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Particularities of Parental Competence of the Individuals with Higher Education

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Abstract

Starting from researches showing that the parents' high educational level predisposed to a child's harmonious personality and from those investigating the effects of professional involvement over the efficient tackling of parental roles, the objective of the paper was to study the parental competence of high education persons (with children aged 7 to 11). The results (N=158) indicated statistically significant differences between those with a university graduate and those without university education and, also, between those graduating in social sciences and those graduating in other domains. Also, some statistically insignificant differences were identified between university graduates and post-graduates.

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Keywords: parental competence; high education; knowing the child; affective support; disciplining; time management; crisis management.

1. Introduction

In the scientific literature there are found numerous situations that have shown that parents, depending on their socio-cultural environment and training level, transmit different values to their children (Dusmann, 2014; Cline & Fay, 2006; Romano, Tremblay, Boulerice & Swisher, 2005). If the parents' education level is secondary or higher, they are tempted to value the children's autonomy, self-control, imagination and creativity (predisposing to success), while if the said level is inferior, the parents will tend to focus on order, cleanliness, obedience, respect for age, the ability to avoid problems (predisposing to failure) (Kohn, 1989). Thus, we can say that the parents' education level is one of the determinant factors of parental competence.

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The parental competence was defined by Glăveanu & Creangă (2009) as a system of knowledge, skills, capabilities, abilities and habits that allow the parent to successfully fulfill the parental responsibilities and also to prevent/deal with crisis situations in a manner that contributes to the child's development. The educational environment built by a competent parent is propitious to the formation of a harmonious personality of the child, which is characterized by originality and spontaneity, autonomy and capacity to fend for himself, preference for construction and imaginative games, tendency to assert himself/to claim the role of the leader, ability to defend himself, high levels of aspirations, perseverance in pursuing goals, authority and power to focus, strong individuality seeking self-affirmation (Osterrich, 1973; Percheron, 1981; apud. Glăveanu, 2012, Shapiro, 2010; White & Matawie, 2004).

2. Objectives and Hypotheses

2.1. Objectives

The studies that show the impact of the parents' high level of education on the raise of the parental competence have to be put in relation to modern society's requirements regarding the permanent education and continuing professional training (introduced in Romania by the Law No 84/1995 and the Government Emergency Ordinance No 102/1998): an increasing number of people with higher and secondary education attend new university and post-university programs and thus they face a new challenge regarding the balance of time allocated to family/parental role and that allocated to the professional and academic environment). As a result, the direct proportionality between the parents' level of education and their level of parental competence may be questioned.

The objective of this research is to investigate the particularities of parental competence of individuals with higher education (university and post-university).

2.2. Hypotheses

The investigative process was guided by three hypotheses:

- The parents with higher education have a higher level of parental competence than those with secondary education.
- The parents graduating in social sciences have a higher level of parental competence than those graduating in other domains.
- The parents with post university diplomas (master's degree, postgraduate studies, and doctorates) have a higher level of parental competence than those who only graduated university.

2.2. Participants

The research subjects were 158 individuals (age $M=38.7$; $SD=16.24$), 8 men and 150 women, parents of children aged between 7 and 11 years. 81 of them had higher education and, out of these, 47 were educated in the social sciences and 34 in other areas (49 university graduates – 34 in social sciences and 15 in other areas; 14 master's degree – 5 in social sciences and 9 in other areas; 2 postgraduate studies – 6 in social sciences and 6 in other fields; 6 doctorate degree – 2 in social sciences and 4 in other areas) and 77 without university education.

2.3. Instruments

The subjects were evaluated using the Parental Competence Questionnaire (PCQ), developed by Glăveanu, 2009, starting from the theories of several authors (Law Nolte & Harris, 2001; Boutin & Durning, 1999; Spock, 1998).

The PCQ has 81 items grouped on the following five dimensions:

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