

ASPECTS OF EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSIDE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Alina TURCULEȚ¹, Cristina TULBURE²

¹University of Bucharest, Romania

²Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania

ABSTRACT

The relationship between parents and children is defining in order to assure the harmonious development of children's personality, the parent being the first educator who significantly draws the emotional and relational trajectory of the future adult. Our study presents a psycho-pedagogical experiment which was unfolded along a school year, upon a target population of 20 pre-school children and 20 parents. The main objective of the study was the implementation of an improvement program intended to improve parents' and children's level of emotional development. The implemented formative intervention centered around presenting some strategies of emotional education, the importance of awareness and control of emotions, identifying desirable behaviors of children and modalities to punish the inadequate behaviors. The results of our study reflect the influence the parent's emotional development has upon the child's emotional development. All these are in agreement with those belonging to the international research which proves the deep and lasting impact of the parents' emotional aptitudes upon the child's emotional life. The scores obtained by children are the result of the concomitant action of the formative intervention of parents and teachers, and that confirms once more the necessity for deliberate and convergent actions of the three main factors: family, school, community.

KEYWORDS: emotional development, parent-child relationship, strategies of emotional education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century competences transcend the usual patterns and claim for a new approach: that of the transferability of acquisitions. The attitude, understood in terms of autonomy and responsibility, tends to become a self-sustained competence. The necessity of developing socio-emotional competences in those educated is imperative. The introduction of personal development classes within the formal curriculum, at the level of the curricular cycle of fundamental acquisitions, is the expression of acknowledging the importance of emotional alphabetization in the circumstances of observing the general schedule of human development (Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Hatch, 1989; Goleman, 2001). This is an attitude that could make the difference, and the intervention upon the students' attitude depends on the parent's attitude towards

the change (Gottman, Hooven, Katz, 1994; Huessman, 1987; Thomas, Chess, 1988, Saarni, 1990; Brazelton, 1992; Elias, Tobias, Friedlander, 2007; Segal, 1997). The influence of parental styles upon the emotional development of their own children may be major, and the parents' training needs from the point of view of their emotional abilities are certain. In order to illustrate the importance of emotional education inside the parent-child relationship and to underline the necessity to implement some emotional alphabetization programs destined to parents we have decided to accomplish a psycho-pedagogical experiment.

2. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

This investigating procedure is aiming at three objectives: to identify the level of emotional development of children and their parents; to implement an improvement program destined to ameliorate the level of emotional development of parents; to evaluate the impact of formative interventions upon the emotional development of parents and children. By following those objectives, we have proposed to test the hypothesis according to which, if during the activities with parents, we implement an improvement program based on emotional development strategies, significant ameliorations will be produced both for the emotional development of parents and children.

3. METHOD

3.1. Procedure

The research was unfolded over a period of a school year and covered the phases of a psycho-pedagogical experiment: *The pretest phase* was oriented toward establishing the level of emotional development coefficients of parents and of children. *The experimental intervention phase* had in view the implementation of a formative educational program addressed to parents and aiming at ameliorating their emotional development coefficients. Inside this educational program we centered on presenting strategies of emotional education, underlying the importance of emotion awareness and control, and identifying the desirable behaviors of children and punishing methods for inadequate behaviors. *The posttest phase* was accomplished in the end of the experimental intervention and had in view to re-apply the evaluation instruments regarding the emotional development of parents and children; also, it aimed at identifying the significant differences registered between the initial level and the final level of the dependent variables (intra subject design).

3.2. Participants

There are two groups of participants involved in our investigation: a group is represented by children attending the school year 2011-2012, in the pre-school group at a kindergarten of Braşov and the other group is represented by their parents. The group of pre-school children include 20 children with ages between 4 and 7 ($M=6.72$, $SD=0.70$). With the view of setting up the target

population made of the pre-school children's parents, we took as a guide the criterion of the parent who most looks after the child, so the one who has a greater educational influence. The investigated adult subjects have ages ranging between 26 and 58 years old ($M=34.45$, $SD=6.26$).

3.3. Measures

Following our objective to identify the emotional development of parents and children we used two categories of methods and instruments of investigation. The investigation tool used to determine the parents' emotional development values consists in a test which was adapted after a similar instrument of Roco and presents ten scripts, each provided with four variants of answer (Roco, 2004), from which the subject picks one. The research method used to identify the children's emotional development values was the observation, and as a registration instrument for the results of the observation we chose to use the observation grid which was developed based on the Emotional Intelligence identification test – the version for children (Roco, 2004). The observation grid includes also ten scripts (like the test used for parents) adapted to answer the concrete realities of the group of pre-school children and, in the same time, to respect the initial versions of the scripts, in order to keep the equivalence between the scripts included in the test for children and those included in the adult version. In this way, we ensure that the data collected from parents and children are comparable.

4. RESULTS

Data analysis reveals the existence of some significant differences between the scores obtained by the adult subjects ($t = - 3.36$, $p < 0.05$), but especially between the scores got by the child subjects during the pretest and posttest phases ($t = - 17.28$, $p < 0.01$). As a result of the experimental intervention, the level of emotional development coefficient witnesses a significant increase, leaving from the average value of 74.5 (in pretest) and reaching the value of 95 (in posttest) for the adult subjects and from the average value 76 (in pretest) to 152.25 (in posttest) for the child subjects (Table 1). The value of the significance threshold indicates the fact that chances for the change in the emotional development coefficient level to be a consequence of hazard and not of the experimental intervention are lower than 5%. Thus, from the intra subject design perspective, we are in the position to reject the null hypothesis and to accept the hypothesis according to which, as a result of the experimental intervention, improvements appear at the level of emotional development for the subjects included in the experimental batch. We think that the methods and techniques of emotional education have some positive effects upon the level of emotional development of the subjects of investigation. On the whole, at the level of the intra subject design, the results of the posttest phase confirm the

hypothesis of our research by showing that through the implementation of the formative experimental intervention, significant improvements are produced on the level of emotional development both for adult and especially for child subjects.

Table 1. Means difference for the experimental groups in pretest and posttest

Variables	Experimental phases	N	Mean	SD	t	p
The emotional development of parents	PRETEST	20	74,5	23,72	3,36	p < 0,05
	POSTTEST	20	95	35,57		
The emotional development of children	PRETEST	20	76	27,65	17,28	p < 0,01
	POSTTEST	20	152,25	24,41		

The scores obtained by the child subjects come to confirm the necessity to introduce improvement programs beginning with very young ages, when, owing to the malleability of forming psychical structures, the results registered as a result of implementing such programs are both conclusive and pertinent. As for the adult subjects, the results, though not spectacular, generally reveals the fact that those are willing to learn modern education methods and techniques, especially those they missed in their own formation. Also, we need to mention the aspect regarding the scores obtained by child subjects, as those are the result of concomitant action of formative interventions of parents and teachers.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of our study reflect the influence the emotional intelligence of the parent has upon the child's emotional development. These are in agreement with the findings of the international research that proves the deep and lasting impact of the parents' emotional aptitudes upon the emotional life of their children (Goleman, 2001). The parent-child relationship is defining for the harmonious development of the children's personality, as the parent is the first educator who significantly draws the emotional and relational trajectory of the future adult. The scores obtained by the child subjects come to confirm the necessity to introduce improving programs in order to observe the emotional development schedule, which, implemented at early ages, have remarkable results. As for the adult subjects, the results, though not spectacular, generally reveal the fact that the adults are willing to learn modern education methods and techniques, especially those they missed in their own formation. We also need to mention that the scores obtained by the child subjects are the result of the concomitant action of the formative intervention of parents and teachers, and

that confirms once more the necessity for deliberate and convergent actions from the three main factors: family, school, community.

REFERENCES

- [1] Brazelton, T. B. (1992). *Heart Start: Emotional Foundations of School Readiness*. Arlington: National Center for Clinical Infant Programs.
- [2] Elias, M.J., Tobias, S.E., & Friedlander, B.S. (2007). *Inteligența emoțională în educația copiilor*. București: Curtea veche.
- [3] Hamburg, D. (1992). *Today's Children: Creating a Future for a Generation in Crisis*. New York: Times Books.
- [4] Gardner, H., (2005). *Mintea disciplinată. Educația pe care o merită orice copil, dincolo de informații și teste standardizate*. București: Editura Sigma;
- [5] Gardner, H., & Hatch, T. (1989). *Multiple Intelligence Go to School. Educational Researcher*, 8.
- [6] Goleman, D. (2001). *Inteligența emoțională. Cheia succesului în viață*. București: Curtea veche.
- [7] Gottman, J., Hooven, C., & Katz, L. (1994). *The Family as a Metaemotion Culture. Cognition and Emotion*, Spring of 1994.
- [8] Huesman, W. (1987). *Intellectual Function and Aggression. The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- [9] Roco, M. (2004). *Creativitate și inteligență emoțională*. Iași: Polirom.
- [10] Saarni, C. (1990). *Emotional Competence: How Emotions and Relationships Become Integrated. Socioemotional Development, Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 36.
- [11] Segal, J. (1997). *Dezvoltarea inteligenței emoționale*. București: Teora.
- [12] Solomon, D. (1988). *Enhancing Children's Prosocial Behavior in the Classroom. American Educational Research*, Winter of 1988.
- [13] Thomas, A., & Chess, S.. (1988). *Longitudinal Study of Negative Emotion States and Adjustments From Early Childhood Through Adolescence. Child Development*, 59.