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Transgenerational Transmission of the Beliefs of Competent Parenting

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Abstract

Transgenerational transmission of family values and beliefs in upbringing children is performed continuously from generation to generation. Family system of values is determined by emotional relationships, attitude towards the family goals, principles, distribution of authority, and the preferred method of parenting style. In this regard, we wanted to investigate whether there were significant positive correlations between the assessment of parenting style in the primary student's family and their beliefs about the competent parenting. We examined 584 students of the University of Niš. The survey used the following instruments: Index of family relations (IFR, author of Hudson 1982) and the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ, Authors: Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 2001). We also used vignettes which present parenting styles of father and mother: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, inconsistent and uninvolved. The results showed that authoritarianism in the student's primary family contributed to their favourable assessment of those families where a parent manifest was authoritarian and indifferent parenting style and student's primary family was consistently less favourable in the assessment of corrective actions within the authoritative, permissive, and inconsistent parenting style. Coercion and Non-Reasoning as authoritarian style features contributed to a better assessment of indifferent parental style. The reference literature (Baumrind, 1966, 1991; Rohner, 2009; Teti, Candelaria, 2002), this parenting style is recognized as the most dysfunctional, because of its negative impact on the child development outcomes. This implies that influence of dysfunctional parenting is transferred transgenerationally, which confirms the systemic approach to the family and its transgenerational analysis of patterns of functioning.

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Main text

Upbringing in the family is based on the experiences of parents on desirable upbringing practices learned from their own family, or that have been recognized by watching others raise their children, reading literature and books, and listening to a variety of TV shows and in the media. However, it is very often the case that family value and belief system is passed on throughout generations, that we have strong conviction that the upbringing we were subjected to during our childhood is the best one. We wanted to test this claim in our research in which we monitored the parental upbringing styles in the families of our respondents, who are students from the University of Nis, and we assessed the actions of parents in the imaginary short stories, in which we described the rough, careless, and also tolerant and accepting actions of parents.

1.1. Theory of parenting styles by Diane Baumrind

In the literature which is concerned with upbringing in the family the theoretical concept of D. Baumrind [1,2,3,4] is stressed out, who, relying on Shepher's model, defined three basic types of parent-child relations: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. Authoritarian parents do not communicate with their children about the rules of behaviour they expect their children to follow. Authoritarian parental style is characterized by high level of control and demand for maturity, with low level of concern and clarity in communication. Authoritarian parents expect absolute obedience from their children and are very prone to harshly punish their children if they are not living up to that standard. Every conversation is discouraged with explanation that the parent has the last say in the matter.

Authoritative parenting style is characterized by parents who encourage verbal communication and initiative of their child. Authoritative style is characterized by relatively high but reasonable control appropriate for the age of the child. Authoritative parents express general acceptance followed by verbal communication, which often results in successful adaptation, independence and social responsibility. These parents practice firm control over their children and have clear demands about their children's behaviour. Children from the families with authoritative parenting style cherish their friendship bonds, are independent and are more adventurous, cooperative with their parents and aspired to successful life. Strategies of authoritative parents consist of: 1. construction of child's competences by including it in children's social competitions activities 2. relying on convincing rather than compelling a person 3. monitoring of children and empowering them when necessary 4. synchronization with "the principle of the sufficient minimum" when pressure needs to be applied in order to gain child's respect 5. use of ethic principle of reciprocity 6. involvement and engaged participation in a child's life.

Permissive parents rarely punish their children; they often accept and approve of actions of their children and their wishes. They have lower demands when it comes to responsibilities and appropriate behaviour of their children. These parents allow the children to regulate their activities, avoid control as much as possible and they do not encourage their children to respect the standards set by the outer world. Permissive parents are more responsive than demanding. Permissive style is characterized by low control followed by low expectations and general acceptance of the child, which results in low social responsibility and false independence of a child. This rearing style is characterized by high level of concern and understanding in communication, but low level of control and demands for maturity.

Mekobi and Martin according Teti, Candelaria, [5] have extended the typology of parenting styles Baumrind by adding permissive parenting style, another, permissively ignoring parenting style characterized by low demands and concerns for the child. In contrast to the original group of the permissive parents, who were very devoted to their children permissively ignoring parents were emotionally and physically distant from their children, showing a low level of care and support for their children. These results suggest that the consequences for children were even worse in these families than in those with authoritarian style with no warmth. In his later work, Baumrind [3] also adds another parenting style, uninvolved neglecting. These parents are neither demanding nor responsive, they are neither monitor nor support, but they can actively refuse, or to completely ignore their responsibilities to raise children.

2. Method

2.1. Problem of the research

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