

THE PARENT'S EDUCATIONAL STYLE - EFFECTS UPON THE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

The latest changes in terms of structure and functions of the family are capable to produce an imbalance on the family level, to favour the appearance of deficient families (disorganised) which are not apt to fully carry out the socialising function of the children. When the family does not adequately fulfill its role in the children's education, there is the risk of having temperamental disturbances in children and the development of pre-delinquent or even delinquent behaviours. The study follows the influences exerted upon the educational style of parents upon the appearance and/or the maintenance of disruptive behaviours. Moreover, starting from the data of the group there needs to be an intervention with the sole goals to decrease the frequency of appearance of these types of behaviours.

Keywords: family, dysfunctional behaviour, school, education

This study represents a continuation of a study presented in a previous article, i.e. "The psychosocial role of the family in the appearance of socialising dysfunctionalities in children". The task of educating and socialising of children in the contemporary family is a topical problem. The family holds a crucial role in raising and in the formation of the lives of future adults. Family can constitute a positive, favourable environment to raise and educate children when the climate in the family is characterised by love, affection, understanding, acceptance, support, appreciation, esteem, open and honest communication of feelings or a negative environment when these elements are lacking.

One of the dilemmas which parents are confronted with in current times, and especially in the period immediately after the Revolution is tied to picking the best educational method for the child. The family's educational style represents an important element to which depends the quality of the education which is realised in its frame. Each family has its own educational style. This is mainly dependent on the parental style with which is often confounded. The parental style refers to the manner in which parents take action towards children and it is a harmonious or disharmonious unity between the ways of action of the two parents. Depending on the educational

style utilised by the parents the consequences seen on the children will be different. The family is the reference group whose values, norms and practices will be adopted by the children, and to which he or she will come back to in the evaluation of behaviours.

A series of specialists considers that the familial atmosphere, the familial climate and the family's influence techniques can be identified with the educational style. Along time there were different controversies in regards to the educational styles of the families, as well as their efficacy.

The French sociologist Lautrey(1980) confirmed the dependence of the educational style to the way of structuring the family. He thus builds 3 types of families:

- *weakly structured families* which present few regularities to the child, the family's norms being almost absent;
- *families with a rigid structure* who place the child in front of unchanging regularities and of norms whose appliance does not admit exceptions;
- *families with a supple structure* which give the child flexible regularities and norms, applicable depending on the situation.

With regards to exercising parental authority, Kellerhals și Montandon (1991, apud Stanciulescu , 1997:95)) consider that this manifests itself in 3 ways:

- *coercitive authority*, based on the parents' conviction that adulthood implies a better competence, having an accept on the necessity to insure immediate, unconditional and forced allegiance of the child;
- *persuasive or negotiating authority*, based on parental firmity, the emphasis being on the necessity of motivating the decision by offering explanations to the child;
- *structured authority or the "partnership"*, when the parent is a guide for the child, offering him or her benchmarks to orient him or her in the construction of personal autonomy.

Osterrieth (1973) considers that relationships between parents and children can be organised along an axis which has at one end the emotional acceptance, and at the other end the emotional dismissal of the child by the parent, while in between the two extremes there are an infinity of expressions and nuances. Combining parental attitudes on the authority-indulgence axis with the ones on the acceptance-dismissal axis, Osterrieth (1973:132) describes the main types of familial education as being the following: acceptance, rejection, supraprotection, dismissal and instability. Thus, the child is regarded as a partner of the adult, his existence being a source of satisfaction and joy. Parents have a positive attitude towards children, support them, help them and encourage them to become autonomous, having their time and presence at the child's disposal.

On the opposite pole, the dismissal attitude is a negative attitude parents have towards their children, which manifests itself through passivity, negligence, evident indifference, or through aggressive domination, severity, excessive exigence, hostility. A defiant expression, compensating the intimate attitude of the child's dismissal is its overprotection, which can take different forms that can even be very contrasting, "from an intransigent domination of the child to an indulgent almost-conformity of the parents towards the children"(Osterrieth, 1973:116). here, one can frame the types of parental domination described by Carmen Ciofu (1998:124): „authoritative parents, hyper-protective parents, indulgent parents, acerbic parents, aggressive parents”.

Most studies that are established towards the educational styles of contemporary families can be organised, especially around two axes:

1. the authority/liberalism or constraint/permissivity axis, utilising indices which reflect the limits and constraints imposed by the parents towards the child's activity, the responsibilities given to them, exercising parental control, the rigour with which rules are applied, etc.;
2. the love/hostility or attachment/dismissal axis, utilising indicators which reflect the degree of engagement of parents in the child's activity, the support (help) they offer him or her, the given time frame, the receptivity towards its needs, emotional warmth.

Combining these two variables, the parental control and support, Diana Baumrind (1980, apud. Stanculescu, 1997:91) distinguishes three styles: permissive style (weak control, increased support), authoritative style (increased control and weak support) and the "authorised" style (increased control and support).

Analysing the ways used by parents to educate their children and to impose parental control one can identify the following parental styles:

- a) *authoritative style*: characterized by the fact that rules are imposed by the parents, without the possibility of a discussion of motivating arguments behind these with the child; associates a strong control with a weak support in the child's activity, the education is based on constraint, domination, fear and punishment. the child thus conforms to the parental decisions by fear of the consequences and not as a follow-up of a well though moral decision.
- b) *democratic style*: characterized by the fact that rules can be modified or created starting from the parent-child dialogue; parents formulate rules and control respecting them, but do not impose. The latter are open to verbal exchange with the children, explaining the rationalities behind the rules to be respected and the situations applicable to them, stimulating at the same time the child's thinking autonomy. Children are considered partners with equal rights. This does not mean that there are no differences between children and

parents, but that, in a first stage, both partners have equal rights and obligations. In this situation, children feel loved, accepted, have self-esteem, are capable of listening, of taking decisions, are sure of themselves, socially responsible.

c) *permissive style or laissez-faire*: is characterized by a low level of control, associated with the identification of the emotional states of the parents and the child. Control is weak and the responsibilities and norms of conduit are few. The consequences of this educational style can be egoistic and terrorizing behaviours expressed by children.

d) *disinterested style* intervenes when the parent is not at all interested in the child's education. When both parents are disinterested, the child live an intense sense of dismissal and develops negative conduits as a way of affirming and attracting attention towards him or her.

Most opinions converge toward the fact that "*the democratic style is the one that favours especially the uthonomy and the social cooperation, while the authoritative and permissive styles encumber the child to go through the necessary experiences in order to sustain an autonomous social adaptation*" (Baumrind, 1966, Blood, 1972 apud Rondal,Hurting 1981).

Indeed, in the families that favour the harmonious growth and development of the children there is a predominant positive atmosphere, the family members listen to each other carefully, are honest to each other, parents do not have the attitude of authoritative bosses, but they are leaders that help the children develop, manifest understanding towards the children's mistakes and put the feelings and self-esteem of the children on the first place.

The democratic educational style has numerous positive consequences for the child, such as:

- Efficacity: the child is motivated to apply the chosen solution
- Development of thinking: the thinking capacity of the child is stimulated
- Relationship: there is less hostility and more affection
- Assertion: the reward system does not need to be used too much
- Power: the parent does not need to use his or her superiority
- Communication: through the conflictual process true problems are often visualised

Even though theoretically many parents agree that an authoritative style, characterised through domination, threatening and asserting punishments (even physical) is not beneficial for the growth and development of the child in the concrete situation of him or her confronting with problems to which the child does not respond in the manner expected by the parents, they resort to authority, power and punishment of the child. Other parents, which come from families in which this authoritative manner to educate children was practiced, apply on their turn the same methods as they

do not know other and did not have access to other information. And, often times in order to justify their behaviour, parents appeal to the way they personally have been raised bringing arguments as, for example “we were scuffled and we were afraid of our parents and, well this helped us get to where we are not”. Many parents have suffered a lot due to abusive treatment to which they were subjected in their families and, because they identify with their own children, they tend to be more permissive, to protect them more and to not impose rules. In time these parents become desperate because they cannot control their children at all. Even if an authoritative attitude, of assertion, can have monetary results, longterm, the effects of this educational style has negative effects towards children.

Thus, on a longterm, the consequences of the authoritative educational style are:

- The decrease in the child's self-esteem and the formation of a negative self-image
- An increased level of depression and hindering the social development of the child
- The weak motivation of the child to actually act upon the rules and solutions imposed by the parents: the danger of superficiality of the child in accomplishing tasks emerges. Motivation is external and from here the probability for the behavioural modifications to continue to be small
- The child's indignation towards the parent: the child feels constrained, feels that his or her needs are neglected. Thus, the relationship with the parent is degrading.
- Time and energy waste from the parent's side in order to control respecting the rules and the accomplishment of tasks by the child
- The child cannot develop self-discipline, guidance of his or her behaviour and the responsibility remain in the parent's task.

This educational method is based upon the trail to control and obtain the power by the parents. As the child is younger, the parent has more power. The latest in puberty, the parent's power will be imposed only conditionally. This period is in general difficult for children and parents alike, as the adolescent becomes so independent from the parent that he or she will not be able to be controlled without difficulty through the rewards and punishment system. And due to the fact that a majority of parents count so much on this system, adolescents react through an independent behaviour which is refractory and hostile.

When the parent does not impose rules and has a “laissez-faire” attitude in the relationship with the child, the consequences on a long-term will be as follows:

- the child learns to dominate the parent; he or she learns to impose his or her necessities through fury and other means; learns that his or her necessities are more important and will thus report back to his or her own person, will be egoistic and pretentious.

- often, the child does not respect the propriety and the feelings of other people. He or she will become inactive and not into giving any help.
- the child has difficulties in relationing with other children, he or she will try to impose his or her will, thus becoming unamiabile to the others.
- the child has difficulties to orient him or herself at school; he or she will confront authorities he or she will find hard to respect.
- the child is insecure in terms of his relationship with the parent. The parent will find it increasingly hard to be loving and tolerant with the child. Accordingly, the child will feel less and less affection from the parent.
- the parent remains frustrated and looks for increasingly drastic ways to impose his authority.

From the previously published study, but also from the presentation of the theoretical notions of the study here, we can see that the role and type of the family is important in the formation of children as future adults. Thus, the study of factors that contribute to disruptive behavioural problems and its impact on the lives of children becomes all the more important. The given study analysed a lot of young people with different problems; defiance problems or delinquency and following the analysis have proposed a method of intervention which would have as goal reorienting the young people towards going back to school or to the workplace.

The objective and the research hypothesis

Our inverstigative endeavour has as a starting point a general hypothesis, and thus the presumption that goes as follows:

- the understanding of the adolescents with defiance or delinquene issues can be regarded as the outing from a vicious circle and then the study of the factors that contribute to the creation and maintenance of this vicious circle would offer data about this. Hence, the work identifies the components of the vicious circle in which these children find themselves, as well as the possible sources of building the vicious circle in the first place (the influence of the socio-economic situation of the family, the familial climate, the family's stability and the parents' educational style - in this work there is only one of these aspects presented, i.e. the parents' educational style) and also solutions for getting out of the vicious circle.

The objective of the research

O1 – determining the specification of the educational practices and the characterisation of the educational styles of the families whose children have socialising problems.

The study's hypotheses

IP1 The parents' educational style facilitates the appearance of a disruptive behaviour

IP2. The young people who take part in an intervention program manifest ameliorated behaviours (the indicators used were the decrease in school absences, the decrease in the appearance of behavioural issues)

The lot of subjects under research

The object of the research was constituted by the cases of young people who presented school problems (absences, scholarly abandonment, weak school results) and/or behavioural disturbances from some high-schools. For each young person in the lot the family he or she is coming from was analysed from the point of view of its structure and functionality. The information with regards to the family of origin were obtained through interviewing the children included in the lot, as well as interviewing their family members where it was possible.

The subject's age range

The age range of the young people included in the lot was between 14 and 16 years of age, and 14 and 17 years of age in the second lot. The selection of the subjects was random. For the entire lot of subjects, the distribution can be rendered as follows:

Table 1: The distribution of the subject lot depending on their average age range

	Age	Average age range	Environment of origin	
			Urban	Rural
Lot 1	14 - 16	15,94	67	33
Lot 2	14 - 17	16,56	63	37

The structure of the lot of subjects depending on the delinquent behaviours:

Table 2. The structure of the lot depending on the type of defiant/delinquent behaviours for the year 2009

		Frequency
Validated	theft and trespassing	76
	roving and begging	10
	aggressive behaviour	9

	others(prostitution)	5
	Total	100

Table 3. The structure of the lot depending on the type of defiant/delinquent behaviours for the year 2010

		Frequency
Validated	theft and trespassing	78
	roving and begging	5
	aggressive behaviour	9
	others(prostitution)	8
	Total	100

Presenting the method and the research techniques used

With regards to the investigation of the chosen population and to the emphasis on the importance of the resulted data we used the Sociological Investigation method on an interview basis and the document analysis method. the discussions took part on the basis of a questionnaire which comprised 15 themes referring to the types of social issues the young people involved in the study had, and some data to describe the utilised lot as well as data about the family of origin of the subjects.

In the families where the parents manifested an authoritative educational style, characterised by verbal aggression, sanctions, physical punishments, the tendency for the children to go towards defiant/delinquent behaviours increases. The same thing happens in the families where the parents have a permissive, uninterested style. In the frame of the research we had in mind the mother's educational style towards the child, as well as the father's educational style towards the child.

Presenting results

IP1 The parents' educational style may or may not facilitate the appearance of the disruptive behaviour. And between them and the children the tendency to accomplish delinquent acts is bigger.

The educational style of the mother towards the child

Referring to the mother's educational style we had in mind the following types: tolerant-permissive; authoritative; democratic and uninterested.

- The mother's educational style (2009 and 2010)

Table no. 4. The structure of the lot of subjects depending on the mother's educational style for 2009 and 2010

	2009	2010
The mother's educational style	Frequency %	Frequency %
non answer	4	2
tolerant - permissive	25	59
restrictive-authoritative	34	1
democratic	5	6
uninterested, slacking	32	32
Total	100	100

The educational style of the father towards the child

Referring to the father's educational style we had in mind the following types: tolerant-permissive; authoritative; democratic and uninterested.

- The father's educational style (2009 and 2010)

As we can notice in the tables bellow, both in the case of the mothers and in that of the fathers of the children included in the lot the democratic educational style is almost non-existent, having predominantly permissive, authoritative or uninterested educational styles. this thing could be explained by the fact that the families characterised by dysfunctions in terms of the normal development of the child's socialisation promote a scarce educational style, defined either by indifference, by authority or by excessive indulgence.

Table no. 5. The structure of the lot of subjects depending on the father's educational style for 2009 and 2010

	2009	2010
The father's educational style	Frequency %	Frequency %
non answer	27	33
tolerant - permissive	16	13
restrictive-authoritative	13	29
democratic	2	1
uninterested, slacking	42	24
Total	100	100

In order to statistically test the relationship between the educational style of the family and the risk of the appearance of pre-delinquent and delinquent behaviours, we had in mind an indicator of the behavioural style in whose structure we included the mother's educational style and the father's educational style. Thus the indicator has two options: inadequate educational style (authoritative, permissive, uninterested) and the adequate educational style (democratic, moderate authoritative)

In order to calculate the Chi-square correlation coefficient to test the statistical hypotheses highlights the fact that (Chi-square is 42,67 to $p=.02$ for the educational style of the mother and Chi-Square is 49,33 to $p=.01$ for the educational style of the father) we can accept the hypothesis of the research, which goes as follows: in the families where the parents manifest an authoritative educational style, characterised by verbal aggression, sanctions, physical punishments, the children's tendency towards pre-delinquent/delinquent behaviours increases. The same thing happens in the families where the parents have a permissive, uninterested educational style.

IP2. The young people who take part in an intervention program manifest ameliorated behaviours (the indicators used were the decrease in school absences, the decrease in the appearance of behavioural issues)

The number of young people who participated in the intervention was 18 (only those with aggressive behaviour). The themes chosen for the intervention were: communication, self-knowledge= the knowledge of own resources, group dynamics, group roles, types of answers - types of problems, conflict, ways of getting out of conflict. After the participation in the intervention for the duration of 10 weeks, the results obtained are: a decrease in the number of school absences and a decrease in the frequency of appearance of disruptive behaviours. The presentation of the data is:

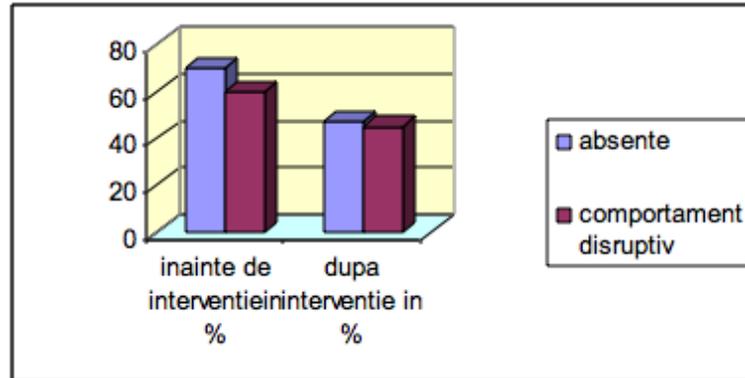


Fig.no 1. Graphic representation of the modifications which appeared after the intervention

Conclusion

As the conclusions of this research show, the familial deficiencies and dysfunctionalities have negative effects upon the children's socialising, which can be reflected in the development of certain behavioural disturbances or pre-delinquent/delinquent conduite in children. The research thus confirms the fact that the destructuring of a family and the loss of its essential functionalities generates educational deficiencies which burden the children's socialising and thus takes to the appearance of defiant/delinquent behaviours in children. Furthermore getting out of this vicious circle of the disruptive behaviour can be represented in different types of interventions in the groups of young people in which this problematic does appear.

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