, while other authors (Laursen, 1995; Petrović, 2009), consider the usual occurrence to be up to two conflicts per day.

The daily occurrence of violence on the streets, in the family, between peer groups, at sports fields, as well as in school, imposes a constant need for educating students, teachers and parents in order to achieve the most appropriate way to prevent violent behaviour and overcome conflicts. Williamson points out that the “extraordinary language of NVC modifies the relationships between parents and children, teachers and students and all of us, and even the way we treat ourselves” (Williamson, according to Rosenberg, 2006). Accordingly, the theoretical starting point of our quasi-experimental research that emerged is the constructive approach to conflict resolution based on the contents of NVC. “NVC means respecting ourselves and others; taking care of ourselves and our own needs but in such a manner

that we are not harming others or ourselves. The main goal of the process of non-violent communication is to have people compassionately listening to one another, so that they can clearly perceive their own needs as well as the needs of others, and communicate their needs in such a manner that others want to help them” (Stanković-Đorđević, 2009). The classification and analysis of the causes of student conflict behaviour was based on the classification of peer violence from the *Special Protocol for the Protection of Children and Students against Violence, Abuse and Neglect in Educational Institutions* (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, 2009), where verbal, psychological (emotional), physical, social, electronic, and sexual violence are clearly defined.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Research Problem*

The main problem of this research was an examination of the effects of implementing a program of NVC in the context of the causes and frequency of conflict behaviour of younger school age students. The significance of this problem is reflected in the possibility of prevention of violent communication as well as in the development of NVC among students of a younger school age.

### *Research Variables*

The research model was quasi-experimental, combining the intra-group and inter-group design. Independent variables were: group membership, with its two levels: control group (1) and experimental group (2); and assessment, also with its two levels: initial (pre-test, 1) and final (post-test, 2). Dependant variables were: the frequency of conflict (ordinal level) and causes of conflict (nominal level) and they are viewed through the frequency of conflict situations and the perception of conflict causes. The research design made a distinction between four situations: control group – initial assessment, control group – final assessment, experimental group – initial assessment and experimental group – final assessment.

### *Instruments*

For the purposes of the quasi-experimental research a survey questionnaire was designed, intended to assess the general modalities of nonviolent communication – The Questionnaire on Nonviolent Communication (UNK). The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions with different response formats. Its internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) was satisfactory ( $\alpha=.76$ ). Of primary interest for this research were the questions related to *the causes of conflict behaviours* as well as the *frequency of violent behaviour*.

The answers of the respondents, about the causes of conflict, were scored as follows: 1 – He/she had deliberately made me trip and fall; 2 – He/she touched and took my possessions; 3 – He/she made other children gang up on me; 4 – He/she had convinced other children not to socialize with me; 5 – He/she had insulted me, called me derogatory names; 6 – He/she had said something rude about my family and 7 – Other. The answers of respondents about the frequency of conflicts were scored as follows: 1 – This never happens to me; 2 – Sometimes; 3 – Rarely; 4 – Once a day; 5 – Twice a day and 6 – Whenever I come to school.

During the analysis of the causes of student conflict behaviour, we have considered the classification of peer violence (according to the Protocol of the Ministry of Education, 2009) which was recognized as: verbal, psychological (emotional), physical, social, electronic, and sexual.

#### *Research Aim*

This research was aimed at examining the effects of implementing a program based on NVC and determining its effect on the causes and frequency of conflict behaviour of younger school age students. This was operationalized through the following specific goals:

1. Examine the difference between the groups of students (control and experimental) regarding the effects of implementing the contents of NVC on the frequency of conflicts, following the implementation of the NVC program.
2. Determine the difference between the groups of students (control and experimental) regarding the dominant causes of conflicts (the frequency of causes and their perception), following the implementation of the NC program.

#### *Hypotheses*

In accordance with the research problem and aims, two research hypotheses were defined:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between the implementation of the NVC program and the emergence of conflicts – in respondents who have not been subjected to the NVC program, conflicts are present more often.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between the implementation of the NVC program and the perception of conflict causes – when it comes to the respondents who have not been subjected to the NVC program, their perception of conflict causes will differ from the perception of conflict causes in the group of respondents who were subjected to the NVC program.

### *Research Procedure*

The research was conducted in three stages.

In the first stage of the research, students and teachers were introduced to general information regarding the research. The parents of the students have signed an informed consent for the participation of their children in the research. The students were not familiar with the purpose of the research. In this stage of the research, the students have completed the NVC questionnaire for the first time, during an additional lesson, in the presence of their teachers.

In the second stage of the research the program of NVC was realized with the students from the experimental group. The program consisted of 15 workshops which lasted for 45 minutes and were realized over the period of 15 weeks, during additional lessons. The respondents from the control group had attended classes according to their regular curriculum, with no additional lessons, and they were not exposed to any additional contents related to NVC.

In the third stage of the research, the questionnaire on nonviolent communication was given once again to all respondents. The respondents have completed the questionnaire during an additional lesson, after classes, in the presence of their teachers. After the questionnaire was completed, the students were briefed on the goal of the research.

### *Sample Description*

The research sample consisted of 180 students of the Primary School "Sonja Marinković", from Novi Sad. The average value of the students' age was 11 years; all of the students were attending the fourth primary school grade during the research. The sample included an equal number of female and male respondents (90; 50%) and a total of 6 classes. The research was conducted during the second semester of the 2010/2011 school year (2 classes in the control and 2 classes in the experimental group) and the first semester of the 2011/2012 school year (one class in the control group and one class in the experimental group). The classes were categorized into the control and experimental groups by using the randomization method whereby the groups of students were matched for gender – there were 45 male and 45 female respondents in each group; and age – all respondents were eleven years old.

### *Statistical Procedures*

Given the levels of measurement of dependant variables, in-data analysis the methods of descriptive statistics were used, as were methods of non-parametric, inferential statistics. Non-parametric methods were also applied because the distribution of empirical data varied significantly from the normal distribution. Descriptive statistical parameters and the testing of



the deviation of the empirical distribution from the normal distribution, are shown in Appendix 1.

In order to test the  $H_1$ , two Mann-Whitney U tests were applied (non-parametric substitute for the independent samples T test) as well as two Wilcoxon signed-rank tests (non-parametric substitute for the dependent samples T test). The Mann-Whitney U tests were applied in order to test for inter-group differences.

In order to test the  $H_2$ , four  $\chi^2$  tests were applied. The answers of the respondents from the experimental and control group regarding the causes of conflict, in the initial and final assessment, were compared to one another.

## RESULTS

### *Relationship between the Implementation of the NVC Program and the Appearance of Conflict ( $H_1$ ).*

*Table 1. Intra-group differences in conflict frequency*

Group	Assessment	N	Average rank	Rank sum	Z test	P level
Control	Initial	90	9.19	73.50	-0.29	0.773
	Final	90	7.81	62.50		
Experimental	Initial	90	39.50	592.50	-2.74	0.006
	Final	90	28.95	1360.50		

*Legend: Average rank – rank mean after the transformation of original values, lower values indicate a lesser incidence of conflicts.*

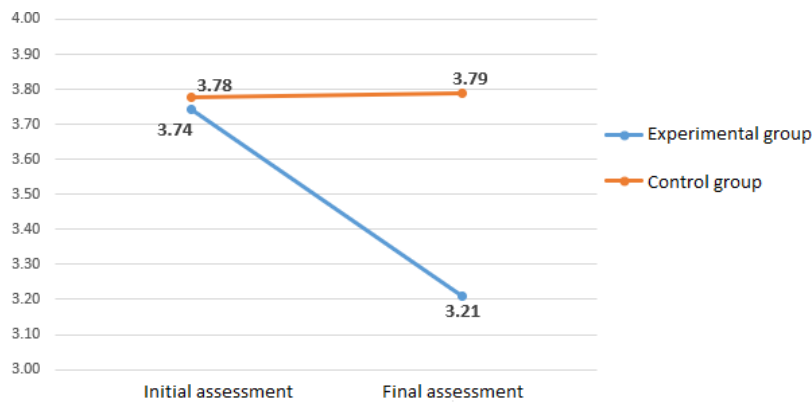
The results shown in Table No. 1 suggest that there are significant differences between the two assessment intervals, with regard to the experimental group ( $Z = -2.74$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with the respondents from this group having conflicts more often at the moment of the initial assessment (average rank = 39.50), than during the final assessment, after the implementation of the quasi-experimental program (average rank = 28.95). When it comes to the control group, no significant differences were observed ( $Z = -.29$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in the frequency of conflict emergence between the two assessments.

*Table 2. Inter-group differences in conflict frequency*

Assessment	Group	N	Average rank	Rank sum	U test	P level
Initial	Control	90	89.99	8099.00	4004.00	0.893
	Experimental	90	91.01	8191.00		
Final	Control	90	81.88	7369.50	3274.50	0.024
	Experimental	90	99.12	8920.50		

*Legend: Average rank – rank mean after the transformation of original values, lower values indicate a higher incidence of conflicts.*

Table 2 shows inter-group differences in conflict frequency in the initial and final assessment. At the moment of the initial assessment there are no significant differences in conflict frequency between the respondents from the control and experimental groups ( $U = 4004.00$ ,  $p > .05$ ). At the moment of the final assessment, after the presentation of contents about nonviolent communication, there were significant differences in conflict frequency between the respondents from the control and experimental group ( $U = 3274.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ), with the respondents from the experimental group (average rank = 99.12) achieving lower scores than the respondents from the control group (average rank = 81.88).



*Figure 1. The effect of the implementation of nonviolent communication content.*

The systematization of intra-group and inter-group differences is presented in Figure 1. When it comes to the intra-group factor, the control group had achieved uniform results in the initial ( $M = 3.78$ ;  $SD = 1.80$ ) and final assessment ( $M = 3.79$ ;  $SD = 1.74$ ), while the experimental group achieved somewhat lower results (i.e. reported a lesser number of conflicts) in the final assessment ( $M = 3.21$ ;  $SD = 1.55$ ) as compared to the initial assessment ( $M = 3.74$ ;  $SD = 1.78$ ). When it comes to the inter-group factor, at the moment of the initial assessment, the control and the experimental group had achieved uniform results ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ;  $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ) while, during the final assessment, the experimental group achieved somewhat lower results (i.e. reported a lesser number of conflicts –  $M = 3.21$ ;  $SD = 1.55$ ) as compared to the control group ( $M = 3.79$ ;  $SD = 1.74$ ). In conclusion it can be said that the respondents from the experimental group report on a fewer number of conflicts following the implementation of the NVC program than before the implementation of this program, and they also enter into conflicts more rarely than the respondents from the control group, both before and after the implementation of the NVC contents.

*Relationship between the implementation of the NVC program and the perception of conflict causes (H<sub>2</sub>).*

*Table 3. Frequency of the causes of conflict for all four quasi-experimental situations*

		Causes of student conflicts						
		What is the most common reason for you to enter into an altercation with your friend?						
		He/she had deliberately made me trip and fall	He/she touched and took my possessions	He/she made other children gang up on me	He/she had convinced other children not to socialize with me	He/she had insulted me, called me derogatory names	He/she had said something rude about my family	Other
I	E f	3	3	9	10	40	25	0
	%	3.33%	3.33%	10.00%	11.11%	44.44%	27.78%	0.00%
F	C f	9	4	12	22	22	12	9
	%	10.00%	4.44%	13.33%	24.44%	24.44%	13.33%	10.00%
I	E f	2	2	8	9	39	27	3
	%	2.22%	2.22%	8.89%	10.00%	43.33%	30.00%	3.33%
F	C f	10	10	9	9	28	20	4
	%	11.11%	11.11%	10.00%	10.00%	31.11%	22.22%	4.44%

*Legend: C – control group; E – experimental group; I – initial assessment; F – final assessment; f – response frequency; % – percentage of responses.*

Table No. 3 shows the frequency of the causes of conflict for all four quasi-experimental situations. The following stand out as the most common causes of conflict: insults and derogatory name calling (in all four quasi-experimental situations – 22.44% to 44.44%), saying improper things about one's family (experimental group – initial assessment, and both assessments in the control group; 26.11% to 30.00%), as well as convincing other children not to socialize with the respondent (experimental group – final assessment; 24.44%).

*Table 4. The relationship between group membership, initial and final assessment and the perception of conflict causes.*

Group	Assessment	N	$\chi^2$	df	p
Experimental and control	Initial	180	257.78	30, 1	.000
Experimental and control	Final	180	288.09	36, 1	.000
Experimental	Initial and final	90	259.19	30, 1	.000
Control	Initial and final	90	272.47	36, 1	.000

The results shown in Table No. 4 suggest that there is a significant correlation between:

- The frequencies of estimated causes of conflicts of students from the control and experimental group, both during the initial

assessment ( $\chi^2(30,1) = 257.78$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and during the final assessment ( $\chi^2(36,6) = 288.09$ ,  $p < .05$ );

- The frequencies of estimated causes of conflicts of students between the initial and final assessment, both for the respondents from the control group ( $\chi^2(30,1) = 259.78$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and for the respondents from the experimental group ( $\chi^2(30,1) = 272.47$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

In other words, it is not justifiable to conclude that there are differences in the dominant causes of conflict after the implementation of the contents of nonviolent communication, between the control and experimental group. In order to gain a more detailed insight into the obtained results, the frequencies of the estimated causes of conflicts, separately for groups (experimental and control) and assessments (initial and final), are shown in Figures 2 to 5.

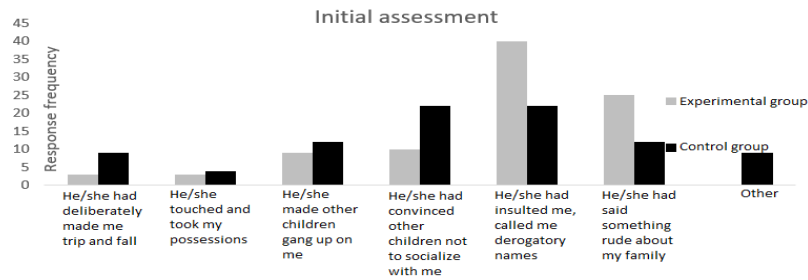


Figure 2. Frequency of the perception of conflict causes in the initial assessment in the control and experimental group.

In the initial assessment (Figure 2), the respondents from the control group more often report insults and saying inappropriate things about one's family as the causes of conflicts, while the respondents from the experimental group more often report convincing other children not to socialize with the respondent as a frequent cause of conflicts.

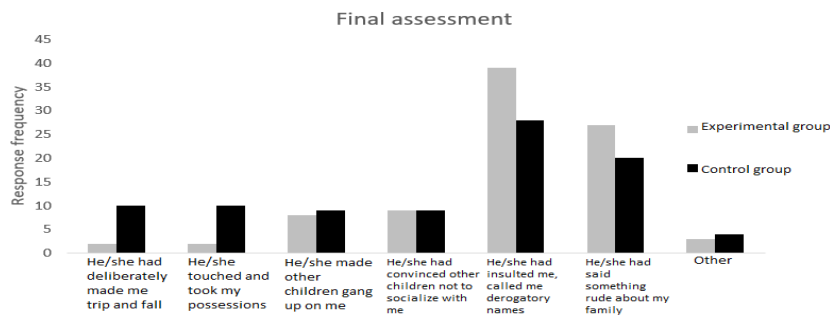
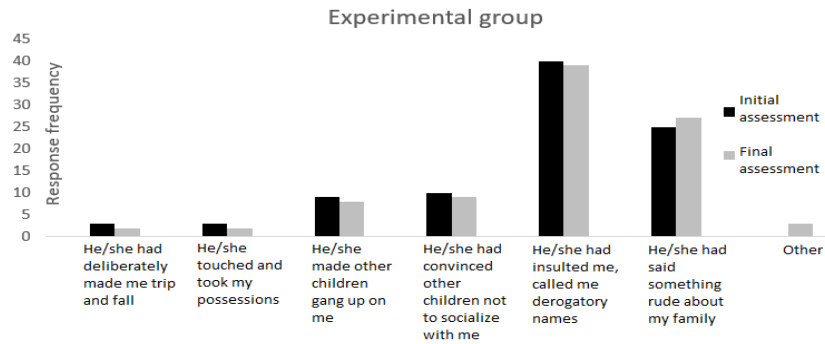


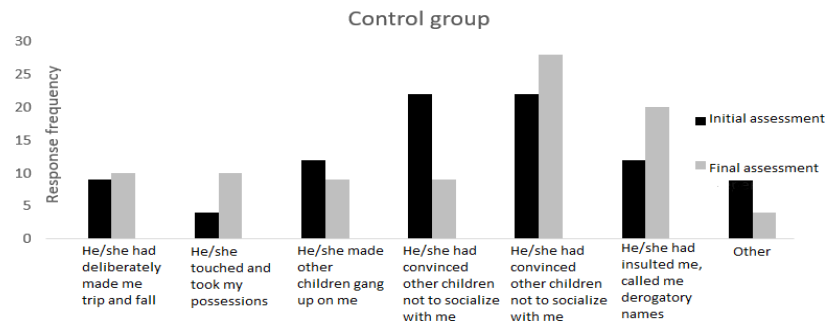
Figure 3. Frequency of the perception of conflict causes in the final assessment in the control and experimental group.

In the final assessment (Figure 3) different causes of conflicts are equally present in the experimental and control group.



*Figure 4. Frequency of the perception of conflict causes in the initial and final assessment in the experimental group.*

The respondents' answers about the causes of conflicts in the initial and final assessment are almost identical in the experimental group (Figure 4).



*Figure 5. Frequency of the perception of conflict causes in the initial and final assessment in the control group.*

When it comes to the control group (Figure 5), respondents more often report insults and saying inappropriate things about one's family as causes of conflicts in the final assessment, while in the initial assessment they more often report convincing other children not to socialize with the respondent as a common cause of conflict.

### CONCLUSION

The results of the initial research, related to the frequency of expressed conflict behaviours in the control and experimental group, indicate that there are no significant differences regarding the frequency of conflicts, between

the respondents ( $U = 4004.00$ ,  $p > .05$ ). The students had completed a questionnaire on nonviolent communication in the presence of teachers. Since we did not control whether the teachers had any influence on the responses provided by the children, it is not known whether the children had responded completely impartially. Therefore, a guideline for future research is to control the influence of teachers on the responses of children.

After the realization of the scenario which consisted of fifteen workshops that covered various aspects of NVC (realization of the experimental program, which was implemented solely in the experimental group), the assessment of all students from the control and experimental group was conducted once more, whereby significant differences were observed between these groups ( $U = 3274.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The respondents from the experimental group (average rank = 99.12) had achieved lower scores than the respondents from the control group (average rank = 81.88), suggesting that a lesser tendency towards conflict was manifested among the students from the experimental group. Based on the results presented above, it can be concluded that there were positive effects of the implementation of the NVC program as well as that there had been a reduction in the number of conflicts among the students from the experimental group, as compared to the students from the control group.

The results related to the frequency of conflict causes for all four quasi-experimental situations indicate the following as the most prevalent causes of conflicts: insults and derogatory name calling (in all four quasi-experimental situations – 22.44% to 44.44%), saying improper things about one's family (experimental group – initial assessment, and both assessments in the control group; 26.11% to 30.00%), as well as convincing other children not to socialize with the respondent (experimental group – final assessment; 24.44%). These results suggest that the respondents from the experimental group report on a fewer number of conflicts following the implementation of the NVC program than before the implementation of this program, and they also enter conflicts more rarely than the respondents from the control group, both before and after the implementation of the NVC contents. When it comes to the perception of conflict causes, the implementation of the NVC program did not influence the perception of the causes of conflicts in the experimental group. The results of this research are in line with the conclusions of previous studies, but they also point to the potential limitations of the NVC program, as well as to the need for its further development.

The frequency and perception of conflict causes were assessed on the basis of two questions from the questionnaire on non-violent communication. Even though the results of the conducted research point to the significant effects of NVC when it comes to the context of frequency, but not when it comes to the context of different conflict perception, the guideline for future research may be a further development of the questionnaire on nonviolent communication. If the frequency and perception of conflict causes

are defined as dimensions of nonviolent communication, which are operationalized through a larger number of items, further research may provide a more detailed insight into the effects of the NVC program. An additional advantage of the development of the instrument might also be reflected in the possibility of using more advanced statistical techniques and obtaining more precise information in the context of the effects of the implementation of the NVC program.

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## **ЕФЕКТИ РЕАЛИЗАЦИЈЕ ПРОГРАМА НЕНАСИЛНЕ КОМУНИКАЦИЈЕ НА УЗРОКЕ И ФРЕКВЕНЦИЈУ КОНФЛИКАТА ИЗМЕЂУ УЧЕНИКА**

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### **Резиме**

Појава насилништва у свакодневном животу, која резултира конфликтним ситуацијама, последица је изостанка квалитетне, мирољубиве и конструктивне комуникације између учесницима, било да је реч о одраслим особама, ученицима у основној или средњој школи, деци у предшколским установама. Комуникација обележена као двосмеран процес представља тему о којој се говори у свим сферама живота са непрестаном тежњом да се њен квалитет унапреди и побољша,

али на задовољство свих учесника у комуникацијском процесу. Један од сигурних путева квалитативног унапређења комуникације је примена ненасилне комуникације. Ненасилна комуникација представља једноставан пут успешне и мирољубиве комуникације у којој до изражаја долазе задовољство, емпатично и апсолутно уважавање различитости свих учесника. Она се може имплементирати и интегрисати у све нивое комуникације и у најразличитијим културама, активностима, групама и ситуацијама, као што су оне које се интерпретирају у породици, школи, институцијама, пословном преговарању, дипломатској конверзацији, односима обојеним емоцијама, терапији и саветодавном раду, конфликтима, свађама. Потпуно супротан двосмерном комуникацијском процесу (процесу ненасилне комуникације) свакако је једносмеран комуникацијски пут означен као конфликт (конфликтна ситуација). Било да је реч о унутрашњем, спољашњем (отвореном), латентном (скривеном), несвесном, лажном, функционалном, деструктивном, мешовитом или конфликту произашлом из потребе, вредности или улога, конфликти нису непожељни у животу и одрастању младе личности. Напротив, конфликти су пожељни, јер се кроз конфликте учи, спознају границе и могућности, одређују ставови, што доприноси афирмацији личности. Резултати представљеног истраживања у овом раду говоре у прилог имплементација садржаја заснованих на ненасилној комуникације, асертивности и емпатији у редовне образовне системе, при чему садржаји ненасилне комуникације, директно и позитивно утичу на смањење фреквенције и конфликтности ученика млађег школског ураста. Користећи квазиекспериментални нацрт истраживања, осмишљен је експериментални програм (од 15 сценарија/радионица за рад са експерименталном групом) и анкетни упитник чија је намена да процени опште модалите ненасилне комуникације – Упитник о ненасилној комуникацији. Упитник се састоји од 14 питања са различитим форматом одговора. Узорак испитаника представља 180 ученика основне школе. Модална вредност старости ученика је износила 11 година; сви ученици су током спровођења истраживања похађали IV разред основне школе.

Након остваривања сценарија експерименталног програма (петнаест радионица) које су обухватиле различите аспекте ненасилне комуникације (реализације експерименталног програма, који је реализован искључиво у експерименталној групи), може се закључити да је дошло до позитивних ефеката примене програма ненасилне комуникације и смањења броја конфликтних ситуација код ученика експерименталне групе у односу на ученике контролне групе.

Резултати који се односе на фреквенцију (учесталост) узрока конфликта сугеришу на податке да испитаници из експерименталне групе извештавају о мањем броју конфликта након што су прошли програм о ненасилној комуникацији него пре примене садржаја о ненасилној комуникацији, а такође и ређе долазе у конфликтне ситуације од испитаника из контролне групе и пре и након примене садржаја о ненасилној комуникацији. Када је реч о перцепцији узрока конфликта, примена ненасилне комуникације није утицала на промену перцепције о узроцима конфликта код експерименталне групе. Резултати овог истраживања су у складу са закључцима претходних истраживања, али такође указују и на потенцијална ограничења програма ненасилне комуникације, као и на потребу за његовим даљим развојем.