



**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

THE USE OF DIVERSITY DOLLS IN EARLY EDUCATION

An anti-bias approach to promote equity against discrimination to children
With special educational needs

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Abstract

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Aim: The objectives of the study is first to identify how children respond on an Emotional level to the diversity doll with special educational needs and secondly, to examine whether the diversity doll creates empathy as an important anti-bias approach.

Theory: The theoretical framework used in this study is Bandura's social learning theory (1977). The social learning theory is based on learning through observation and explains the modification(s) of the behavior.

Method: A narrative design is applied in the study for the data collection based on observation and unstructured interviews with preschool children at an International preschool in Gothenburg region.

Results: Through observation and discussion with the children regarding the diversity doll and its impact on them, the range of the emotions the doll creates in the children is identified. Moreover, the children showed their problem solving capability in all the situations with the diversity doll. Empathy, as one of the main aims of the survey, is emerged from collected data.

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List of Abbreviations

ECE	Early Childhood Education
DPD(A)	Diversity- Persona Doll (Approach)
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLT	Social Learning Theory
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Lpfo 98	Curriculum for Preschool as revised 1998

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Chapter One

Introduction

The first chapter of the introduction consists of a reference to the general background of the research problem, clarifies the importance of an anti-bias approach to the problem and analyzes the importance of the diversity doll in the survey. Moreover, the description and examples of the application of the doll are given. The chapter will end with a discussion of the findings of the literature review and recommendations further research.

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, schools especially in Europe have witnessed increasingly heterogeneous classrooms. Teachers are nowadays faced with an extremely diverse range of pupils and are required to respond effectively to meet their needs. Moreover, children become attentive to variations in gender, coloring, language, and ability at a very young age. Swift and Maher et al (2008) claim, that children are usually subjected to high levels of violence and trauma with alarmingly high incidences of assault, regulatory offense, and abuse. Moreover, according to a survey by the Education and Science Research Council, children with special educational needs are more likely to be bullied, rather than children with no special educational needs (Thomson, Whitney & Smith 1994). In support of this statement, previous surveys on the field had revealed that bullying is more relevant to children with special educational needs or any kind of physical impairment. In the field of Early Education, according to the Swedish Curriculum for Preschools, one fundamental value is that “ No child at the preschool should be subjected to discriminations on the ground of gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability or any person with whom the child is associated or to any other abusive treatment” (Lpfo 18, p.7). Moreover, the promotion of empathy and understanding of others is raised as an important aim for preschools ‘Education should give children the opportunity to develop their ability to express empathy and consideration for others by encouraging and strengthening the compassion for and insight into the situation of other people’. Thus, children at preschool should be educated in a way that promotes the equality and human rights of all people and building capacities empathy and compassion for others. Teachers in early education need to implicit those interests to children in every day basis with anti-bias approaches.

Furthermore, studies have shown that the majority of the bullying-discrimination preventing programs take part in schools after or when some incidents were reported, which implies that the prevention programs are not sufficient enough. However, there is no previous research in the literature about anti-bias methods that function as a preventive measure for discrimination especially at preschools. Thus, the researchers in education need to examine an effective anti-bias method that can be used from the teachers to children to promote equity and minimize discrimination among children at early stages. For the above reasons, a new approach is therefore needed for the prevention those problematic situations before they appear or attenuate them.

This thesis considers as the main purpose of the study the introduction of an anti-bias approach with the use of Diversity Doll at schools for the children who are more likely to accept discrimination and bullying before actually, an incident occurs. The researcher also intends to raise the awareness of the negative impact of discrimination, bullying, and stigma and sensitize the children to their peers who are diagnosed with a kind of Special Educational Need. Therefore, it is of great importance to investigate how an anti-bias approach can be more effective in a very early stage, for example on preschools. In addition, surveys on early education shown that, the first five years of a child's life provide the foundation of his or her physical, cognitive and affective growth. During this crucial time, children begin to form their first emotional attachments, learn to interact with others, and develop a sense of self (Chang, 1993; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Godez-Mena, 1992 & 1993; Hail & Rhornberg, 1995; Swadener, 1988).

The Diversity-Persona doll (DPDA) is associate degree anti-bias, an active learning approach for adults and kids. It builds on universal storytelling traditions to push inclusion and fellow feeling, address problems with bias and unfairness, and develop emotional intelligence and shallowness in an exceedingly non-threatening manner. The research aims to find a solution for this challenging problem and intends to explore the efficiency of diversity dolls on children's perceptions of special educational needs. Thus, this study examines the emotions and reactions of children who been presented a diversity doll with a kind of Special Educational Need. Furthermore, the study seeks to gain a better understanding of anti-bias methods that can be used in the field of Education to provoke problematic situations from the level of early education.

The aims in this study are twofold:

First, to find how preschool children without special educational needs respond on an emotional level to a diversity doll with a kind of special educational need and second, to indicate that the diversity doll is an effective anti-bias tool for the creation of empathy to children 3-6 years old.

1.2 Definition of Terms/ Explanation

Anti-bias education (ABE): Regarding anti-bias education a most applicable description could be that is an approach which includes addressing issues for personal and social identity, social-emotional relationships between people with different from oneself, prejudice, discrimination, critical thinking and taking action for fairness with children (Corson,1998, p.14-16).

Inclusion: ‘The term of inclusion over time replaced integration and social justice. It implies the complete acceptance of a student – regardless of any difference, impairment or disability – in a regular class with adjustments being made to ensure that every student is fully involved in all class activities’ (Adrian Ashman, 2019, p.7).

Diversity/Persona Doll: The term of persona or diversity doll is multiple. In this dissertation some characteristics of the doll that can conclude to a definition are given: Persona dolls are one approach to supporting children’s social emotional development (Pierce, Johnson, Lynn 2010, p.106-108). Also, as Brown (2008) states, persona dolls are commonly used as an educational tool for teaching children about social, cultural and or physical diversity (Papouli, 2018, p.6).

Many professionals like social workers, play therapists and psychologists include dolls and other human figures in their work with children either to describe difficult situations for them, either to understand other people's situation (Papouli, 2018, p. 6)

Moreover, Persona/Diversity Dolls are life-like, culturally acceptable woman and boy dolls fabricated from material (most of the times) given ‘personas’ or identities and remodeled into distinctive personalities with cultural and people backgrounds, family things, talents and disabilities, fears and interests.

Diversity: The broadest sense of this term. It refers to all peoples racial, identity, ethnicity, family, culture, gender, class, sexual orientation and ability. Diversity exists in the differences among people and groups. It is not a term that refers to some people and not to others (Derman, Sparks, Keenan, Nimmo 2015 p.3).

Bullying: Bullying is a subset of aggressive behavior, which in turn is generally defined as “behavior intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual” or in similar terms (Berkowitz 1993, Olweus 1973b, Tedeschi & Felson 1994), (Olweus, 2013 p. 751-780).

Discrimination: Discrimination is hard to define as it is a complex phenomenon based from the social group, the based biases that it can occur, the way it is expressed. On this research I borrowed as more appropriate a general definition of discrimination as a behavior, ranging from subtle snubs to extreme physical violence. It stems from attitudes, ranging from implicit and unconscious cognitive associations to explicitly hold and publicly stated beliefs. It can target different children in different social groups for different reasons at the cultural level, the structural/institutional level, or the individual level (Brown, Discrimination and Adolescence 2017 p.22).

Empathy: The concept of empathy has many different aspects. Empathy’s linguistic roots are in ancient Greek whereas in this thesis I choose Dilthey’s explanation of the motion of Verstehen into philosophy and the human sciences to describe the putting one-self in the shoes of others to see and experience things from their perspective (White & Constantino, 2013 p.16).

1.3 Significance

The study intends to contribute to the field of Early Childhood Education by presenting an anti-bias method for equality and no discriminations against children with special educational or physical disabilities. Additionally, there is a gap in the literature about studies that take place before those phenomena unfold. For that reason, the most important part of this research is that it focuses on

exploring a method that aims to prevent discrimination **before** it takes place in a school environment. In other words, the main focus is to familiarize children of a mainstream school to children with SEN and promote equality standards. For that reason, the study takes place in an international preschool in Goteborg with children from different socio-cultural backgrounds and identity whereas, any children with special or physical needs attend the preschool. Furthermore, in a world of discriminations, trauma and bullying we live, it is of great importance not only aiming to minimize those phenomena by promoting the equality and respect to the other person but also finding new ways to adapt in the new datum and find new ways to prevent them. The school community is the main factor that influences not only children's assessment but also their emotions, cultivates the traits of personality and indicates norms and values for a person's life. Besides, the school consists of a miniature of our society and reality.

This study also proposes an important anti-bias method that could be useful for future educators, teachers and researches in the field of Education promoting the more systematic use of this approach of diversity doll. Hence, the ideas presenting in this study could be an invitation for further discussion and research in the field. The positive efficiency of the diversity doll is apparent in this study and should be taken into consideration from theory to practice. It constitutes an innovative method contributing to the field of Early Childhood Education and at the same time is pleasant for all children since it combines play and learning.

The section of the theoretical framework which consists of social learning theory and highlights elements of the sociocultural theory intends to provide a broader explanation about learning and behaviors but also contributes to the answers of the research questions.

1.4 Conclusion

The dissertation is divided into two main parts: The Theory and the Research. Chapter One introduces the background information about the topic investigated. Chapter Two discusses the theories related to the diversity doll approach as an anti-bias measure. Chapter three reviews the different studies in the field of diversity dolls and their efficiency and gives form to the research questions to be examined and consists of the body of previous literature research on the specific topic. Chapter Four presents the data collected during the presentation and observation of the

diversity doll to the children. Also, it refers to the possible limitations of the study and the ethical considerations of the researcher. The last Chapter, Five conducts a discussion about the findings of the research and examines possible suggestions for future research. At this point, I would like also to refer that throughout this study the term Early Childhood Education refers generally to all aspects related to the care and education of preschool children from birth through six years of age.

Chapter Two

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework that underlies the research of this paper. The dissertation is framed by Bandura's social learning theory as the main theory that surrounds the research. Through the explanation of the social learning theory one can understand how people can learn not only on a cognitive level but also how the behavior is modified. Moreover, this chapter discusses the meaning of the word 'learning' in the social learning theory specifically, and provides some applications of the theory. At the end of the chapter, a general background based on the emotional development of children is presented and is discussed why the social learning theory is important for the specific research paper.

2.1 Bandura's social learning theory

The social learning theory of Bandura (1986), in general, emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. Bandura in his social learning theory gives a major importance to the learning through observation and behavior modification. In his book, *Social learning theory* (1977, p.18) Bandura claims that all learning phenomena occur on a vicarious basis by observing other peoples' behavior and its consequences for them. Moreover, articulated by Albert Bandura (2002) in his Chapter on the influence of mass media, children can observe others and learn from others' experiences via symbolic modeling. Given an example for the mass media discrimination, if children see members of their in-group being discriminated against or receiving negative outcomes (even if it virtually rather in person), they can have an immediate affective reaction and develop negative outcome expectations. More particular, these negative emotional and cognitive reactions can lead to lasting attitudes and emotional and behavioral reactions towards people associated with that experience (Brown, 2017).

As derives from Bandura's' social learning theory (1963) children can learn social expectations and behavior largely from observing that others do. More particular, Bandura and colleagues (1963) in their original investigations found out that children were more likely to be aggressive for instance, when they had observed others behaving in this way. Taking this into consideration, the diversity

doll approach is an important tool to show children that we should be positive to all children with special educational needs. Through the use of the diversity doll, the instructor is a role model who promotes to the children the message that we all have equal rights. To support this statement, Bandura involves in his studies approaches such as showing children films of an adult or playing quietly with other toys or playing aggressively with a 'Bobo' doll (a blow-up toy that can be knocked down and then rebounds). The main findings of those studies were that children who had observed the adult acting aggressively, they played more aggressively and also, they carried out the same actions that they had seen the adult use. In reverse, the above finding is directly connected to the case that children will have a positive attitude if a doll will be presented to them in a friendly and positive way by the instructor. The study aims to present the diversity doll to children in a positive way and create to them emotions of friendship, caring and empathy. Taking into consideration that the children had a negative attitude with the aggressive doll means that they will have a positive attitude with the diversity doll since it is presented positively. Another important finding of Bandura's (1963) studies is the factor that children imitated a behavior is depended on whether they see it as relevant or not. In other words, this can mean whether the model was of the same age, same gender or age and what the children perceived would be the likely outcomes for them (Long, Wood, Littleton, Passenger and Sheehy 2011, p.171). Additionally, the diversity doll used in this research paper has the same age and other common characteristics with the children such as (same preschool, same country, city, favorite toys, games, and hobbies) for the children to be able to connect with her, feel more familiar and comfortable and see it as a relevant, one another 'child' as they are.

Bandura's (1986) original view about children's social learning is that children can learn through exposure, acquisition and acceptance to become less sensitive to violence but also 'how to do it'. The diversity doll is exposed to the children, presents her identity, what she likes and what she does not and her advantages and weaknesses. In his book, of *Social learning theory* (1971) Bandura refers to the observational learning and the way of learning through modeling. He clarifies that most of the behaviors that people display is learned either deliberately either inadvertently through the influence for example (Bandura, 1971, p.2). First, Miller and Dollard (1941) at their publication *Social learning and Imitation*, referred to the modeling process of learning. They praised that for imitative learning to occur, observers must be motivated to act, be provided with an example of the desired behavior, they must perform responses that match the example and their imitative behavior must be positively reinforced (Bandura 1971, p.6). Taking that finding into consideration, during the presentation of the diversity doll the researcher/observer is always positive and friendly to her, taking care of her and shows to the children the desired behavior.

Concluding with Bandura's book of *Principles of behavior modification* (ch.3 p.118, 1971) he refers that "The research conducted within the frame of social learning theory demonstrates that virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through observation of others people behavior". Subsequently, the presentation of the diversity doll agrees with the social learning theory of Bandura. The doll is positively presented to the children, has common characteristics which make them feel a familiarity with her and the presenter/observer has a positive attitude and emotions of care and empathy to promote the desired behavior.

2.2 Social learning analysis of the observational learning

It is considered important at this stage to state the processes of the observational learning

In order for a person to learn through modeling and observation, four main interrelated sub-processes are significant:

- Attentional processes – meaning that a person cannot learn much by observation if he does not attend to, or recognizes the essential features of the model's behavior.
- Retention processes – analyzes that a person cannot be much influenced by observation of a model's behavior if there is no previous memory of it. Bandura (1977) refers to in order for observers to profit from the behavior of models when they are not anymore present to provide them with direction, those memories will be represented in memory via symbolic form.
- Motoring reproduction processes- where symbolic representations guide over actions.
- Reinforcement and motivational processes- the fourth component of modeling relies on the fact that when positive incentives are provided, observational learning which previously being unexpressed is translated into action (Bandura, 1965).

A major function of modeling stimuli is to transmit information to observers on how to organize component responses into new patterns of behavior. Those responses can be conveyed by different circumstances: physical demonstration, pictorial representation or verbal description (Bandura, 1971, p. 10).

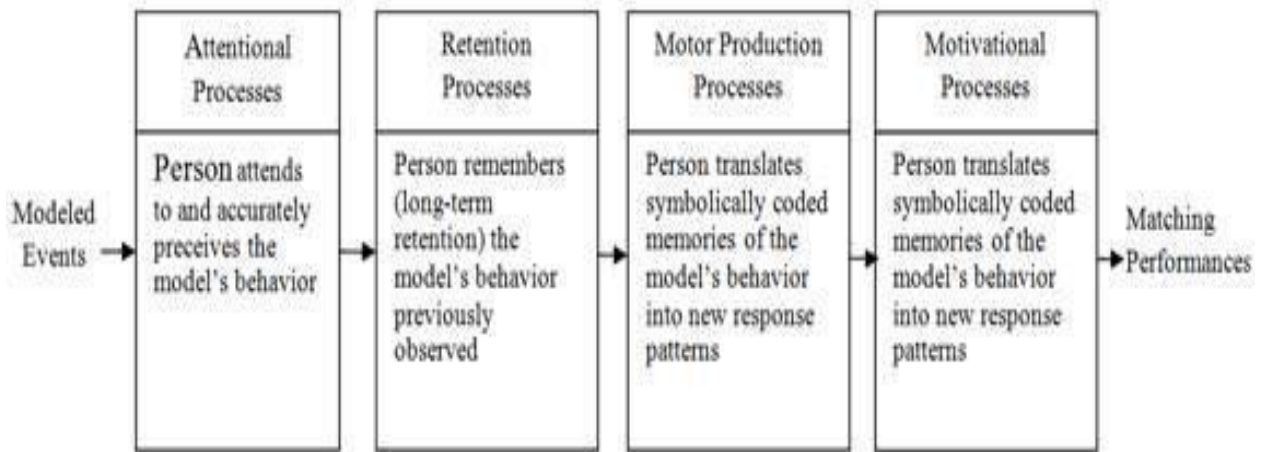


Figure 1: Processes of Observational learning (Bandura, 1986, p.52)

2.3 Learning in the social *learning* theory

But what does *learning* mean in the social learning theory?

The word learning can be defined in many different ways. Behaviorists define learning as a permanent change in an individual's behavior whereas, other psychologists perceive learning as the changes in the amount or type of knowledge we have and how we see our world (Long, Wood, Littleton, Passenger and Sheehy, 2011 p.14). Bloom (1956), categorized the learning objectives of learning in three major domains: the cognitive (memory, perception, use of language), the affective (emotions) and the psychomotor (movement association with mental process). At the social learning theory the term of learning is not be taken to mean that the theory is only about how behavior is acquired for the first time, rather it refers to a general process and set of variables in acquiring, maintaining, and changing behavior (Bonta 2003; Horney 2006). According to Akers (1998, p.50) the basic assumption in social learning theory is that the same learning process in a context of social structure, interaction, and situation, produces both conforming and deviant behavior. The difference lies in the direction of the balance of influences on behavior. From my view, learning in social learning theory is a general process which consists of different variables in order to reach the final stage of behavior modification with a focus on the stages and requirements needed to achieve a behavior modification. For that reason, it should be consider a long-term process to achieve. Consequently, the diversity doll constitutes an important introductory tool for the desired behavior modification.

2.4 Applications of social learning theory in prevention of and treatment of crime

It is discussed above that the social learning theory can transform the behavior of the observers. For this reason, it is important to analyze this sector deeply. In case that the criminal and delinquent behavior is acquired and sustained through the cognitive and behavioral processes in social learning in naturally occurring environments, then it should be possible to modify that behavior to the extent that one can manipulate those same processes or the environmental contingencies. This is the underlying assumption of prevention and treatment programs that have relied on the application of social learning principles. The different variables of the social learning theory are used to many types of group therapies and self-help programs; positive peer counseling programs; gang interventions; family and school programs; teenage drug, alcohol, and delinquency prevention/education programs and other private and public programs. That behavior and modifying programs are used in groups or individually from privates or public administrators (See Morris & Braukmann 1987; Ellis & Sowers 2001; Pearson et al. 2002; Andrews and Bonta, 2003; Hersen & Rosqvist, 2005). Oregon social learning center programs (OSLCP) and the Seattle Social Development Research Program are some of the organizations that put in practice the social learning theory to monitor the behavior of adults and children.

2.5 Children's emotional development

At this point the child's emotional development and perception of the world phenomena, cognitive knowledge and emotions are presented to validate whether children of a young age can learn through observational modeling. Psychology of behaviorism, as promoted by Watson and B.F. Skinner surmised that babies are born impartial but with an inborn capacity to learn from experience and require social and emotional experiences to shape their development, an essential ingredient without which they cannot develop socially, emotionally or intellectually (Demetriou, 2018). In contrast, some philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau took a nativist stance believing in an innate

capacity of children that would ensure their development regardless of social and emotional intervention. Moreover, Demetriou, (2018), continues in referring to the emotional and cognitive development of children, studies have shown that during the second year of life and with the dawning of representational thought and the use of symbols, children can deduce the perspectives and feelings of others. As a result, self-recognition and self-other differentiation develop, during which time the child's emotional language describes internal states. The second year of life on children is characterized by marked developmental changes, including the beginning of mutual interactions between peers (Demetriou, 2018).

Another study proves that 18- to 25-month-old toddlers exhibited perspective taking with another's distress, even in the absence of obvious distress signals (Vaish, Carpenter, & Tomasello, 2009). From a theoretical standpoint, empathy could be viewed as a form of imitative behavior or identification. On observing 2 to 5-year-olds' responses to another's distress, Bridges (1931) claimed that social development manifests itself from the imitation of another child's actions and words as, compared to the more sophisticated interventions of the older children, the younger ones were more likely to stare or perhaps cry in 'sympathetic imitation' (Demetriou, 2018).

Recognizing the above finding is clear that children even from the very early stage of their life can adopt empathy and be influenced by their peer behavior. Taking into consideration children's emotional development from the early years, signifies the importance of the diversity doll approach at the Early Childhood Education. Moving on, in the second and third years of life, the role of imitation for early socialization has shown that whereas older children are more competent at imitation of conventional social behaviors such as mannerisms and expressive behaviors, younger children display imitation of affective and non-instrumental behaviors (Kuczynski et al., 2015). The increasing cognitive development, children's comprehension of the feelings and thoughts of others ameliorates, and by 2 to 3 years of age, the first signs that children comprehend others' distress emerge. Indeed, by 3 years of age, children can understand the links between situations and the emotional reactions they provoke. In that case, children can understand which emotions their behavior will provoke to others and through the diversity doll approach they will recognize the negative or positive outcomes of their behavior to children with Special Educational Needs. Moreover, researchers have found that children at this age can understand the concept of experiencing more than one emotion simultaneously (Harter & Buddin, 1987). During their preschool years, children of 2 to 3 years of age have been found to become increasingly adept at

identifying emotional expressions and situations, whilst also becoming able to verbalize coherently and fluently about the causes of their own and others' emotions. Also, by this age, children use language to communicate not only about current emotions, but also about past and future emotions. In fact, during their third year, children become increasingly likely to talk about inner states and to ask questions about the cause and consequences of emotions, beliefs and desires. Such inner states appear increasingly in their narratives (Dunn, 1988) and their excuses and justifications in conflict with others so that they interweave their understanding of other people in their interactions in ways that markedly affect the quality of their relationships (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Morris, 2014). Others have shown that preschoolers can identify positive and negative emotions, displaying both non-egocentric and inferential abilities to understand others' feelings (Denham, 1986; Widen & Russell, 2010; Dimitriou, 2018). Gaining a deeper understanding of children's emotional development can say that the age that the diversity doll presenting to the children is appropriate since they are in place to understand emotions, make correlations and see the outcomes of different behavior patterns. Besides, early years is the time that children start to develop the emotion of empathy and as a consequence, the right time for the diversity doll help them create it even further.

The person most responsible for the widespread use of modeling techniques is Bandura (1977). Bandura as is referred to in this chapter said that most human behavior is learned through observing models and that complex behavior is best learned in this way. He added a cognitive component the behaviorist models of learning and, in so doing, changed the emphasis regarding which variables are important in the learning and performance of behavior (Layton, 1972 p.2). Many developmental psychologists have been interested in the development of empathy. Hoffman (1975, 1978, 1984, 1987) is one of the rare few to work out a model of empathic development. In devising such a model, Hoffman's goals were to determine the main stages of empathic development and to identify the main factors that contribute to the transformation of primitive empathic responses into more advanced forms of empathy (Radenovic, 2011 p.486). According to Vygotsky, social interaction precedes development and cognition and those factors contribute to the learning process. On the other hand, Bandura's social learning theory proves that children and adults can learn through modeling and observation. Through Bandura's experiments one can be less or more aggressive. On the same note, other emotions as empathy can be created. The psychology and studies have proved that children from a very young age can perceive those emotions and can show empathetic behavior from the early stages.

Bandura's social learning theory is the appropriate theory for the diversity doll approach research. The aims of the research are connected to his findings, the main method of the research is the observational method where the researcher presents the doll to the children with the desired behavior and trying to identify their emotions and if they are in place to do problem-solving and create positive emotions and empathy towards the doll and as a consequence to children with Special Educational Needs. Social learning theory proves that all the behaviors of people can be modified and that is possible through observational learning and behavior modification, factors which in this research are taking place.

Chapter Three

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this Chapter of the Literature review, the main purpose is to present the studies that have been written about and analyzed the impact of Persona Dolls in the major of Early Childhood Education. The chapter presents a systematic literature review of articles about Persona Doll impact in various studies in the last 10 years (2008-2018). Moreover, both previous literature reviews and experimental studies are included in the chapter. The paper offers interesting implications about the impact of Persona Dolls for educators, teachers, school counselors and children psychologists. It can be used as a current research landscape and contribute more knowledge to this area of studies. The findings derived from a systematic literature review that has studied the influence of persona dolls in different studies, aiming to answer if there is an impact and cultivation of empathy in young children. According to the euro barometer 2015 survey, discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin is regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination in the EU with a percentage of 64%, followed by sexual orientation 58%, gender identity 56% and disability 50%. Greek teacher Papouli who is currently working with diversity dolls agrees that students need to learn about and understand the needs of vulnerable populations, as well as to be aware of the barriers to their living conditions (Papouli, 2017). Moreover, various analysis studies conclude that youngsters learn by perceptive variations and similarities among folks and by fascinating spoken and unspoken positive and negative 'messages' regarding those variations (Katz, 1976; Milner, 1983; Aboud, 1988; Glover, 1991; Derman-Sparks, 1992; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000; MacNaughton, 2001).

On the other side, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is promoted as an economical investment in supporting child and community development. However, fewer ECD practitioners are currently being trained and supported, part because of the closure of the many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) caused by a lack of funding (Chisholm, 2004). Richter et al. (2006) recognizes that several child care staff and lecturers are discouraged, under-trained, and over-stressed. Taking into consideration the above studies and percentages I believe that it is important to find a way to handle those situations by innovative pedagogical approaches.

Moving to the field of special education someone can find many studies talking even today for extreme levels of bullying against children with Special Educational Needs. Thomson, Whitney and

Smith 1994 concentrated the findings of the study of Education and Science Research Council which showed that of the 186 children (ninety-three with special educational needs and 93 with no special educational needs) who took part into the survey about bullying, almost two-thirds of the children with special needs complained that have been bullied before in their school. Arguing to the above, more recent studies admit the phenomenon of bullying to children with special educational needs. According to the National Research Council (2001), children with special educational needs are harassed in a percentage of 22% and 70%. Sullivan and Knutson, (2000) refer only in North America that a child with Special Educational Needs has 3.444 times more possibilities to be bullied compared to children without SEN. Rose, Monda-Amaya and Espelage (2010), argue that the bigger the special need of the child is, the bigger the bullying is.

On that point my main concern is to find an anti-bias method to prevent those incidents. Diversity doll is an associate degree anti-bias, active learning approach for adults and kids. It builds on universal storytelling traditions to push inclusion and fellow feeling, address problems with bias and unfairness, and develop emotional intelligence and shallowness in an exceedingly non-threatening manner. Several surveys have been conducted in various countries around the world about the impact of the persona doll on changing the behavior of young children, on expressing their feelings, creating empathy and on combating prejudice and racism. Some of these will be presented below.

The studies were found searching in Google Scholar, University of Gothenburg library website (which gives access to a wide range of academic and research sites), in ERIC and Psyc-info databases. The author searched researches written in English and Greek (mother tongue), mostly during the last 10 years period (2008-2018). In other words the study is accurate and the findings are present- based. Moreover, the key search terms were- *social exclusion, Persona Doll, children of migrant background, diversity and diversity dolls, inclusion, early education, empathy* and I aimed at finding both literature reviews and experimental studies in the literature review sector

3.1 The phenomenon of bullying

In general, bullying is a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon that directly affects hundreds of millions of people each year. (Volk, Dane and Marini, 2013) According to recent studies, bullying in schools affects more than 15 percent of students (Rigby & Johnson, 2016). Within research circles, the most familiar definition of bullying comes from Dan Olweus, originally proposed in the 1970s and reiterated in the book “*Bullying in School*” (1993). He defines bullying as: “A student is being

bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.” This definition has provided the foundation for the Olweus Bullying Victimization Questionnaire, which has been used to measure bullying among adolescents all over the world. (Currie et al, 2012). At other researches, bullying is defined as the systematic and repeated abuse of power involving not only physical but also verbal abuse as well as acts of indirect aggression, such as gossip, or spread malicious rumors and attempts of the social exclusion of a child from the peer group (Smith & Sharp, 1994)

The phenomenon of bullying is based mainly on the power imbalance between the bully and the victim (Ashman, 2019) Ashman, notes that bullying has different forms such as physical, verbal, extortion, damage to property, isolation, gestures, intimidation and most critical in our days the form of psychological bullying through technology. Moreover, it can be considered a problem that takes place seven days per week in a 24-hour base. Ashman (2019) also refers that the consequences of bullying to the victim usually includes physical injury, loss of confidence and self-esteem, not willingness to attend school, lack or loss of friends and for some students, being bullied is an ongoing problem that gradually can lead to depression and suicide.

For the above reasons, it is of a major significance for school authorities and teachers to implement a sense of empathy and acceptance to children even from a very early age. Rigby, 2010 refers that dealing with bullying requires a whole-school approach that includes teachers, students to parents. Although Rigby et al (2010), suggest practices in school when the bullying has taken place and not to prevent it, the importance of this study is to focus on a practice that can take place to prevent those kinds of phenomena.

3.2 Incidents of Bullying to children with SEN

Variant research shows that bullying occurs even among preschool-aged and can be a severe problem in the preschool environment. Regarding the special education, several studies made in the school environment have demonstrated that bullying (both victim and perpetrator roles) often involves children with SEN. As Rigby and Johnson (2016), support that the students with a disability report being victimized more often than students without a disability. Other researchers have shown that children with disabilities report that peer relationships and exclusion from the peer group are ongoing problems throughout their school life (Lightfoot, Wright and Slopper, 1998). Thompson et al. (1994), Clean and Davis (2006), conclude that the children with cognitive and

physical disabilities are a greater risk of bullying and social exclusion than their non-disabled peers. Additionally more previous studies suggest that children with disabilities (SEN) are more frequent targets of peer victimization, social exclusion and physical aggression compared with their non-disabled peers (Baumeister, Storch, & Geffen 2008-, Monda-Amaya & Espelage- 2011, Whitney Smith & Thompson 1994).

More specific, at a study which took place in Finnish school between children with age three to six show that as much as 18% of the bullying phenomenon was explained by the proportion of children with SEN, and children with SEN were over-represented in bullying situations and children with SEN were targets of all kinds of bullying. Moreover, the results of the specific study show clearly that bullying is already a phenomenon among preschool children (Repo & Sajanemi, 2014 p.15). In another study, Askell-Williams (2017) in Australia found out that students who reported being bullied were also being reported having less positive mental health.

3.2.1 Autism Spectrum Disorder and Bullying

Regarding the autism spectrum disorder and bullying a UK National Autistic Society parental survey found that over 40% of children with an autism spectrum disorder have experienced bullying and peer victimization at school (Batten, Corbett, Rosenblatt, Withers, & Yuille, 2006) Furthermore, a recent UK study found that pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) experienced higher frequency of bullying than pupils with other special educational needs (pupils with dyslexia) and pupils without identified Special Educational Needs (Humphrey & Symes, 2010). In a current study about exploring the friendship and bullying experiences of children with ASD and data that were collected from a study of Baird et al 2006 found out alongside the others that in terms of children's experience of victimization, although almost all children reported some experience of disagreements with other children this led to feelings of exclusion and rejection in 40% of the children with ASD (Rowley, Chandlerb, Baird, Simonoffd, Picklesed, Loucase, Charmanb 2006).

Moreover, the research of Baird et al. (2006) that conducted by the UK National Autistic Society in London found out that two in five children with Autism had experienced some kind of bullying In

the literature little research has explored the specific factors who lead children with ASD being more vulnerable to bullying. Carrington and Graham (2001), explain some of those factors:

- Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder often struggle to express themselves with nonverbal behavior such as gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language
- Their literal interpretation of language can make it hard for them to understand social rules and the motives of other children such as sharing jokes and that can make them an easy target of bullying
- Children with autism spectrum disorder sometimes have unusual range of interests, repetitive behaviors and narrow focus on conversation can cause them to stand out to the other peers as ‘‘different’’ and compounding their isolation.

Those reasons can lead children with Autism Spectrum Disorder easier to teasing and rejection by their peers and as a result to bullying (Carrington & Graham, 2001).

3.3 Anti-bias interventions

Systematic institutional inequalities deeply affect children’s lives and their development. The anti-bias program actively addresses problems with diversity and equity within the room and broader community and is enjoying growing acceptance within the field of Early Childhood Education. The anti-bias goals and approach ought to be seen within the context of children’s rights (Porteus, 2004) to survival, full development and protection from hurt, abuse and exploitation but also full participation in family, cultural and social life. Derman-Sparks and the U. S. Anti-Bias Task Force developed four principal anti-bias goals and connected outcomes (Derman-Sparks et al. 1989; 2010) that apply to kids, to service staff, lecturers and families: fostering identity and self respect – to make up confidence, cluster identity and self-identity that doesn't involve feeling superior to anybody else; promoting sympathy for comfy interaction with individuals from numerous backgrounds, in terms of each data and emotional attitudes and feelings; unlearning negative attitudes; and inspiring a problem-posing/activist approach to assist develop the boldness and skills needed to face up for oneself et al within the face of prejudice and discrimination.

3.4 The diversity/persona doll approach

Persona dolls are one approach to supporting children's social emotional development. (Pierce, Johnson, Lynn, 2010). Persona dolls are commonly used as an educational tool for teaching children about social, cultural and or physical diversity (Brown, 2008). Many professionals like social workers, play therapists and psychologists include dolls and other human figures in their work with children either to describe difficult situations for them, either to understand other people's situation (Crenshaw & Steward 2015,- Lefevre, 2010-, Lefevre, Tanner & Luckock, 2008). In general, diversity dolls are life-like, culturally acceptable girl and boy dolls fabricated from material, given 'personas' or identities, and remodeled into distinctive personalities with cultural and people backgrounds, family things, talents and disabilities, fears and interests. The 'stories' told concerning every Doll's life raise problems like racism, gender, HIV and Aids stigma, people, poverty, abuse and incapacity. Persona Dolls sometimes visit in cluster settings or in homes and a relationship develops between every Doll and therefore the adults and kids. The Dolls don't seem to be used as puppets: the adult relays to the youngsters what the Doll has aforementioned. Kids and adults are given opportunities to retort to the problems raised through the Doll's experiences. Interactive problem-posing discussions develop, and during this safe atmosphere kids are manifest by talking concerning their own identities, life experiences and feelings. The stories ride one another with the aim of unlearning discriminatory attitudes and behavior making the youngsters relate to the Dolls as 'friends'. Within the method, they build their understanding of fairness and unfairness, learn skills in conflict management and drawback finding, and are inspired to feel happy with their families and cultural backgrounds. The youngsters are helped to grasp the hurt that prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior cause and crucially, to develop the abilities they have to face up for themselves. The use of the dolls is worldwide and more specifically is broadly used: in the U.S.A. (Taus, 1987; Derman-Sparks et al., 1998; 2010), the U.K. (Brown, 1998; 2001; 2008; 2009), Australia (MacNaughton, 1997; 1999; 2000a; 2001; 2007), Denmark (Brown, Harris, Egedal and van Keulen, 1998), Federal Republic of Germany (Brown et al, 1998), U.K. (Brown et al, 1998) and Iceland (Ragnarsdóttir, 2002), as well as in African countries (Smith, 2006; 2009; President, 2007; Brown, 2008).

Recipients of Persona-Diversity doll Approach usually have a spread of previous coaching, expertise and skills. They embody Early Childhood Education practitioners, teachers, organization trainers,

lecturers, social staff, activity therapists, psychologists, kid care staff, and residential guests. A very important component is that the twin nature of the approach, that edges each adults and kids. The coaching is empowering, non-threatening and provides a fun 'hands-on' expertise that permits for reflection and discussion of private problems and raises awareness of social problems, human rights and prejudice. Adults are led through a method that begins with their own personal experiences and ends up in using the Persona Dolls as a tool. Respect for participants' experiences and confidentiality are essential. The coaching includes demonstrations, viewing of optical disc material showing competent practitioners in action, discussion and role-play with Persona Dolls. Carefully designed activities generate discussion on problems with culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, family and religion in a safe atmosphere. Participants are prompted to recollect discriminatory or unfair things, to explain their feelings at the time, and determine barriers to action or resolution. In one exercise, participants are asked to pick who they need to take with them to an island from a group of individuals (including, as an example, an Imam, feminine politician or male nurse). Little teams discuss and choose, followed by a comprehensive session discussing their selections, attitudes and attainable prejudice.

Small cluster exercises type a very important part of the coaching. Participants select a Doll and as a bunch 'create a persona' using pointers as well as cultural background, language, age, gender, name, talents and disabilities, home and family founded, likes and dislikes (for example, food or TV-programs), fears and up to date history. The cluster then role-plays the introduction of the Doll that is followed by discussion. Problems like HIV, racism, incapacity and sadness are wont to build stories reflective real world things that have happened to the Doll. Role-playing the state of affairs specializing in one in all these problems builds problem-solving and questioning skills.

The coaching ends with coming up with for support and learning. Cooperative observance has been selected because the strategy for following progress. Initial observance queries include: How are Dolls being used? What key problems do kids generate? What do adults study in their own practice? What is operating well? What stunned you? What disturbs you? What will you do differently? Furthermore, the diversity/persona doll can be used to introduce wide range of fields such as gender, impotence, diversity, special needs, physical impairment, racism and xenophobia, health, culture, religious belief and social issues (Smith, 2006). Research has shown that using the persona doll, which is a powerful method of importing meaningful stories, can effectively introduce the issue of equality among children. The fact that history tells through a doll, and is not read, gives practitioners the opportunity to tailor this story to the needs of the children they want (Allen & Whaley 2010).

This doll can help the teacher to convey to the children of his class the concept of respect and understanding towards the different. The persona doll, through its handler, presents children with a history and everyday experience that can happen to every child and that is why they are plausible. (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008) Dolls have their own strengths and disadvantages, abilities and things they cannot do, fears and interests just like kids (Smith, 2013). Supports Smiths approach, a child can be more familiar with a Doll who is like a real life person, making them feel more comfortable in order to link themselves with them and their situation.

The persona doll respects the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child. As the doll narrates its story to children, they create a bond with her, are involved in history, come into the position of another and understand him (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). Additionally, it can help in the development of emotional intelligence (Smith, 2013). With regard to the development of empathy, it is important for children to understand how:

- A) Each person's feelings are important to him,
- B) Other people have feelings other than us
- C) Others may think and feel different from us (Allen & Whaley, 2010).

Children, by giving advice and by finding solutions to the doll's problems, enhance their self-esteem and self-confidence (Persona Doll Training Organization, 2012) improves their spoken word, and feel proud of their cultural background (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). As is mentioned above, children feel more familiar with the Persona Doll. Children should feel proud of their family and their background especially if they are living in a foreign country but also they can learn from the Persona Doll Approach (PDA) about new cultures and create the value of respect for them. Still the persona doll helps to approach the distinction. The basic assumption of the PDA is that attempting to address prejudices will help to reduce discrimination and harmful consequences, not only for those who are discriminated against, but also for those who discriminate (Smith, 2009). In addition, the doll persuades a child with a deviant behavior to 'be into the place' of the other child and that may has a positive effect on it. Children learn to behave fairly to others. They learn how bad it is to exclude people from the groups and behave badly in the cause of pain and misery (Persona Doll training organization, 2012). The doll with her speech and movement has the ability to convey high moral messages to children (Daraki, 1978). The child shows great confidence in the doll that speaks with love (Perak, 1988). The dolls educate the child. The simplicity, the warmth and the love with which the children speak makes them come close to them to touch and shape them. Moreover, children are

impressed by the little adorable figures because they are simple and speak in their souls (Daraki, 1978).

Furthermore, children perceive differences in language, gender and colour at a very early age (Smith, 2009). Many researchers suggest that children learn by observing the similarities and differences of people around them and by receiving negative or positive messages about these differences. The PDA is an anti-bias method that can be applied to adults and children and can affect human rights, identity, diversity through history and dialogue. At the end of the story one of the most important goals is to understand the children of justice and injustice while at the same time they are strengthened to feel proud of their origin and their family (Smith, 2009). Furthermore, like many other methods, persona doll is based on the belief that in the same way that children learn a behavior, they can ‘unlearn’ it (Smith, 2005). The goals of the persona doll method are to give each child the following:

- 1) Develop respect and self-esteem.
- 2) Emotional interaction with people from different backgrounds.
- 3) Critical thinking and resolution of issues related to bias.
- 4) Ability to support himself / herself and others in dealing with injustice (Smith, 2009)

3.5 Studies about the use of diversity doll

In the recent past, many studies in education were conducted with the approach of the diversity doll in vary origins and for different educational purposes. Below, some of them are presented.

a) Pride for language

The significance of the first survey presented is huge due to the place that the research hold is a small village in Greece. Being an immigrant in this area is not considered a common phenomenon, as a consequence the society is small and habitants usually more narrow-minded. It took place in Greece and specifically in the village of Dimario of Xanthi with a large population of Pomakic origin and stereotypical perceptions. The sample consisted of 9 pupils of Pomakic origin attending the local kindergarten. The aim of the survey was to investigate the influence of the persona doll on daily educational activity and the results of this application. We used Miss Aishe, a 5-year-old girl of

Pomakic origin, and the problematic situation was the lack of knowledge of Greek. Aishe, talked about the way she was treated by the other children in Athens where she lived, and the mockery of her appearance (she wore a headscarf and long skirt). The results of the survey showed initially that the children had cordially accepted the doll and during the conversations with her they had great ease in talking about their family and the experiences they had experienced. She behaved like a real girl and was encouraged through the doll to sing in the Pomak and speak their tongue. The children showed anxiety, empathy in her problems, recognized the injustice done against her and felt angry about it. They also developed conflict resolution skills and emotional vocabulary and proudly felt their language (Vitsou, Agtzidou, 2008). As mentioned above, a successful PDA approach in a small village about diversity can be considered an anti-bias method.

b) Australian Equity and Social Diversity Research Project

McNaughton, head of the Australian Equity and Social Diversity (Australian Equity and Social Diversity) research project, used persona dolls to find answers to two questions: First, what do four to five year- olds know about race, class, and gender and secondly, the PDA might react to children with dolls with different backgrounds. Initially, children were interviewed for what they already know. Then four persona dolls were used, each with a different identity and background. The children were encouraged to play with the dolls to break the ice and talk with them, and then introduce stories about gender, tribes and classes. The results of the survey showed that children knew much more about social diversity than researchers believed. Children of Anglo-Australian descent had misconceptions about Australian Aborigines and knew very little about their culture. Nearly half of the children saw the persona dolls' white skin as "normal, dear and better" and feared the persona doll that had black skin. They refused to talk to her, play and look at her. A girl of Vietnamese-Australian origin reported blushing and looking down on her look like the doll of Anglo-Australian descent, but she did not really look like it (Smith, 2009).

c) Carol Smith's research

Carol Smith conducted surveys that looked at the effects of using the persona doll method on young children and their teachers. Surveys were conducted in poor areas in South Africa, where there were many distinctions. They have been selected to present through the persona doll approach stories that

address issues related to racism, xenophobia, culture, belief, language, social class, poverty, abuse, disability, HIV and AIDS, stigma, diversity, inclusion and human rights (Smith, 2013).

The goals of the survey were through the persona doll method:

- (a) To address issues of identity and self-esteem.
- b) The development of empathy and emotional intelligence.
- c) The cessation of negative behaviors (versus different)
- d) The Activist Approach (Smith, 2009).

In general, the findings show that education and implementation of the persona doll method led, to a greater or lesser extent, to an improvement in self-esteem, empathy and the ability to confront children with prejudices. Thus, the objectives of the research have been achieved (Smith, 2013). In terms of matching, teachers also reported that the age given to the dolls helped the children identify more with each other and express themselves as they were of the same age. It is important to note that using the persona doll method the children felt they were not alone and that they had not only these problems. The dolls had clothes like their own, habits like their own, friends, problems like these. They also mentioned that the outward appearance of the dolls with real clothes helped children in identification and empathy (Smith, 2009). Regarding the subject of empathy, teachers have indicated that children have been identified with dolls so much and that is why they showed empathy and compassion for them (Smith, 2013). Acknowledge that persona doll approach can be used not only to children but also to adults. For many of the children, it was the first time they knew a doll (who represented themselves) with their own skin color of both sexes. This helped them to understand that their identity is accepted and respected (Smith, 2013). The doll even made it easy for shy children to talk and participate in the conversation. Teachers reported that children gained more self-esteem and confidence in them (Smith, 2009). As far as the results to the teachers themselves were concerned, they heard the children and began to understand the value of this dialogue. Teachers also reported that they feel more understanding and are able to show greater compassion for children (Smith, 2013). Also 90% of teachers said they liked to use the doll (Smith, 2009).

3.6 Discussion and conclusion of the literature review

In the heterogeneous world that we are leaving even more children are subjected to trauma and violence. There is a huge need of an anti-bias intervention which can promote effectively the equality between pupils and fight against the discrimination. In this systematic literature review the

research questions and aims were supported. Persona doll consist a useful tool that not only is accepted by the children but also creates positive feelings to them and can contribute to change their behavior positively to problematic situations. From a psychological aspect in the above findings of literature, Persona Doll influences the psychological situation and someone's way of thinking. More specific, adults and children can create a bond with the doll and feel free to express their own thoughts, emotions and as a consequence this can help to the solution of the problem. Pierce, Johnson and Lynn (2010) referred to the social and emotional improvement that this approach can offer, while Smith (2009) asserts to the development of the emotional intelligence. According to a social aspect, Persona Doll can eliminate or minimize the discrimination and promote equality towards pupils. Smith, (2009) states that, the PDA approach helps the elimination of not only the victim of discrimination, but also for the perpetrator.

Regarding the cultural aspect of the Personas Doll use, every children and adult's culture, ethnicity and identity is respected. Vitsou & Agzidou (2008) but also Smith (2009) refers to their surveys on that factor. According to the authors opinion, is very important for a person to feel that their identity – either language- either religion etc is respected from the others, especially when someone lives outside of its country of origin. The right that everyone has to keep their own identity is unique and cannot be taken.

From a social aspect, everyone can acknowledge that the Persona Doll Approach can be used and have a positive impact not only to children but also to adults. As referred in Carols Smith research, even the teachers were affected from the Doll and created empathy. This is a very important finding, showing the wide range of PDA use in order to create empathy and limit conflict. Although, in this systematic literature research can be addressed some limitations. Firstly, the theoretical background, there has been a lack of research articles refer to the size of the problem in our days about discrimination. Searching about inclusion, the majority of articles and educational books refer to inclusive strategies only when a child has a kind of special or physical need and how can this be provoked into the classroom. At this part, one of the aims was to find articles referring more to the impact that Persona Doll has in order to promote the acceptance of children with Special or Physical Educational Needs. The limitation to those articles is obvious although the wide range of articles about Persona Doll against discrimination in general is clear. Another limitation of the study is the access of data. As an inspirational student researcher, there was a lack of access to all the institutions and internet research platforms that a researcher should with a result, few sources of literature in the

systematic review. Language is also a barrier, this systematic review for Persona Doll approach is searched in English which is not the mother tongue of the author but also in Greek which is the mother tongue. In any of the above cases, is possible some important data not being collected or translated. Furthermore, since the research will take place in Sweden, it would be very useful for the author to have access to Swedish Educational Articles and books, for this reason, important information about the anti-bias strategies and Persona Doll in Sweden is not included in this literature review.

In a world that discriminations, trauma and bullying about the different, it is of a great importance not only aiming to minimize it by promoting the equality and respect to the other person but also finding new ways to adopt in the new datum. This literature review can consist of feed for future studies about the Persona Doll, such as different types of presenting the Doll to the children but also can be a base of series anti bias interventions. Although the limitations mentioned, this literature review proposes an important anti bias method that could be useful for future educators, teachers and researches in the field of Education promoting the more systematic use of this approach. The positive efficiency of the Persona Doll as a tool is apparent in this literature review and should be taken into consideration from theory to practice. Concluding it constitutes an innovative method, pleasant for all the children and with great results at the same time.

Chapter Four

Method and methodology

Chapter four discusses the method and methodology of the study. Firstly, there will be a brief description of the qualitative methodology that is chosen as suitable and secondly the qualitative research method will be presented. At the end of the chapter, ethical considerations will be also discussed.

4.1 Qualitative research methodology

The preferable method for this research is the qualitative. According to Pope and Mays (1995), a qualitative research is the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of the participants (Nigatu, 2009). The research method followed on this study is a case study. Case study is in general a research method having its use in the social and life sciences involving an in-depth detailed examination of a subject (the case), allowing the exploration and understanding of complex issues. It is recognized also as a tool in many social sciences researches such as Education (Zaidah Zainal, 2007). To be more specific, the use of case studies is widespread in theory-oriented disciplines such as sociology, psychology even in economics (Rodrik, 2003). Through case study methods, a researcher can go beyond the quantitative results and allows understanding the behavioral conditions through the actor's perspective (Zaidah Zainal, 2007).

4.1.1 Strengths of case study

Case study as a tool of methodological investigation has a very long history (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Smith (1994) suggests that Charles Darwin's biography from the early nineteenth century could be considered a case study. Even from Symonds Percival Chapter (1945), notes that case study is considered a valuable method of research. For instance, refers to Miles (44) that case study 'is the one of the most important research methods in sociology'. Crowe, S. et al (2011) argue that case study is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences.

Also, Hill and Ackiss (29) claimed that case study method bridges the gap between the stereotyped community survey and personality culture community study (Symonds Percival M, 1945).

Moving forward, as Robert Yin explains in his book about *Study Case* (1984) the examination of the data in a case study is conducted within the context of its use. For instance, in the process by with a subject comprehends an authentic text. More specific, the researcher must observe the subject of its research within its environment. This process isolates a phenomenon from its context, focusing on a limited number of variables (Zaidah, 2003). In this research study, case study seems most appropriate since the researcher observes the children in their own environment, at a preschool context. One more reason case study methodology framing this research paper is that case study approach lends itself into capturing information on more explanatory questions of 'why', 'how' and 'what', where aim of the study is to find how the children respond to the diversity doll.

To continue with, the detailed description of case study in qualitative research besides the fact that helps to describe the data in real-life environment helps to explain in many cases complexities of real life situations which may not be captured by quantitative research methods (Zaidah, 2003). For example, the aim of this study is to find how the children respond on an emotional level to the diversity doll and identify their emotions. On my view, qualitative study and more specifically case study is preferable to answer the aim of this research. The identification of emotions is a complex phenomenon and acquires a methodology that gives to the researcher the opportunity for in-depth analysis. Furthermore, in the field of Education we can infer that a case study approach is flexible in that it allows the researcher to investigate something that has not been in his original goal. Researchers can make even more questions and get more details about their research allowing him to expose different patterns something that leads to recovery something new through their research and include it or give them new feed for further research in the same or a new direction (Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos and Elden Wiebe, 2010).

One more pros of the case study could be that it is a research method with a great range of use. Case study research encompasses a wide variety of methods (questionnaires, surveys, etc) or almost any other single or mixed of qualitative and quantitative research (Allison Stewart, 2014). Case studies are considered a useful tool in research methods, both in qualitative but also in quantitative research, being a solution when a big sample of the population is difficult to obtain (Zainal, 2003). I would like to share also that Case study plays also a key fact in Inclusive Education, to be more specific is not only an ideal approach to researching inclusive education but also it can capture the richness of data to understand the multiple aspects of the inclusive environment (Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos & Elden Wiebe, 2010). Lastly, the theoretical framework that underlies the research study stipulates a methodology that focuses on social phenomena and real life complex situations.

4.2 Critics and limitations of the research methodology

Despite all the advantages and strengths, the case study has received criticism from some opponents. According to Yin (1984), a case study often lacks rigor. In this spot, I would agree to a degree because claims of the researcher tend to be more subjective since he is researching alone, talk with, and observe the subject of its research. In my opinion, this could lead to a trap of influence taking away the objectivity since he spent time with the subjective. Bent Flyvbjerg (2006), refers to his article with the title “*Five misunderstandings about Case Study*”, that the method maintains a bias towards verification and the alleged deficiency of case study is that it allows the researcher to have more subjective judgment instead of quantitative methods. In his opinion, it is more falsification rather than verification that characterizes the Case Study. Explaining this sentence, in a case study the preconceived assumptions, hypotheses, of the researcher were wrong, and the case material makes the researcher to revise some important points of the research hypothesis (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Moreover, since case studies use a small number of objects it is difficult to generalize from a single case and as a consequence, difficult to reach a generalizing conclusion (Zaidah, 2003). The subject of reliability is also important regarding case studies. It is well known that quantitative researches use number, statistics and bigger amount of test and qualitative research is based more on interviews, observation, etc. In this case, of study case the analyst is engaged in actions and materials that represent empirical data, he is very descriptive and cannot invoke general principles. Therefore, the claims of the case study are likely to be too unreliable to permit scientific evidence (Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum, & Gideon Sjoberg, 1991). However, in this study is clear that the study seeks to find specific responses to how children react emotionally to the diversity doll, open the way for future further research.

4.3 Qualitative research method/ technique

4.3.1 Observation

The type of method collecting the data is mainly observation and unstructured interviews in a manner of discussion with the children. Searching the literature, it comes, that it is difficult to find a definition for Observation. Although the definitions vary from authors, I will choose an old definition of Becker and Geer (1970), who defined participant observation as an activity, "In which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time" (1970, p. 133). Tihanun (2009) claims that the researcher gets close enough to study subjects, to observe in the specific circumstance with participation aiming to access tacit knowledge of the subjects. Besides, observation is one of the oldest and commonest research methods in social sciences and scientific research. Through observation, an emphasis on the need for studying children is taken in a natural situation including his emotional and social behavior rather than to rely exclusively on static measurements (Jersild, Meigs, 1939). Moreover, the researcher aims to record children's emotions and thoughts at that time meeting the dolls as a way to create empathy. Qualitative methods are, by their nature, concerned with exploring the perspectives of participants and examining their experiences in the contexts in which they occur (Smith, 2003).

4.3.2 Role of the researcher (in observation)

The roles of a researcher when using the observation method have been defined as "the characteristic posture[s] researchers assume in their relationship" with the people whom they are studying (hereafter referred to as "insiders") (Chatman, 1984, p. 429). The role that the researcher will choose for his observation depends on the situation – if he knows the environment or not and from what he wants to collect. As referred from Chatman, (1984) and Carey, McKechnie, & McKenzie, (2001), going into a new environment may require the researcher to adopt the role of complete observer, whereas studying a group in which she/he is already a member allows the researcher to adopt the complete participant role. What is important is that the researcher assumes an

appropriate, fluid role—one that allows her/him to observe intimately the everyday life of the insiders” (L.M. Baker 2006). The chosen role of participation in this study is the complete participation of the researcher. The complete participation in the entire scientific world suggests that it is the full involvement of the researcher where he studies a group of which he is already a member (Spradley, 1980, Adler, 1994). The reason that the complete participation applies in this study is that the researcher has full everyday access to the school and interaction with the children. Although some authors refer that the full participation is efficient since the researcher obtains a very good understanding of the insiders, I will also agree with Spradley (1980), that the researcher may feel that ‘he has so violated his observer role that it is almost impossible to report his findings’ (p. 220).

4.3.3 Unstructured interview

Accordingly with the observation method an unstructured interview was followed in the study. At this point I have to refer that since the participants in this survey are children and not adults an unstructured interview with a combination of observation as the main method to collect the research data was chosen. At the same time with the presentation and observation of the doll for the children, the researcher asks questions to them to examine if they like and accept the doll and if they feel empathy towards it. In general in the scientific world, interviewing is considered the most common method of data collection in the field of qualitative research. Moreover, Oakley and Gender (1998; 32:707–310) claim that with an interview not only the practices and standards are recorded but also achieved challenged and reinforced the unstructured interview technique was developed firstly in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology as a method to elicit people’s social realities. Furthermore, an unstructured interview usually starts with a broad open question concerning the area of the study with subsequent questions dependent on the participant’s responses (Wildemuth, 2017, p.239). According to the literature, the term unstructured is mainly used with other terms as *an informal conversational interview*, *in-depth interview*, *non-standardized interview* and *ethnographic interview* (Wildemuth, 2017, p.239). In the literature, they are various definitions of the unstructured interview and most of them are different from one another. One of the definitions that I will borrow is Pattons (2002), who is defining unstructured interviews as a natural extension of participant observation because they occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork (Wildemuth, 2017, p240). Furthermore, an unstructured interview usually starts with a broad open question

concerning the area of the study with subsequent questions dependent on the participant's responses (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Gaining a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the unstructured interview some of them contributed to my decision of choosing this kind of interview and mentioned below:

- Unstructured interview is very common to incorporate into a study primarily based on participant observation
- In an unstructured interview even though the research questions are not predefined, the researcher has to keep in mind the study's purpose and the general scope of the issues that he would like to discuss in the interview (Fife, 2005)
- The researchers control into the interview has to be minimal but at the same time he has to encourage the participants to relate experiences that are relevant to the research problem and his study (Burgess,1984)

According to the above analysis of the characteristics of the unstructured interview can be explained the reason that is chosen as a combinative method of data collection with the participant observation.

4.4 Sample selection/participants

4.4.1 Sampling

The category of the selected sampling is the non-probability sampling and the technique is convenience sampling. The size of the sample is small due to the timeline of the survey and the access of data the researcher has.

4.4.2 Sample/Participants

The participants of the survey are kindergarten children with age from three to six years old. The school from which the sample was selected is a half publicly and private International preschool which follows the Swedish curriculum from preschool in the city of Gothenburg. Moreover, it is an English speaking school which follows the Swedish law for schools and preschools in Sweden. The school is open five working days per week from 07:00 in the morning until 17:30 in the afternoon. The preschool owes two different buildings in the same area. The first one has three different classes, one for the younger children from ages 1 to 3 and two classes with children from 4 to 6 years old. The same structure of groups applies also at the second building the preschool owes. As an international preschool it is considered multicultural as the students and their families have different ethnicities and are coming from different parts of the world.

The participants of the research are 10 children in total with ages from three to six years old. The identity background varies, for instance Sweden, India, China, Australia, Italia, Japan but all of them belong to the same age group and speak English the hours that attend the preschool. Another common characteristic and the reason the researcher chose them is that none of them has a kind of Special educational need or physical disability nor a person in their families. The above characteristic was very useful to the presentation of the diversity doll since one of the main aims of the study is to prevent situations of discrimination against children with SEN.

4.5 The diversity doll

In this study the presentation of the diversity doll lasted three weeks. During the first two weeks, a diversity doll with a developmental kind of special needs was presented to the children. More specifically the doll had low moderate Autism. At the third week the researcher chose a physical kind of disorder.

4.5.1 Autism spectrum disorder

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD), the common clinical term for childhood autism and the related pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) described in the psychiatric classification systems (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, World Health Organization, 1993) are neurodevelopment disorders characterized by impairments in social interaction and communication and by rigid behavior (E. Rowley, S. Chandler, G. Baird, E. Simonoff, A. Pickles, T. Loucas, T. Charman 2012). Also, the authors refer in their article that children with autism find difficulties to develop appropriate peer relationships. In support of this status Bauminger and Shulman (2003), claim that children with autism spectrum disorder very often avoid initiating playing with their peers and prefer activities that allow them to be on their own. In contrast, Bauminger and Kasari (2000) found out that children with ASD desire the social relationship and express emotions of loneliness, in levels significantly higher than other children of their age. Hurlbutt and Chalmers (2002), highlight in their research the importance of peer relationships in the life of a child diagnosed with ASD.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are present in any kind of research. When conducting a research with observations and the participants are children, more ethical considerations arise. In every research, besides the ethical principles, one should take into consideration and the human rights of the participants. Below follows some of the ethical agreements in research and ethical implementations when researching with children. As Babbie (2003), states in his book "*The basics of social research*", "anyone involved in social science research needs to be aware of the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of scientific inquiry." Taking into consideration this statement, a researcher has to follow some ethical rules while conducting research and those rules are taken into consideration at this survey. Beginning with the voluntary participation, the participating school, (teachers, policy) was informed about the research aim and plan. Moreover, the consent of the children's guardians who took part on the survey is a contributory factor. All the parents met with the researcher and signed the document of the informed consent (Appendix 1). Both school authorities and guardians ensured the voluntary participation and that can withdraw the research at any time.

Although, carrying out a research with children necessitates obtaining their consent an implication to protect children's rights for research (Hammersley, 2014). In addition to this a research should be carried out with or by the children and not on them. Considering the age of the children, the researcher, I, was challenged to find a better way and the appropriate language to explain the research and the observation process to the children of this age. In addition, a relationship of trust was already established between the participants, the school and the guardians with the researcher, since they knew each other prior to the research.

Another research implication considers the “No harm to the participants”, in regard with their psychological and physical well-being. Additionally to this implication, as referred at Article 3.1 of United Nations and Convention on the Rights of the Child “ In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration” (OHCHR,1990). Thus, during the collection of data, the researcher’s primarily concern is to protect the children from any kind of harm or discomfort at all levels.

Furthermore, anonymity and confidentiality are assured in the research paper. The real names of the children and the preschool are not published or revealed. Babbie (2003, p.53) refers to confidentiality as “A research project guarantees confidentiality when the researcher can identify a given person’s responses but promises not to do so publicly”. Accordingly, Article 16.1 of OHCHR states that “No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honor and reputation” (OHCHR, 1990). Consequently, a researcher shall protect the anonymity of the participants and guarantee the confidentiality as a human right.

Chapter Five

Data analysis

Chapter five analyzes the collected data from the observations and the unstructured interviews. Moreover, the chapter introduces the type of analysis that has been used in the research. At the end of this chapter, the conclusion and discussion about the research and findings is presented.

5.1 Thematic analysis

In the research world, there are many types of data analysis. At the present research paper, thematic analysis is the chosen type. In general, thematic analysis is one of the most common types to analyze qualitative data (Javadi & Koroush, 2016). This type of analysis is connected mostly with the content analysis and is used with phenomenology and ethnography (Christ 1970, Benner 1985, Aronson 1994). In addition, the data on thematic analysis vary from transcript records, notes, pictures, or videos. At this research paper, the collected data are notes from the observation and the unstructured interviews and as a consequence, thematic analysis is the most appropriate for this research paper. Furthermore, as Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested, thematic analysis is an exciting way to discover new themes and different concepts from the data someone has collected. Moreover, thematic analysis has a high level of flexibility and simplicity and can be used even from aspiring researchers. Another advantage of the thematic analysis is that it is understandable for a wider percentage of people (Javadi & Koroush, 2016).

However, like other qualitative methods, thematic analysis might have its limitations for a researcher to pay attention to. In other words, the researcher should avoid the simplistic views of the data otherwise, their validity is destroyed. Moreover, analyzing the data with thematic analysis, sometimes might lead to a simple paraphrase of them and not in deep explanation. In this case, the role of the researcher is, to tell the reader what the data mean and not just providing them. Another limitation of Thematic Analysis (TA), is that the analysis might be weak or unconvincing, because

the themes have high levels of overlap, or lack of coherence and consistency. Although, the possible disadvantages of the thematic analysis, (Hollardson, 2009, Hayes 2000) claim that they mainly occur due to inappropriate research questions or poor analysis and not from the thematic analysis itself.

This type of themed analysis is most appropriate for the qualitative data, extracted from the observation and unstructured interview. It also enables the researcher to break through the narrow bounds of quantitative statistical analysis and statistics, and to highlight issues that exist in research data. The thematic analysis, analyzes texts on the presence and frequency of specific terms, explanations, or meanings. A topic is captured with something important to the data concerning the research question, and represents some level of a pattern within the answers or meaning within the main data. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and referring to the various themes that emerge from the data. It essentially organizes and describes the data in detail thus, is considered as the most appropriate of the analysis of the particular data.

The collective data of the research are grouped separately, per team, and theme category. The observation data were collected by 10 children, in total, who were separated at three different groups in 3 days of observation each group and each week. The time of observation lasted 20 minutes at each session. The age of children was 3-6 years old in mixed groups. All the observations took place at the same time, to the same room at each session. The first week one group of three children was observed in the morning, the second week one more group of three children and the third week one group of four children participated. The first two weeks the diversity doll presented to the children had autism spectrum disorder (Developmental disorder) and the third week the diversity doll was handicapped (physical disorder). The survey results are presented by the group.

The main purpose of the researcher was the first day to present the doll to the children (name, age, family etc.) giving the opportunity to the children to spend some time with the doll and connect with it. On the second day of the observation the researcher wanted to create a role-play by describing a problematic situation- an incident that took place before the meeting and discuss the situation with the children. On the third day of the observation, the researcher intended to create a problematic situation for the children to solve, identify their emotions for the doll and examine whether empathy occurred. In this case, the way to deal with the difference between a person and a handicapped person was highlighted. It also found the way children react and solve difficult situations (e.g., the aggression of people with autism, etc.), as well as, the fact that children develop empathy through the use of the doll.

The collected data retrieved in a form of recordings from the discussions with the children and the observations of the researcher at each meeting session. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed together with the collected data of the observation.

The observational data consist of behavioral reactions, facial and body expressions of the children and the transcriptions focused on the replies of the children and the emotions they claimed that felt. Regarding data analysis, the emotions labeled in two main categories of positive and negative emotions as the findings from the observation into positive and negative reactions and body language signs, where they compared and analyzed together. Empathy was categorized as a situation than a feeling. The researcher collected all the characteristics of empathy and identified them at the data.

5.2 Reactions of children in diversity doll with autism spectrum disorder (Developmental disorder)

As referred in the Introduction Chapter the two objectives of the research are first to identify how the children responded on an emotional level to the diversity doll and secondly to indicate the diversity doll as effective anti-bias approach to promote empathy.

5.2.1 Group one

The first morning I arrived at the preschool and I went with the children at the classroom. The diversity doll was with me and I noticed that everyone was looking at her with curiosity. They haven't seen her before. We all sat down in a circle, I took her on my hands and sat her on my lap. I told them that she is a friend of mine, who is going to another preschool but she will visit us for some days this week. I introduced her name and age. After the presentation of the diversity doll, I asked the children what they liked or did not like about her. One of the children replied that she likes her dress and fits with her clothes. Another commented on her hair and the last one commented on the pink color she had on her dress saying also that she loves her because her dress is all pink. Then, I went on to say that even though she was the same age as them she could not yet speak and express herself, so maybe we could try to be more understanding with her and we all agreed that it was the right thing to do. I replied to the child who said she loves her because of her pink color and her dress, that

‘Vaso loves pink too, she wants everything she has to be pink’

At this point they were smiling I explained that many times when she doesn't get pink but another color, she gets really frustrated. I observed that everyone was not only very curious about her but also talking to her as she was an alive child. The children were looking carefully at her and were talking to her. I continued the description with some more details (whether she has siblings, which is her favorite food, country of origin etc.) talking to everyone, listening very carefully but still trying to get a physical contact with the diversity doll. More specific I told them that

‘Vaso is from Greece and has an older sister. She loves playing with her sister and other friends but most of the time she spends playing time alone. Sometimes when she plays with her sister, she gets a bit nervous. Also, she can't stand the loud sounds and sometimes she gets a bit frustrated if someone comes closer to her without asking her’

It is important to note that one of the children at that point interrupted and said that this is not okay and she should stop doing this, the rest of them agreed by nodding (referring to her getting frustrated with her sister).

At the end of the first day and presentation of the diversity doll I asked the children how they would like to say goodbye to Vaso with options of a hug or a high-five. All the children asked her very kindly ‘Can we give you a hug?’

We referred that she doesn't like touching without permission and since she could not speak, she just nods to us. I noticed that the children were very touchy with her, looking at her and try to get to know her. I identified that they problematized when I referred to her frustration, but at the end they all had to give a smile and a big hug to her. Moreover, they were all listening very carefully and put all of their attention to her without distraction.

The goal first is to get to know the doll and familiarize with her and introduce gradually more details thus, the stories are built on top of each other. Children are imitating the behavior of others, especially when they familiarize with them. The fact that the story is told through a doll, and not read, gives professionals the opportunity to adapt this story to the needs of the children it addresses (Allen & Whalley, 2010). It is important to mention that persona dolls have been used with children as a tool for promoting anti-bias thinking and attitudes (Derman-Sparks, 2010; Whitney, 2002).

The second day of the observation a role-play took place. We were sitting in the same classroom. I wanted to have the connection with the classroom and our meetings with Vaso. Also, I was trying to get our meetings every day the same time. This time, Vaso wasn't sitting, but came in the classroom when everyone was there. I needed to see their reactions. They all smiled and looked positive seeing her again. Then I placed her between us.

My first question was if someone remembered her name and I did not get an answer on that question. After that, I asked them what they remember about her. They remembered that we are from the same country and then I asked them if they remember what happens if she does not get the pink color and I got other children reply: 'Yes, she gets really frustrated', the rest of them nodded positively. Then I asked 'What do you think about it? Do you think it is ok or no?' Everyone replied that it is not ok. At this point I noticed that they were looking a bit annoyed with her reaction. Their facial expression changed, they stopped smiling and crossed their hands. I remind them that we always need to have on our minds that it is difficult for her to express herself verbally and maybe we can find new ways of communication with her together. To continue, I introduced the role play situation. 'I have to refer an incident that happened earlier with Vaso. One of my friends had a pink bag today and Vaso, saw it and she wanted it'

I remind them once again that she cannot express herself verbally. Then I represented the incident. To create the role play, I left the room with Vaso and when I came back I represented the scene, without any verbal use of language. My imaginary friend who was another doll sitting while holding a pink bag and Vaso. Vaso was sitting quietly until the time she saw the bag. Then, very suddenly she started grabbing the bag from my friend the other friend was very shocked. Vaso was holding the bag really hard as my friend did, with a result that Vaso accidentally hit my friend on her hand and after that she left it and started crying very loud. Everyone was looking at me and Vaso with suspense. One more time they were all paying their attention to her. Then, I asked the children:

'What do you think that happened now and why?' and the children answered

'She wanted to get the pink bag and that is the reason that she got angry'

But they also replied that she should not get angry about that and need to ask if she wants something that does not belong to her. One child in particular refers that

'I don't like her after that because she is scary'. Once again, I remind them that even though you they have the same age, Vaso cannot speak yet, so we also need to understand her and respect that. Also, every person in the world is different and there is nothing wrong about that, we should accept everyone and that at Vaso case we know what she wants maybe and what frustrates her so, it is easier for us to understand her. Besides, we all have favorite colors and sometimes we have similar reactions while playing with friends. The important thing is to try and understand how friends feelings too. I observed that they were nodding positive with agreement in my words, understanding what I explained to them.

In the end of the observation, I said to the children that Vaso needs to leave and that she will come back tomorrow for her last visit. I continued saying that she felt really happy seeing them again and

that she would like to get a hug from each one this time. Everyone accepted the offer and hugged her but I noticed one child did it with more reservation this time. More specifically, they all stood up with a smile and a small jump in the air and hugged her, in contrast with one child that was standing behind, having his fingers in the mouth and waiting for me to ask again in person if he wanted to say goodbye to Vaso. In the next observation, the children, especially if they have had a particular emotional reaction to the story or if they have experienced a difficult situation, they identify with her and become their beloved and trusted friend. With open-ended questions a researcher provides information and encourages children to reflect and express their feelings. Also, the use of “silence” is important (Lynch & Hanson, 2004), which can reveal many facts about how children feel. Gradually, the trainer gathers information about the problematic situations that children have experienced, takes advantage of the dialogues that emerge daily and advances in feedback and the creation of a new story or the continuation of another (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). In addition, the bond which created between the child and the doll but also the opportunity given to the child to participate in the story makes him feel and respect the feelings of different children. The use of the doll equips the children with the feeling of tenderness towards the different (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). The daily dialogue and interaction between the child and the doll make the user either to create a new story or to continue the existing one, giving rise to a subject that is of interest to children (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). It is important to mention here that persona dolls have been used with children as a tool for promoting anti-bias thinking and attitudes (Derman-Sparks, 2010; Whitney, 2002).

The third and last day of observation was at the same classroom and the scheduled time. In the beginning of the conversation I asked the children what they remembered about her. For my impression, they remembered many details of her identity and also that we need to ask her before we hug her and she likes only the pink color.

Then I asked why do you they think is so important to ask her before giving her a hug and the children replied that she has something in her mouth and she cannot speak.

Then, I presented to the children a problem solving situation. I showed them two plastic cups, one of green color and one of pink. I put both of them in front of the diversity doll and noticed their reactions.

I heard ‘Oh, no, one green and one pink’ and they seemed shocked about what will happen next, their mouth was open, their eyes were glazing and they had their fingers crossed around the mouth.

To continue, I put on purpose the green cup in front of Vaso instead of the pink and asked them how they think she is feeling.

‘Angry, because she does not have the pink cup’ the children replied.

Then I asked what do they think we could do about it and take the green cup and bring the pink cup to her was one suggestion with the rest nodding of agreement. I asked the child who gave me the reply to this change if wanted, so it happened. With a feeling of hurry and enthusiasm the child changed the cups. At this point, everyone smiled and clapped their hands.

‘How do you think she is feeling now?’ was my next question.

‘Happy because she has the pink cup. (...) She loves pink. (...) Pink makes her happy and calm’ were their answers. After, I asked them how did they feel about her and they answered that they felt happy because she was also happy. At the end of the conversation, I said to the children that Vaso thanks them a lot about that movement with the cup and she feels really happy that she found some new friends who are taking care of her and like her company. Also, that it is time for her to go now, and I asked if someone would like to give her a hug. They all smiled for one last time and hugged her even stronger this last time.

We see, therefore, from the research data that the children developed empathy but also at the end of the three days session they saw acceptance of the diversity doll. It could therefore be argued that the aims set by the application of this method have been achieved. As derives from Bandura’s social learning theory, the behavior modification acquires time and different variables into account. Learning and change of someone’s behavior is a process that can occur in time. The instructor/observer gave to the children the proper tools and saw them the desired behavior. At all sessions, was close to the doll with a positive and friendly attitude and explaining to them the reasons why the diversity doll reacts in specific ways passing the message of understanding the other’s people’s feelings and behaviors. The diversity doll was presented in a positive way too. Her identity had common characteristics with the rest of the children in order to cause familiarity and this comes in common with social learning theory were the children are more probably to adopt a behavior whether they see it as relevant or not.). Furthermore, the primary goal is for the children to name the doll's feelings, to empathize with her, to counsel her, thus helping themselves, a condition that also happens in our case. It is important to mention that generally when children using this doll create a direct relationship with her as if she were alive by having as if at the back of their minds as it happens in this study. As they make use of the persona doll, they can experiment with life events and through play and communication they can provide solutions to important problems. Both the

physical and the virtual appearance of the persona doll help increase the children's desire to create a story.

5.2.2 Group two

The second week I got into the classroom with the second group, the children in that group was from 3 to 6 years old. From my observations, I noticed that everyone was smiling and looking at her trying to touch her. I presented them the diversity doll in the same way as to Group 1 and they all got excited to meet her at first place. Once more, by the first impression Vaso was really warmed welcomed in both groups. After that, one of the children asked for her age. Apparently, she was four like them. This made them more excited about her and then I was hearing voices *like* 'I am also 4!', 'Next year I am going to be 5!'

I continued saying that, 'Well Vaso has many likes and dislikes just like you guys' One child asked for an example and I answered that she likes to play just like them but sometimes she doesn't like to play with many people, instead she prefers to play by herself.

'Who likes to play by themselves?' I asked, and most of them raised their hand. 'Why do you like to play by yourself?' One child asked, talking to Vaso.

This reaction showed to me how engaged the children were with the doll, giving the speech to her, believing that she was alive. I answered for her 'Well, sometimes when someone tries to take a toy from her without her permission she gets a bit upset. Mostly, because she is unable to express herself verbally and feels that some friends don't understand her needs. You see, Vaso, even though you have the same age, she doesn't speak yet, and so we should try and communicate with her in other ways. That is why I am talking for her. We have found our own way to communicate, so you can do too!'

I continued by asking them if they have any question for her, such as which is her favorite color. Later, the children asked Vaso and I answered that 'Well her favorite color is pink (everyone got excited here), but she only likes pink. She doesn't like any other color, so she has everything pink and if it is not she might get a bit frustrated. Is that ok?' A child responded 'no' and the rest replied about their favorite colors.

At the end of the conversation I asked them if they want to give her a high five or a hug, reminding to them that they have to ask her before. Two of them wanted to give a high five or a hug, except of

one child who said that she was afraid of her and didn't like her because she does like orange and not pink color like Vaso.

The second day of observation as in the first group, I asked them if someone remembers her name. Apparently, one of the children replied positively. As in the group one, the second day of observation most of the children did not remember her name but other details for her. For instance, they remembered that she likes the pink color and only. After that discussion, I presented Vaso and the incident with the friend and the pink bag. The role play was the same as in the group one. I left the classroom and when I entered again, I represented the scene without talking, observing their reactions. I observed signs of anticipation, they were rubbing their hands together and they were unable to sit still. I asked them what they think that happened and if it is ok to react like that.

They replied 'No' and that 'We need to take every color' and one child replied that she likes green color. At this time, from their gesture I observed that they had their eyebrows down and together and narrowing of the lips which showed me a kind of bothering or even anger.

Keeping on my mind Bandura's social learning theory (1977), as the instructor, I had to message to the children the desired behavior and once again, I reminded to them that it is hard for Vaso to express herself verbally and we might need to find another way to tell her that all the colors are beautiful. The children said that it is not nice when we hurt our friends and that we need to tell a teacher about that. At that moment I explained to them that, everyone might get frustrated some times and gave them some examples from our daily life. The important thing here was to give them the reasons why the diversity doll reacted in this way and try to understand her actions and her feelings. Then I asked them if they can think and find another way for Vaso to express her feelings and needs to a friend that when she wants to play with a toy which does not belong to her. It was hard for them to find an answer, the only thing they thought was for her to communicate it, but since she cannot speak yet it was even harder. I proposed to them that Vaso and they might can communicate with signs and point with their hand if they want to show something to her. They felt like we have found a solution to our problem, so I noticed some smiles and told them that Vaso needs to leave and that she will come back the next day. I also told them that Vaso felt more familiar with them today and that she would like to say goodbye with a high five. All of them gave a high five to her and left the room. Although, in the beginning of the second day children were keeping a distance from Vaso, I noticed that while we were talking, they were totally involved into the discussion without being distracted and they were looking at her all the time, like the first group did.

During the observation I noticed from their body language that they felt more familiar with her, sat closer and tried to have a physical contact with the diversity doll.

The third day and last day, everyone sat closer to her from the beginning which shows that they felt more familiar with her and have had build a kind of relationship since they knew more things about her and vice versa. It was the third day in a row that they met the diversity doll and it considered a familiar person. I asked what they remembered about her and they told me about her name and pink color. Then it was the time to bring the two cups and place the green cup in front of her. Their reactions show to me that they were really stressed and worried (sign of interlocked fingers around their body) not because she would be frustrated, rather they just wanted to see her happy (their answers were 'No , no she wants the pink color! (...) She only likes the pink, we need to give her the pink cup, pink is her color '(...) etc. In addition, the children said that they loved Vaso and they had become friends with her.

The end of the story in the presentation of the persona doll must be short and simple, and propose an appropriate - if not perfect - solution, telling the children what the doll has finally decided to do. But even in cases where the persona doll does not bring up difficult issues, children need confirmation that they have been taken care of the doll and that everything has ended well. Dolls and their stories can make a significant contribution when they are part of an anti-racist curriculum. They provide children with knowledge of equality and justice, but also encourage them to support those who are discriminated against. Therefore, the use of the persona doll is an innovative, effective, enjoyable and non-threatening way to promote diversity, provide psychosocial support and protect human rights. Stories are built on each other: gradually and with open-ended questions, the researcher delivers information about problem situations that children have experienced, benefits from dialogues that emerge daily, feeds back and creates a new story or continuation of a story. The primary goal is for the children to name the doll's feelings, to feel and counsel her, thus helping themselves. Children are happy to give their advice to the dolls, through references to their own experiences and actions. And the doll, by thanking them for their advice, reinforces, boosts their confidence and at the same time creates safety within that group. Stories are built on each other: gradually and with open-ended questions, the researcher delivers information about problem situations that children have experienced, benefits from dialogues that emerge daily, feeds back and creates a new story or continuation of a story. The primary goal is for the children to name the doll's feelings, to feel and counsel her, thus helping themselves. Children are happy to give their advice to the dolls, through references to their own experiences and actions. And the doll, by thanking them

for their advice, reinforces, boosts their confidence and at the same time creates safety within that group.

5.3 Reactions of children in diversity doll with physical disorder.

5.3.1 Group three

The last week of observation the doll presented had a physical impairment. I took the third group of children in the classroom and I introduced Vaso to the children (age, name, family). I noticed that everyone was looking very carefully at her legs. I asked them if they notice something on her.

‘She has broken legs’ a child replied to me.

Also, the children said that the doll couldn’t walk. A child asked why she couldn’t walk and I answered that she was born like this, so she needs a special chair to walk and after I asked them if they had seen any of those special chairs somewhere. The children referred that they had seen grandmas and papas using that to walk and I added, that those special chairs can be used also by children. Everyone was looking at her and her legs very carefully, trying to understand the situation. To continue, one of the children asked if they can be friends with Vaso from the very first minutes, looking again at her while making the question. I replied that it would be her pleasure and asked the rest of the group if they would like to be friends with her as well. Most of them replied ‘yes’ and one replied ‘No’. I asked the child who said no for the reason he does not want but I didn’t get a reply. Later, I felt that I had to change to another question and asked them if they would play football with her, how could they change the game in order for her to play also since she couldn’t walk, what other parts of the body she could use to play.

‘She could play basketball maybe’, a child responded. I said that this is a wonderful idea and I asked them if they could think of any other game to play with her. The children replied that maybe she could see and they could look at stories and books or coloring. We all agreed that those are very good ideas and maybe we can play something next time we will meet with her. To sum up, at the end of the day the children said that they liked Vaso a lot and they wanted to meet up her again.

The second day, everyone sat closer to her and repeated her name, age, country of origin etc. They all looked so excited seeing her again! I observed their eyebrows were raised, the eyes were widened and their mouth open. I continued the conversation saying that

‘Today was a really warm day, so Vaso and her mum got for a walk at the playground. Vaso was sitting in her special chair, when something happened, some children were playing around and they saw her sitting on her chair and they started laughing at her, so Vaso got a bit sad and asked her mum to go back home’. I noticed signs of sadness like hands over the head posture and a slight pull down of lip corners with a losing focus in eyes. They replied that “This is not ok, she should tell her mum about those children, it's not nice’.

My next question was if it is ok to make fun of other people who might not be able to use parts of their bodies like their feet or like their hands etc. One of them replied negative and the rest nodded. I also asked them what they would do if they will see in their new school a friend like Vaso. They all replied that they would play with her. We notice that after contact with the doll, children are able to develop emotion, but also to accept the doll. It is also observed that they are trying to find different ways to integrate the doll into their group and thus, a child with a motor disability. This is also the meaning of the school, to cultivate acceptance and respect for all students, whether they are disabled or not. Still, the goal is to apply the social model of integration and get children in touch with it. In today's society, the clinical model of disability approaches comes from education provided at school. The third day getting back into the main classroom and after saying "Hello" to Vaso, I told them that Vaso today is a bit sad because the appointment with a doctor did not end up so well, it might get a long time for her to walk again and that is the reason she is a bit sad today. The practitioner created a new problem to them in order to see if they can solve it, something that will show to me the level of empathy. I told them that Vaso today is going to stay and play with us for a while. So, I asked them to think what game should they chose to play with her and I let them free for a while to check. I observed that one of the children gave her a book and sat next to her while reading it. Another child brought the blocks in front of her and tried to pass her pieces and build together, one other brought the crayons to color and the last one brought the cooking materials. I got amazed from their capability to solve the problem to this situation, find different activities to play with her and all appropriate for the situation! Furthermore, while I was observing them, I saw and heard that they were talking to her saying 'Look, we can play with that, do you want to build a castle? You can use this color if you want'.

At the end of the observation I told to the children that Vaso today feels really happy and thankful, because she has found new friends who like to play lot of games with her. All children smiled and when she left the room, everyone gave her a big hug.

To sum up, in the second case of Vaso, I observed that children were more confused with the diversity doll when they saw that she cannot use her legs in contrast with the first case that they got excited from the beginning, especially because her clothes were all pink. Signs that made me conclude to that case were that I did not noticed many smiles, their eyes were focused mostly on their legs, they were moving their head closer to her down part of her body looking carefully at it. Vaso, had the same pink dress at the third group too, but her legs caught the children's attention more than that. After get to know her better, not only they liked her but they totally understood and respected her needs finding creative games to play with her. Generally, in the first case of Autism

Spectrum Disorder the researcher noticed that everyone's first impression was more enthusiasm but after the role play they became more confused at her and the third day when we explained what she likes and dislike, and that we can find a new way to communicate with her, they knew how to approach her and the doll left everyone with positive feelings saw signs of happiness (arms and legs open, feet pointing at her, smiles, eyes open). .

The diversity doll consists a new educational tool that can help reduce the discrimination, stereotypes and racism that children from other countries may experience is the persona doll, the identity doll (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). The difference between this doll and the others in the classroom, with which the children play, is that the diversity doll brings children into a problematic situation in which they are called upon to find a solution. The operator with open-ended questions and dialogue provides children with information about situations that they have experienced. Children are concerned and express their emotions, recognize the doll's emotions and advise her to resolve her problematic situation. Also, positive behaviors are taught, (Allen & Whalley, 2010), informed about equality, justice, and learn to support discriminated individuals (Vitsou & Agzidou, 2008). The person doll is treated like any other member of the group, as if she were a real child, so she associates with the children. The actual characteristics given to the doll make it more plausible in children. The doll is kept and reminded of the children to behave like a real child, with respect and affection (Bisson, 2012).

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 The emotional importance of the diversity doll

Social diversity and equity issues are presented by diversity dolls to children in two ways. First of all, diversity persona dolls have different physical characteristics such as skin tone, hair texture and color. In addition, dolls vary in gender and race. Second, each doll has its own persona, in other words personality and identity like it was a human being. For example, the doll has a life history that details its race, ethnicity, family culture, gender and special interests. As referred in Chapter 2, Bandura's social learning theory supports that the factor who indicates whether the children imitate a new behavior depends on if they see that factor as relevant or not. In other words, if the person they observe has similar characteristics to them it is more likely to adopt this behavior (Bandura, 1963). Diversity doll is an innovative way for the children to understand deeper and better the stories the dolls tell. Also, they represent means for understanding the differences and the variety at the society, and generally the equality. So, the young generation can gain the mentality to leave with the rest of society equally. During the training session, the practitioner develops the chosen doll's persona. Then in the sessions with the children, the objective of the practitioner is to help the children explore their negative and positive experiences, events and emotions (Brown, 2001; Buchanan, 2007). To do this, the practitioner sits with the doll in his or her lap, and introduces the doll to the group of children. The practitioner then speaks to the group, by telling them about the doll's experience, and uses this as a way to facilitate discussion. The purpose of the Persona Dolls is to facilitate the process of identification and to establish a relationship between the dolls and the children, so that through the dolls, the children are able to express their emotions, especially the emotions that may be difficult to talk about. By being able to talk about their emotions, children are more able to manage their emotions.

Also, the main purpose of the doll is to create empathy which is crucial in the Persona/Diversity Doll program (Emotional Literacy and Persona Doll fining Manual, 2010). In order for the teacher or individual working with the dolls to reflect children's responses and encourage discussions around emotions, he/she needs to have empathy. In these sessions the practitioner needs to understand the perspective of the child by transposing himself/herself as much as possible into the child's situation,

and experience other-oriented feelings. The diversity doll allows the child to speak about his/her emotions because the doll is seen as someone who understands them, and has empathy for them. Therefore, empathy is a crucial/core component. The analyzed data on this survey, illustrate clearly the modification of the children's behavior to the doll and the variety of their emotions. More particular, in the beginning when the dolls presented to the children they all saw emotions of joy and enthusiasm about her. They found many correlations between them and the doll, as the age, country, habits which let them feel more connected with it. This then allows an easier adoption of the desired behavior according to the social learning theory.

As soon as the children met the doll better they found out more about her character and become more curious to know her better but also they saw confusion to some of her reactions in the first group and to her appearance to the second group. As long as the researcher explained in both situations to them why the doll is or acts in this way, the next emotion was for them the realization of the situation and they were trying to find different ways in order to make her feel happier. Children were waiting every day with excitement to see the doll at the same time and in the same classroom giving her a hug like they are waiting every day to meet their friends. The last day, in both the problem solving situations the researcher told the children about the doll they proved that they were feeling sorry and stressed about her because they wanted to see her happy and solve this problematic situation, something that they achieved in both groups and left them also with a feeling of relief and happiness.

From the data we can conclude that diversity doll can be used to introduce issues of gender, disability, diversity, racism and xenophobia, health, culture, religion and social issues (Smith, 2006). Previous research in the field has shown that the use of diversity doll, which is a possible method introducing meaningful stories can effectively introduce the issue of equality in children. The persona doll is an effective, enjoyable and non-threatening way of presenting diversity to children, contributes to respect for the cultural and linguistic specificity of each child, empowers each child individually, is an important anti-discrimination tool and enhances their sense of self, helps develop empathy, psychosocial development of children, protects human rights, improves their verbal speech, cultivates a sense of respect, solidarity offers a wealth of knowledge on issues related to equality, justice defends individuals who were victims of racism. The persona doll is an effective, enjoyable and non-threatening way of presenting diversity to children, contributes to respect for the cultural and linguistic specificity of each child, empowers each child individually, is an important anti-discrimination tool and enhances their sense of self, helps develop empathy, psychosocial

development of children, protects human rights, improves their verbal speech, cultivates a sense of respect, solidarity offers a wealth of knowledge on issues related to equality, justice defends individuals who were victims of racism. The lens of social learning theory help the instructor promote the message of equality with the diversity doll as an appropriate tool and make children understand other's people situation. Also, the diversity doll is a useful tool for within the frame of social learning theory, gives the opportunity to the children to see a model and adopt its behavior, discuss about new imaginary stories and scenario that take place in everyday life situations and whom they will face in the future while the instructor promotes the desired behavior through the stories and is a real life visual model to the children.

6.2 The creation of empathy

When we tell stories with the DPA doll, we encourage and respect each child's cultural and linguistic heritage and respect all people. The persona/diversity doll has its own story and it empowers children. Through their identity, their attachment to dolls and their involvement in stories, children can feel the feelings of others, respect those who are different, adopt a loving attitude, be supportive and sensitive. Persona dolls, or identity dolls, lead them to actively learn diversity through history and debate. We, the teachers, are responsible for our active efforts to keep the vision alive and to raise children without racism, stereotypes and obsessions (Smith, 2005; 2006). It is clear from the survey data that the doll plays a very important role in the child's physical, social and mental development. The doll as a toy is related to the child's developmental stages and helps to develop a child's imagination as creates numerous stories and scenarios for his doll, doing work, being at home, being her friends, etc. Through the play with the doll, the child begins to emerge from their microcosm, join their peer group and socialize. This is the beginning of the child's integration into society (Parousi, 2009). Piaget states that in the early stages of infancy, the first stages of thinking are internalized actions, so the game corresponds to thinking.

Moreover, Bandura at his social learning theory emphasized that children can learn through observation and change their behavior (Bandura 1971). The connection of the social learning theory and the results which derive from the data analysis is apparent. Bandura is first referred to the observational learning and the way of learning through modeling. He clarifies that most of the behaviors that people display is learned either deliberately either inadvertently through the influence for example. Reinforcement is a key component in this theory. The different stages of Bandura's

social learning theory can be found on the research data and explained further. Attentional process of Bandura (1977) as a first stage of observational learning determined in other words the quantity of attention a child pays to the model. Derived from the research data, children were focused to the diversity doll at all sessions, giving her the word to speak and coming in physical contact with her. The details and all the information the children remembered about the doll and as a consequence the doll's behavior led us to the second stage of observational learning process which is the retention process and determines how well the child remembers the mode's behavior and information. At the third and fourth stage of observational learning process, production and motivational process respectively, the instructor plays an important role. In this study, the instructor showed to the children the desired behavior she wanted children to acquire. This can be found from the verbal instruction in order to engage children in the desired behavior, the physical presence of the instructor where demonstrated the desired behavior but also through symbolic modeling, from the imaginary situations and the role plays. Data analysis showed that the children were motivated to imitate the instructor and its desired behavior to the doll. Moreover, research data show that children indeed are influenced from the doll and that they can create signs of empathy for it.

Regarding the diversity doll, through the play, the child can recall dialogues, situations from the environment in which they live and begin to represent them with the dolls. This is how the child's senses are mobilized. Persona Doll for early childhood is a true person shaping a child's personality (Dimitratou, 2005). Derived from the survey data, the children are able to create positive emotions for the doll. Children seemed to show they care for someone else and not judge other persons. The children throughout this period of time and with the guidance of the researcher showed empathy to the doll and Bandura's social learning theory for observation and the role of the researcher on that was ascertained. The doll has the ability to influence and teach the child through her passions to learn rules, codes of ethics, values, and ideal (Kontogianni, 2012). According to the literature study (Eisenberg, 2002; Hakansson, 2003; Lamn, Batson, & Decety, 2007), empathy is the participation in another's emotional experience. Dolls are the 'perfect vehicles' that lead to empathy (Brown, 2001). But what do we mean by empathy? It is widely argued that empathy (Eisenberg, 2002) provides the necessary foundations for the appropriate behavior within the community. A child may feel empathy for another person at any age. As children grow, their capacity for empathy widens and they become more able to interpret and respond to the sadness of others (Hoffman, 1975). Children can feel the feelings of others, through their identity and attachment to dolls and their involvement in stories, respect those who differ or adopt a loving attitude, and become supportive and sensitive. An increase

in pre-social behavior is promoted, such as sharing, helping, caring and expressing support (Hamre, 2004a, b).

The survey data show that familiarity is building between the children and the doll by opening themselves to the doll, talking to her and feel comfortable. The common characteristics doll has with the children such as age is a contribution factor for familiarity. Furthermore, one of the most important characteristics of the doll is that it gives children the opportunity to engage in dialogue with them through which the child can freely express himself, to expose his thoughts and desires. In this way the socialization of children is practiced as they are led to express themselves (Peraki, 1988). The child feels very different to the doll and to the adults. The doll can fit it into her fantasy world and use it as she wishes. The child sees the world presented by the doll as true because the tale is the world of the little child. Seeing the doll play, the children identify and communicate with her psychologically, adhere to her and do not care about the puppeteer who moves her, even if they see it (Daraki, 1978). From the survey data we notice that the children at all groups who were older from years 4 old were more involved to the stories and have a better understanding of the situations, expressing their feelings better and showing care. It is observed that older children understand easier more complex situations such as empathy. Moreover, the gender of the participants is possible to play a role to the perception of empathy while girls show more empathetic behavior instead of the boys, with more engagement to the stories and enthusiasm. Lastly, as it derives from the survey data, children of that age, (4-6) have a better understanding to something that they can observe with their eyes. Consequently, it was more difficult for them to understand and empathize with a disability that they could not see in contrast with the last case with the physical impairment, that they all show a greater level of understanding without mixed feelings about the doll.

At the early level of education and at any stage of education the significant role of the teacher is unquestionable. Children from the very young age spend the majority of their time at the preschools and schools. The school and the teacher are not only responsible for teaching student's courses but most importantly to teach the values. The role of the teacher plays a significant role to the child's perception about our world and to the structure of its character. The teacher should always be by the side of every child without any discrimination or inequity. Today's school should adopt new methods for children with SEN. Teacher's education should involve training around the techniques of discrimination and involve training around the use of the diversity doll. Moreover, teachers could have workshops around using the diversity doll when they are working with children. To sum up,

the teacher's/ researcher's intervention consists of one factor for the creation of empathy. Children are imitating the behaviors and learning through observation thus, it is important to have someone who promotes those values to them. Even though empathy as a feeling is inherit at all children from very young age, as the children getting old is easier for them to understand more complex phenomena and develop their level of empathy.

6.3 Conclusion

The study has a twofold aim. The first aim was to identify how the children respond on an emotional level of the diversity doll to the children. The collected data saw the different emotions children experienced. Children at all groups observed, experienced enthusiasm at first, followed by hesitation and mystify to the doll but also emotions of friendship, care and love as they named at the end of the observations. Moreover, all the participants had feelings of joy at the end of the problematic situation because they had strong feelings for the doll. The concentration of the above data, leads us to the second's aim's answer of the survey which is to identify the diversity doll as an effective tool to create empathy. On the final day of the observation, each of the four participated groups, showed only positive emotions for the doll. The children responded positively to the solving problem situations created by the researcher and all the groups achieved to find a solution to the problem. With the use of the doll, the researcher becomes able to cultivate respect for the 'other'. The children were able to understand, the emotions of the doll respect, the dolls presence, and were willing to help because they had started caring about it.

Considering the survey results, we conclude that the diversity doll is an innovative method of removing any discrimination, stereotypes or manifestations of racism experienced or experienced by children is the use of the persona doll as an educational tool.

6.4 Research constraints

In every single research study limitations of the method and technique arise. In general, it is almost unavoidable for a researcher to support the research method and methodology he chose for his survey was without any imperfections. The current study meets also several limitations. To begin with, the timeframe was narrowed. Due to the working hours of the researcher and the children's attendance times but also the preschool schedule, the arranged time of meetings with the children

and the period of observations which lasted two weeks were limited. Moreover, there was an exception of one participant child not attended the last two meetings and as a consequence, there are no data for the specific child. Lastly, the role of the researcher leading the study and observe the emotions and reactions simultaneously was challenging.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

Future research of this study could involve a broader collection of data to the numbers of participants and the percentage of preschools. Despite the limitations, the current study can contribute to the field of Early Childhood Education as a teaching tool to promote equality and at prevention programs for discrimination and bullying. Also, child's psychologists can use the doll in order to address trauma or to children with Special Educational Needs, in order to provide them with social, emotional or psychological support. The study can be expanded and used in a long-term program aiming to reflect and examine the results of a long term exposure to the doll regarding time frame. Furthermore, it can be used at the same time to groups where the doll is used and is not used comparing the results.

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Appendix 1: Observation consent form for parents



Project title: The use of diversity dolls in Early Education

Researcher: Georgia Kaloti
Program: International Master in Educational Research (IMER)
University of Gothenburg

guskaloge@student.gu.se

I agree my child to participate in the research project led by Georgia Kaloti and its observation for the researched period.

The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of participation to the program and to reassure my child's safety at all levels:

- I have been informed about this program from the researcher. The purpose of the survey, the process and the behavior that will be observed are clear to me.
- My child's identity and the preschools identity will remain anonymous and confidential
- I have the right to withdraw my child from the research project at any time I decide to do it.
- I can contact Georgia Kaloti if I have questions about the program and my child's participation
- I can receive a copy of the research findings from Georgia Kaloti in order to reassure my child's anonymity

Date:

Name:

Signature:

Appendix 2: Observation consent for the preschool



Project title: The use of diversity dolls in Early Education

Researcher: Georgia Kaloti
Program: International Master in Educational Research (IMER)
University of Gothenburg

guskaloge@student.gu.se

The current study is a part of the student Georgia Kaloti at the Master program of International Educational Research at the University of Gothenburg. The study aims to the exploration of the children's emotions with the use of a diversity doll and children with Special Educational Needs.

I hereby provide consent for Georgia Kaloti to observe the children at our Preschool and I am aware that:

- All the guardians are informed by a personal meeting with the researcher and a signed document about the purpose and the process.
- It is under parent's decision whether their child will participate to the project.
- All the names of the children and the name of the preschool will be anonymous and the confidential.
- I can withdraw the research project from the preschool at any time.
- I can receive a copy of the findings by Georgia Kaloti at the end of the survey.

Date:

Name:

Signature:

Appendix 3: Unstructured interview sample questions



Day 1: Presentation

- What did you like or did not like about her?
- How would you like to say a goodbye? Hug, high-five?

Day 2: Emotions and role play

- Do you remember her name?
- What do you remember about her?
- Do you remember what happens when she does not get the pink color?
- What do you think about it? Do you think is ok or no?
- What do you think happened now and why?

Day 3: Empathy

- What do you remember about Vaso?
- How do you think she is feeling? (Problem solving)
- What do you think we can do about her?
- How do you think she is feeling now?
- How do you feel about that has happened, her?
- Would you like to give her a hug?

Appendix 4: The diversity doll



The diversity doll used in the study is made of fabric material and has over 40cm height. The doll had her own 'persona', regarding her name, family, background and a story to tell.

