

What Do Children Learn at Swedish Preschools?

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Abstract

The purposes of this research are, first, to make visible, examine, and illuminate preschool teachers' perception of what children enrolled in preschools learn and how they learn it; and second, to highlight and illuminate what abilities preschool teachers perceive that children can develop during their stay at preschools. As a theoretical framework, theories of entrepreneurship education and citizenship education are used. The research was conducted using a questionnaire sent out to thirteen local municipalities in the county of Norrbotten in the north of Sweden. The results showed a thoroughgoing positive response from the respondents to almost all of the statements presented in the questionnaire. The positive responses that the preschool teachers and other staff gave to the statements in the questionnaire can be an important platform for the development of active citizenship, although these positive responses still need to be critically analysed and further investigated.

Based on the research results, it is argued that the relationship between entrepreneurship education and citizenship education is a close one and that it is possible for one to lend itself to the other and strengthen the development of individual's skills for inclusion in society from very early ages.

Keywords: children, preschool, citizenship, entrepreneurship, education

1. Introduction

In this article, insights from research that has sought to deepen the perception of preschool teachers about what competences and skills enrolled children aged 1-5 years have possibilities to develop during their visits at the preschool presented. Earlier studies have found that entrepreneurial skills and tools for active citizenship are closely related and that it is possible for one to lend itself to the other and strengthen the development of an individual's skills for inclusion in society (Westerberg & Lindström, 2011). Based on the research results, I argue that even young children enrolled at preschools can develop their citizenship and entrepreneurial skills.

In the first part of the paper the concept of preschools, its connection to the Education Act, and the preschool curriculum is presented. In the next two sections the theoretical framework for entrepreneurship and citizenship is described as well as the method used. In the fifth part the research is presented, and in the last part, the research findings are discussed and analyzed.

2. The Swedish Preschool

The school system in Sweden includes preschool class, compulsory school, upper secondary school, and adult education.

In Sweden, attendance at school is compulsory for all children aged 7-16 years. Before their attendance at school, most children in Sweden stay at preschools. Preschool is an educational group activity for children from the age of one until they start school. The preschool is a separate school form, and its activities are regarded as education and teaching. Teaching takes place under the supervision of preschool teachers, but there may also be other staff to promote the child's development and learning.

Within the Education Act (2010: 800), municipalities are required to provide preschool activities and child care for children aged 1-12 years. As of 2013, there are more than 470,000 children enrolled in preschools. Almost 96 % of children aged 3-5 years attend preschools (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012; 2011). One goal of preschools is to provide children with good pedagogical activities; the preschool should be enjoyable, secure, and rich in providing learning opportunities for all children enrolled. Moreover, the children should have

the opportunity to learn through playing, creating, and exploring – on their own, in groups, and together with adults.

The staff of the preschool plans pedagogical activities that enable children to create, learn, and explore. This takes place, for instance, through playing, cooperating with others, painting, building, and singing. Creating a secure environment for both children and parents is an important task of the preschool.

The preschool is regulated by the Education Act (2010: 800) and the Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2010). The Education Act states that the grouping of children should have an appropriate composition and size and that the preschool premises should be fit for purpose. There should be preschool teachers and other staff with the education or experience necessary to support the child's development and learning. Furthermore, the curriculum states that the premises and equipment should be available so that the aim of the preschool can be fulfilled.

The Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98 (2010) stipulates that democracy forms the foundation of the preschool. "An important task of the preschool is to impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based" (p. 3). The overall tasks of the preschool are to lay the foundations for lifelong learning. The curriculum states that adults should give children support in developing trust and self-confidence and that the children's curiosity, initiative, and interest should be encouraged and their will and desire to learn stimulated. The curriculum further stipulates that: "Children should have the opportunity of developing their ability to observe and reflect. The preschool should be a living social and cultural environment that stimulates children into taking initiative and developing their social and communicative competence" (p. 5). The curriculum also states that children should have the opportunity to explore an issue in greater depth on their own and to search for their own answers and solutions.

In the Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98 (2010), it is argued that play is important for the child's development and learning. The curriculum states that play and enjoyment in learning in all its various forms stimulate the imagination, insights, communication skills, and ability to think symbolically and to cooperate and solve problems. In the curriculum, the opinion is expressed that children search for knowledge and can develop it through play, social interaction, exploration, and creativity, as well as through observation, discussion, and reflection. "The preschool should promote play, creativity and enjoyment of learning, as well as focus on and strengthen the child's interest in learning and capturing new experiences, knowledge and skills" (p. 9).

The task for the preschool is expressed as to give children support in developing a positive picture of themselves as learning and creative individuals. Furthermore, the preschool should support the children in developing confidence in their own ability to think, act, move, and learn.

In the Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98 (2010), more explicit guidelines on the preschool teacher's responsibility have been developed and expressed. It is stated therein that the preschool teacher's responsibility is to provide children with opportunities for learning and development and, at the same time, to encourage them to use the whole range of their abilities. The other responsibilities mentioned include to organize their work so that the group of children can experience a sense of enjoyment and meaningfulness in learning what is new; to receive new challenges that stimulate enjoyment in learning new skills, experiences, and knowledge; to receive support and stimulation in their social development; and finally, to provide the children with good conditions and a secure group environment for building relationships.

The conditions that the preschool should strive to ensure for each child are in line with the overall key competences developed by the European Commission. The European Commission works with EU Member States to develop the concept of key competences, that is, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help people gain personal fulfillment and enable them to take part in society. In 2006 the EU adopted the European Framework of Key Competences, a reference tool to help Member States to adapt their school curricula to modern needs. In the framework, the following eight key competences were identified: communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages, mathematical competence, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression (European Commission - Education, 2012). The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which states that children have the right to be consulted in matters directly concerning them, is another broad global push for children to be treated as active participants in society rather than as passive recipients and targets of adult decisions and interventions (Nichols, 2007).

Of special interest in this article is the preschool teachers' perception about children's possibilities to develop their civic competences and sense of initiative and entrepreneurship toward achieving active citizenship.

3. Theoretical Framework

In this article, the shared features of citizenship and entrepreneurship are used as a theoretical framework (Westerberg & Lindström, 2011).

Jans (2004) claimed that, today, the childhood years present themselves as a very ambivalent reality because, on the one hand, children are surrounded with care, and on the other hand, children are stimulated to present themselves as individuals with their own rights. These different social and cultural conceptions of what childhood is and should be are made manifest in laws, policies, and a range of steering documents, such as curriculums and institutions that contextualize the everyday lives of children in any society (James, 2011).

Marshall (1950) argued that young citizens were not seen as full members of a community because, although they had some social and civil rights, they did not have political rights, and he thus envisaged children as becoming citizens. Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) were critical of Marshall's definition and defined citizenship as a more total relationship than did Marshall. They believed that citizenship is inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices, and a sense of belonging. Later, Hartley (2010) similarly claimed that the actual process of citizenship formation is carried out by children who individually, collectively, and differently produce citizenship in their actions, forms of association, and thence identities.

Jones (2002; 2008) and Jones and Wallace (1992) claimed that young people are not sovereign members of the community because they are still at the entrance into adulthood. They further argued that young citizens do not have full access to the citizenship rights of adults but have indirect rights, as children do, through their parents or careers. It is therefore reasoned that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is needed as protection in such situation of dependence.

Today, it is possible to argue that our society has become more complex due to individualization and globalization. Beauregard and Bounds (2000) claimed that the nation-state is no longer as dominant as it once was owing to two forces: globalization and cultural diversity. As a response to this, they suggested an alternative concept that they termed "cosmopolitan citizenship" in recognition of the multiplicity of the world. Their argument for using cosmopolitan citizenship is based on their concern for vulnerable groups and oppressed communities. A cosmopolitan approach places obligations on citizens over and above their obligations to their own nation. Cosmopolitan citizenship is the idea of a varied and multicultural identity in relation to other signifiers, such as ethnicity and class (ibid).

In considering the society to come, Arnot (2006) questioned what sort of citizen will be needed in the future and how youths should best be prepared for the social changes that will occur. "Youth cultural research have found that young people today employ the language of individualizing, the concept of freedom and choice, to justify their life styles and decisions" (Arnot, 2006, p. 69). In the same way, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) described "Freedom's Children," the name by which they refer to children who, unlike their parents, have been brought up to become choosers or consumers of what life has to offer. This new culture is described as a self-culture, and it is tightly connected to leisure. "Central to this self-culture is the process of individual reflexivity in which individuals come to see themselves as the center of their own life-world" (Arnot, 2006, p. 70).

Inglehart (1997) and Giddens (1991) stated that young citizens participate in society with "self-actualizing" or "self-reflexive" involvements in personally meaningful causes guided by their own lifestyles and shifting social networks. In the light of new knowledge and experiences, people constantly reconsider and redevelop their self (Giddens, 1991).

Biesta, Lawy, and Kelly (2009), and Biesta and Lawy (2006) argued that young people's citizenship learning is not just a cognitive function; rather, it is a process that is situated, related, and uniquely linked to young people's individual life trajectories.

Instead of using the word life trajectories, Jans (2004) talked about the everyday life and claimed that learning is an integral part of our everyday life at every age and in diverse domains. It is reasoned that the classic relation between children and adults has changed. Jans (2004) further argued about the actual participation discourse and the social construction of childhood. Hengst (2001) even claimed that we are witnessing the liberation of childhood from modernity's educational project. James (2011) asserted that to change children's experiences, what is critical is the unpacking of the cultural discourses through which children live their everyday lives as children because this is a construction that is ongoing on a daily basis. Using a case study and data from empirical research carried out in children's hospitals, James (2011) suggested a need for changes in adults' ideas

about childhood, including about what children are, what they can do, and how their relationships with adults take place.

4. Active Citizenship

It is argued that, today, children and adults are becoming peers in the sense that they both have to learn to give meaning and shape to their active citizenship. Jans (2004) stated that playfulness and giving meaning could be universal characteristics of children although these are determined by culture and time-setting factors. "Although children are almost continually learning, they go through life in a playful way, especially when growing up in sufficiently stimulating circumstances" (p. 35). Jans (2004) further claimed that active citizenship and participation seem to open more possibilities for linking childhood and active citizenship in a meaningful way. Similarly, Lister (2007) argued that children should be equipped with skills and capacities for effective citizenship.

Jans (2004) cited that focusing on children's lived citizenship also draws attention to the possibility of social change and helps to identify shifts in the ways in which ideas about children's competences and hence their citizenship status might change over time. However, an earlier research by Nichols (2007), who studied children in preschool and observed teachers working to shape the class from a mixed bag of individual kids and to organize them into a collective operating unit according to classroom routines, values, and rules, found that young children are highly motivated to learn how power works in the collective class. She further observed that maintaining the rules of conduct during floor time, when the children gathered on a mat to participate in a teacher-led activity such as story reading, was the most stressful task for them.

Jans (2004) stated that children today can be regarded as active citizens, that is, that their ability to learn and play allows them to give active meaning to their environment. Furthermore, by accepting playful and ambivalent forms of citizenship, child participation presents itself no longer as a utopia but as a fact.

5. Entrepreneurship

In this study, my point of departure is in line with what have been argued thus far, and I thus hold that theories of entrepreneurship and citizenship can be seen as complementary to each other because the core of both theories include personal skills and qualities, such as motivation, learning, social awareness, and the development of self-confidence, self-responsibility, and creativity, and because a portfolio of citizenship skills has been identified to be able to show mutual respect to others, develop social awareness, take self-responsibility, and build self-confidence and self-worth (Hall, Williams and Coffey, 2000). Rather than seeing young citizenship as something that begins in adulthood, Smith, Lister, Middleton, and Cox (2005) claimed: "... the fluidity of young people's self-identity suggests that the transition to citizenship is negotiated throughout the life-course" (p. 426).

Shane and Venkataraman (2000) claimed that entrepreneurship depends on particular opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of those opportunities, and the mind-set of the individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit them. Eckhard and Shane (2003) also focused on a deeper understanding of the opportunities in the entrepreneurial process. Chell and Athayde (2009) argued that the skills for innovation, such as imagination, creativity, curiosity, enthusiasm, and talent, are often equated with the skills required for entrepreneurship. Imagination is defined here as the ability to envision the development of an idea into the future, and creativity subsumes the ability to connect ideas and to tackle and solve problems.

6. Methodology

This study used an attitude survey questionnaire, which was followed by a letter with instructions and a presentation of the research. Before distribution the questionnaire was pilot tested of four preschool teachers with different experiences from work at preschools, and both its reliability and validity were found to be satisfactory.

The survey instrument, which contained 34 statements and used a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was sent to all 13 municipalities in the county of Norrbotten in northern Sweden. Five questionnaires were distributed in each of the total 534 preschools/preschool divisions in Norrbotten, for a total of 2670 questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the professionals and other personnel working with children enrolled at the preschools. A total of 529 professionals completed the questionnaire, and preschools from all municipalities were represented. No respondent answered all the items in the questionnaire. The questionnaire survey was used to reach as many preschools/preschool divisions as possible. As the research had respondents from all municipalities there were no remaining sent out to the preschools/divisions in the research. From hereon I use the term "preschool" to refer to a single preschool as well as to a preschool with one or more divisions.

The statements that the preschool teachers or other staff working at the preschools had to consider in this research were divided according to the following themes: motivation, responsibility, cooperation, leadership, communication, curiosity, creativity, initiative, and self-image, self-esteem, and self-confidence. The respondents were asked to indicate whether it was possible for children enrolled at preschools to develop their own inner motivation, their ability to take responsibility, the ability to work with and listen to others, the ability to lead an activity, their creativity and curiosity, and the ability to generate new ideas. The respondents also had to indicate whether children could develop their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-image. Finally, the respondents were asked whether the children could develop their ability to see new possibilities.

7. What Abilities Can Children Enrolled in Swedish Preschools Develop?

This part of the article shows the survey results, illustrated in 18 histograms representing the answers to 18 of the 34 statements. These results include the responses from all 13 municipalities covered in the research. The overall results are discussed in the next section, and a profile of the results on all statements is provided in the appendix.

Of the 529 respondents, 97.9 % were females. Many of the respondents have been working at a preschool for a long time: 24.4 % for 21-25 years and 38.5 % for 26 years or more. About three quarters (72.0 %) of the respondents had formal education as a preschool teacher.

This section is structured according to the following themes: motivation, responsibility, cooperation, leadership, communication, curiosity, creativity, initiative, and self-image, self-esteem, and self-confidence. The questions were based on theories of citizenship and entrepreneurship, which are central to the study aim and research questions.

7.1 Motivation

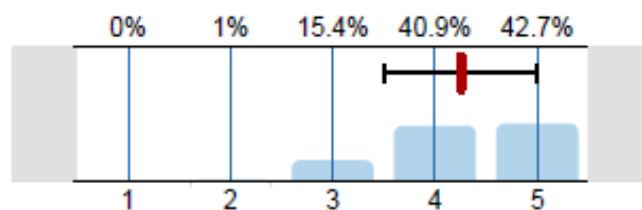


Figure 1. Children can develop their inner motivation

N=518

More than three quarters of the respondents (83.6 %) partly or totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their inner motivation.

7.2 Responsibility

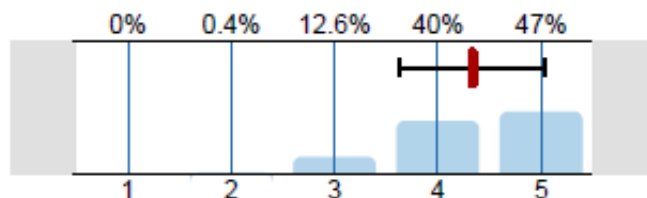


Figure 2. Children can develop their ability to have responsibility

N=523

Most of the respondents (87.0%) partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to have responsibility.

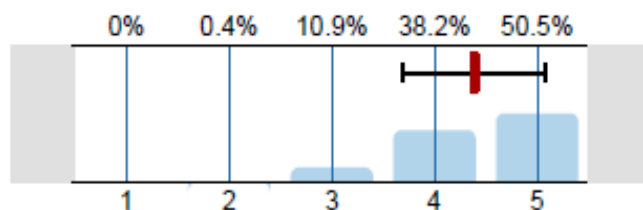


Figure 3. Children can develop their ability to take responsibility

N=521

More than half of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to take responsibility.

7.3 Cooperation

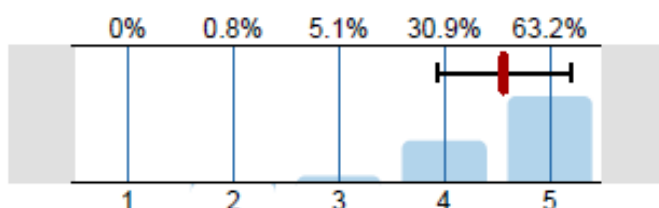


Figure 4. Children can develop their ability to collaborate with others within the organization

N=514

A majority of respondents (63.2 %) strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to collaborate with others within the organization.

7.4 Leadership

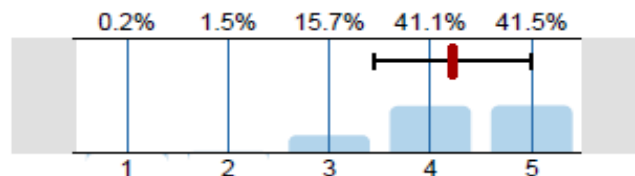


Figure 5. Children can develop their leadership skills through play

N=523

Majority of the respondents (82.6 %) partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their leadership skills through play.

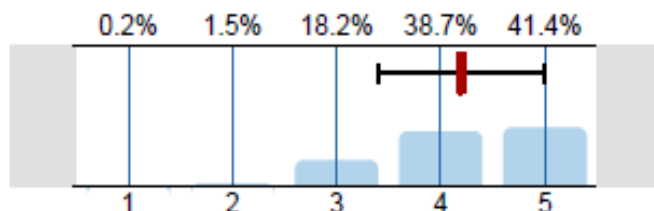


Figure 6. Children can develop their leadership skills through activities

N=522

Most of the respondents (80.1 %) partly or totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their leadership through activities.

7.5 Communication

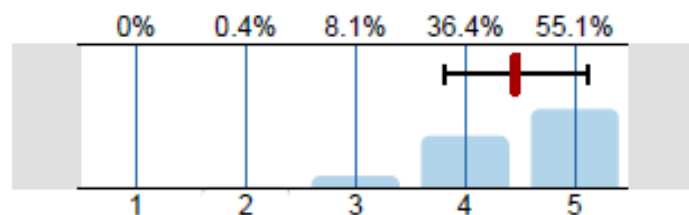


Figure 7. Children can develop their ability to listen to others

N=517

Most of the respondents (91.5%) partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to listen to others.

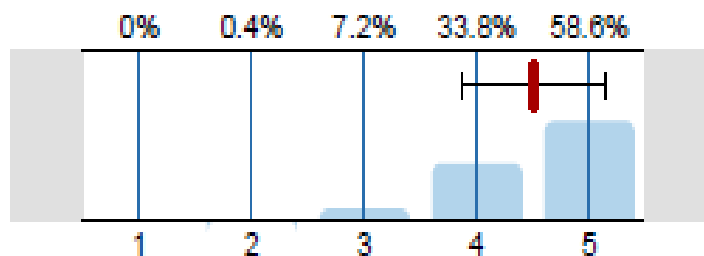


Figure 8. Children can develop their ability to carry on a conversation with others

N=512

Almost all of the respondents (92.4%) partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to carry on a conversation with others.

7.6 Curiosity

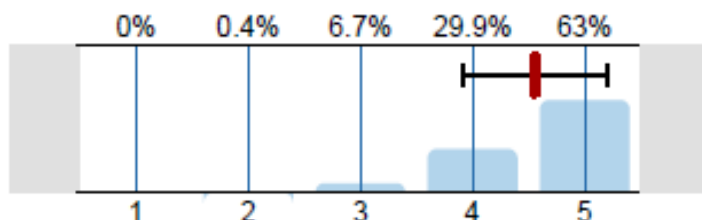


Figure 9. Children can develop their curiosity

N=522

Most of the respondents (92.9 %) partly or totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their curiosity.

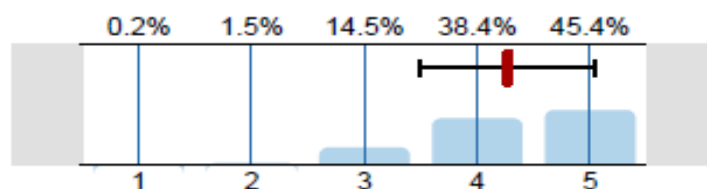


Figure 10. Children can develop their imagination

N=518

Most of the respondents (83.8%) partly or totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their imagination.

7.7 Creativity

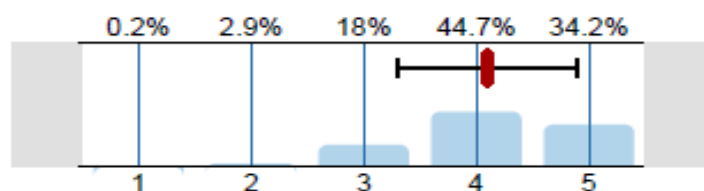


Figure 11. Children can develop their ability to manage changed circumstances

N=517

Nearly all of the respondents (96.9 %) agreed, partly agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to manage their changed circumstances.

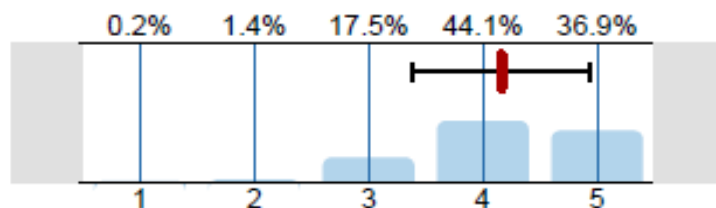


Figure 12. Children can develop their ability to see different possibilities in certain situations

N=515

More than three quarters of the respondents (81.0 %) partly or totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to see the possibilities in particular situations.

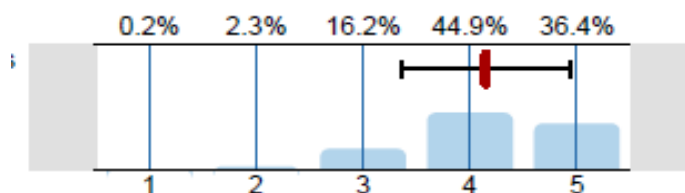


Figure 13. Children can develop their ability to see possibilities and solutions instead of problems

N=517

Almost all of the respondents (98.5 %) agreed, partly agreed, or totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to see possibilities and solutions instead of problems.

7.8 Initiative

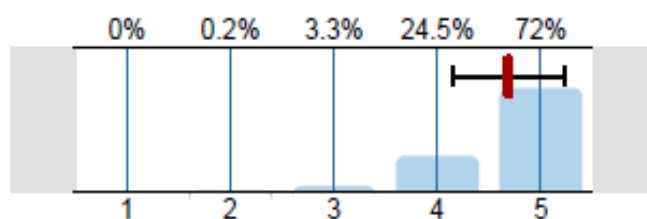


Figure 14. Children can develop the ability to play

N=522

A majority of respondents (72.0 %) strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to play.

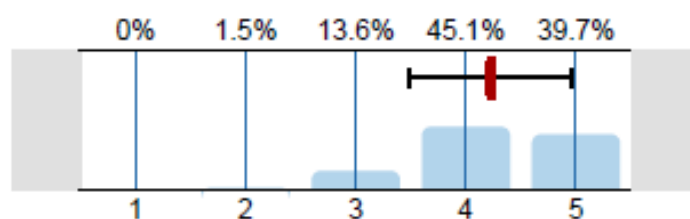


Figure 15. Children can develop their ability to see possibilities

N=521

Among the respondents, 45.1% partly agreed and 39.7% strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to see possibilities.

Self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-image

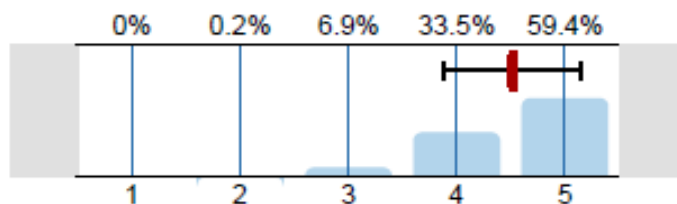


Figure 16. Children can develop their self-esteem (självkänsla)

N=520

More than half of the respondents (59.4 %) strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their self-esteem.

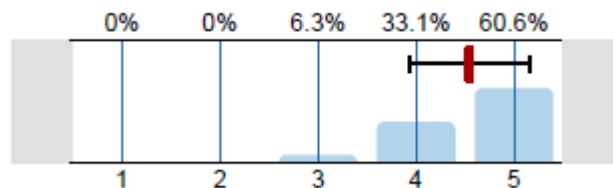


Figure 17. Children can develop their self-confidence (självförtroende)

N=520

Nearly all of the respondents (93.7 %) partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their self-confidence.

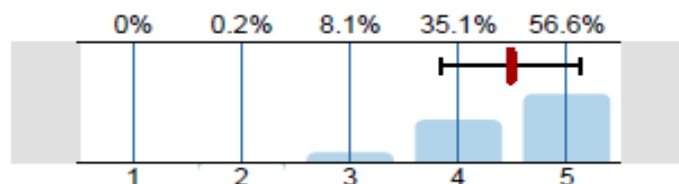


Figure 18. Children can develop their self-esteem

N=519

Among the respondents, 35.1 % partly agreed and 56.6 % totally agreed with the statement that children can develop their self-esteem.

8. Entrepreneurship and Citizenship: Useful Tools for the Future

The purposes of this research are, first, to make visible, examine, and illuminate preschool teachers' perception of what children enrolled in preschools learn and how they learn it; and second, to highlight and illuminate what abilities preschool teachers perceive that children can develop during their stay at preschools. As a theoretical framework, theories of entrepreneurship education and citizenship education are used.

The research as a whole provides many interesting answers to the purposes of the study. The results consistently show that the respondents generally agreed with all the statements presented in the survey. However, there are a few areas in which the respondents were more hesitant to agree. These include the assertions that children can develop their ability to express themselves through drama and to understand the world outside the preschool.

The research finds that preschool teachers and other preschool staff, such as baby carriers, contribute to the development of children toward learning, using, or acquiring what could be called a portfolio of citizenship and entrepreneurial skills and dispositions. The items in the survey cover the central concepts of entrepreneurship education and citizenship education. The core of both theories includes personal skills and qualities, such as motivation, learning, social awareness, and the development of self-confidence, self-responsibility, and creativity. All these conceptions were included in the statements in the questionnaire.

One will notice that children at preschools are encouraged and given opportunities to take action on issues that are of concern to them. Seikkula-Leino (2011) argued that the pedagogy of entrepreneurship education is focused on young people's active learning. The research shows that children at preschools are perceived as being capable of active learning. Central for children and of great significance to their development are the activities and the environment at the preschools, and the importance for child development of being able to play is indisputable. Majority of the respondents (63,2%) agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to collaborate with others within the preschool. This confirms Jans (2004) statement that children today can be seen as active citizens; that is, their ability to learn and play allows them to give active meaning to their environment.

Young people's feelings of motivation and their having the opportunity for ownership are important factors toward their development as citizens. Almost 41% of the respondents agreed with the statement that children can develop their inner motivation, more than 80% partly or strongly agreed that children can develop their ability to have responsibility, and 88.7% partly or strongly agreed that children can develop their ability to take responsibility. The policy documents for the preschool clearly state that each child should be supported in expressing his or her thoughts and in joining in and taking responsibility. Similarly, Jans (2004) argued that children should be stimulated to present themselves as individuals with their own rights. However, this study could not determine to what extent preschool children of different ages exert influence. The study cannot either give the answer of what more explicitly children feel they have influence in except from playing.

Communication among children and between children and preschool teachers is an important aspect of the activities and daily routines at preschools, as is the ability of children to lead other children in play and other activities. Thus, children need to feel confident in their own abilities and in their communication with other children and adults. The survey results show that 80,1% of the respondents partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their leadership skills within activities at the preschool, and 82,6% partly or

strongly agreed that children can develop their leadership skills within play. The results also reveal that 55,1 % of the respondents agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to listen to others, and 58,6 % agreed that children can develop their ability to lead a conversation with others at the preschool. This can be analysed in line with Hartley (2010), who claimed that the actual process of citizenship formation is carried out by children who individually, collectively, and differently produce citizenship in their actions, forms of association, and thence identities.

Gibb (2002) talked about learning as a social and developmental process that can take place outside an organized and structured context, as well as about the capacity to learn from different sources. Individuals can learn from their mistakes by doing, by coping, by experiment, and by grasping opportunity. Furthermore, there are a number of supporting attributes for learning, such as the motivation to learn, a developed self-confidence and self-belief, curiosity, and the ability to take initiative and be creative.

This research shows that preschool teachers provide children at preschools with a lot of opportunities. The children are more like cocreators, and it seems that children at the preschools have space for their curiosity and imagination as well as for their desire to learn. Jans (2004) similarly argued that the classic relation between children and adults has changed.

The survey results strongly indicate that children at preschools can develop a number of entrepreneurial skills: 63,0% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their curiosity, 45,4% strongly agreed that children can develop their imagination, and 39,7% strongly agreed that children can develop their consciousness about their talents and can expand their ability to see possibilities.

Regarding entrepreneurs, Thompson (1999) stressed the importance of showing initiative, being willing to think conceptually, and seeing change as an opportunity. In this research, the respondents were asked if children can develop their ability to see opportunities and solutions instead of problems. The results show that 81,3% of the respondents partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their ability to see opportunities and solutions instead of problems, and 81,1% partly or strongly agreed that children can develop their ability to see different possible solutions in a given situation. The ability to take initiative is another conception with a strong connection to entrepreneurship education. In this research, 72,0 % of the preschool teacher respondents strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop the ability to play.

To conclude, some similarities regarding crucial personal attributes are found between theories of entrepreneurship and citizenship. The skills required for entrepreneurship and for the development of young people's citizenship are characteristic "self" emotion skills, such as developed self-efficacy, self-belief, self-assurance, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence. Those skills are central in both theories. In this research, the respondents were asked whether it is possible for children to develop personal skills, such as their self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence (see appendix 2.8), while they are enrolled in preschools. The responses strongly indicated that such possibilities do exist within preschools; 92,9 % of the respondents partly or strongly agreed with the statement that children can develop their self-esteem, 60,6 % partly or strongly agreed that children can develop their self-confidence, and 56,6 % partly or strongly agreed that children can develop their self-image.

Based on the survey results, it can be argued that children enrolled in preschools have good possibilities of fulfilling the goals and ambitions indicated in the steering documents of the Swedish school system. This research points to a shift in pedagogy toward a focus on children as being active in learning, and the findings indicate that children seem to have the potential to be part of the processes at preschools and to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Fuchs, Werner, and Wallau (2008) claimed that younger children tend to display an entrepreneurial attitude in everything they do and that young people are usually very creative, straightforward, and unconcerned with the potential risks inherent in their actions. Our results indicate that children enrolled in preschools seem to be capable of developing those skills, and therefore, it would be desirable to encourage entrepreneurial behaviour more systematically in preschools. Sarasvathy and Venkatarman (2011) argued that entrepreneurship may be a social force akin to democracy; based on this, they held that entrepreneurship is a tool for changing society for the better that everyone should have the right to embrace.

The relationship between enterprise education and citizenship education is a close one, and research has shown that it is fruitful to combine the theoretical perspectives of citizenship and entrepreneurship. The results of our research clearly indicate that both citizenship education and entrepreneurship education can contribute to the personal development of young people enrolled in preschools. This study also shows that it is important that children and young people even in the later part of the school system are given the opportunity to develop these skills.

The results also show that young people enrolled at preschools can adopt an entrepreneurial approach. Following Sarasvathy and Venkatarman (2011), who argued that entrepreneurship as a method and a social force comparable to democracy would render unnecessary the claims of, for example, Korhonen, Komulainen, and Rätty (2011), and Biesta, Lawy, and Kelly (2009), democracy in itself may be seen as a result of enterprising action (Davies et al., 2004).

Of course, it is possible to be critical of the positive responses that the preschool teachers and other staff gave to the statements in the questionnaire. One critical argument would be that preschool teachers automatically answer in positive terms regarding the outcomes of their job and profession. However, because the respondents came from different preschools, there does not seem to be any systematic bias. Given that this is an exploratory study, the responses is found satisfactory for analysis, however, follow-up studies that would show whether children enrolled in preschools develop entrepreneurial skills and adopt an entrepreneurial approach in the long term are suggested.

A research work with a longitudinal perspective could be helpful in deepening young citizens' perception of their being citizens. What may emerge to be crucial are the global aspects of the cultural discourses through which children live their everyday lives at the preschools, which represent a negotiation and a construction that are ongoing on a daily basis.

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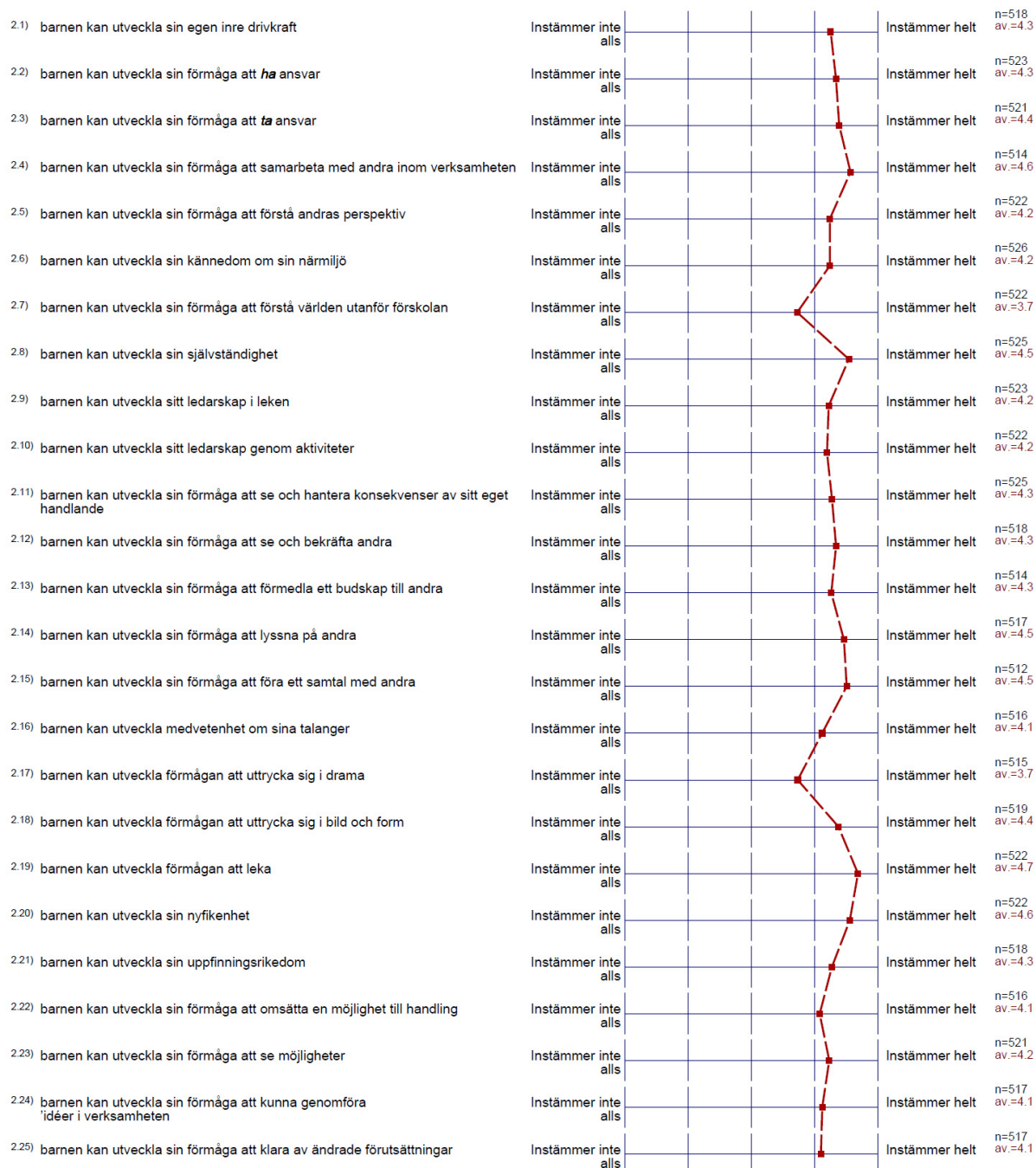
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Appendix

Profile

Compilation: Survey Total Förskola 2012

2. Jag ser förskolan där jag arbetar idag som en verksamhet där:



| | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|----------------|------------------|
| 2.26) barnen kan utveckla förmågan att se olika möjliga lösningar i en situation | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=515 av.=4.2 |
| 2.27) barnen kan utveckla förmågan att se möjligheter och lösningar istället för problem | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=517 av.=4.1 |
| 2.28) barnen kan utveckla sin självkänsla | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=520 av.=4.5 |
| 2.29) barnen kan utveckla sitt självförtroende | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=520 av.=4.5 |
| 2.30) barnen kan utveckla sin självbild | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=519 av.=4.5 |
| 2.31) barnen kan utveckla sin förmåga att hantera sina egna känslor | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=512 av.=4.4 |
| 2.32) barnen kan utveckla sin förmåga att hantera och förstå andras känslor | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=518 av.=4.3 |
| 2.33) barnen kan utveckla sin förmåga att känna tillit till andra barn | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=518 av.=4.4 |
| 2.34) barnen kan utveckla sin förmåga att känna tillit till vuxna | Instämmer inte alls | | | | | | Instämmer helt | n=513 av.=4.6 |