

The Correlation between Interfamilial Influencing Factors and the Behavior of Preschool Child

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Abstract

In the familial group, parents exercise, directly or indirectly, major influences on children. This educational function is one of the most important, because the parents are those who offer educational models intended to form the worldview and life, and also the attitude towards social norms and behavior in relationships with others. Due to the fact that in the first years of life (“the seven years from home”) sets the foundations of the personality, it is necessary that parents provide models based on the psycho-pedagogical principle clearly outlined. The educational strategies used by parents are diverse. They consider that they are always well intentioned and they are convinced that the effects will be positive, but not always the influences exercised are those expected, and there are cases when the real result of the educational ways have negative consequences on the process of training and personality components. The educational family environment (positive or negative) may have repercussions on their school performance. The study was carried out on 100 preschoolers, aged between 5 years and 7 years, and had as purpose the observation of the family environment and its influence in the formation of structuring factor of the child's personality.

Keywords: education, behavior, preschooler, influence, intra familial environment.

Conceptual Insights

1. Characterization Of The Preschool Child

The preschool age is the only age of human development which has so many explosive and unforeseen characteristics. This period is carried out between 3 and 6/7 years, and the words “the seven years from home” evoke the particularly high formative role of the family in child development. The human psyche is focused on acquiring experience because the development of the strictures consciousness and intelligence are still limited in the preschool period. This fact explains why it needs such a particular importance during this period. Many psychologists consider that the preschool period marks the entire subsequent psychic life. In the preschool period occur some fine distinctions of the inter family and extra family relationships that begin to have new weights with a more intense increase to those from the second category. This side of psychological progress leads to the development of intimate and personal behaviors. Diversification of the child interrelations leads to the primary establishment of his identity. M. Debesse (1) finds the development and characterization of preschool age as a metaphor of the faun. The child is both a part of nature as well as a part of the culture. From the part of nature, he has not been totally detached, because he continuing to be egocentric, affectionate, guided by pleasure, capricious, and from the part of culture, he began to approach slowly, discovering what is right and what is wrong, accepting the others and becoming competitive and collaborative.

1.2. Preschoolers Personality

The preschool is the period in which the child's personality begins to form and appear the first relationships, but also attitudes that helps to organize the child's mental life to a higher level. Also, during this period, we will encounter a detachment of the preschooler concerning perceptual field, but also a better organization and stabilization of the behaviors. This happens, as Leonetiev said (2), due to the significant changes that occur at the level of mental activity.

The explicative models of development indicate the existence of some stages in the major plans on the psychic life:

- **cognitive** (J. Piaget);
- **affective** (S. Freud);
- **psychosocial** (E. Erikson);
- **Moral** (L. Kohlberg).

The self-image of children is closely linked to the emergence of his moral consciousness and it is formed by attitudes, exigencies, prohibitions and expectations of his parents. As well, during the preschool period, is forming the child's confidence in people around him. The child's moral conscience includes certain metal elements which are similar, such as representations, notions, moral judgments, as well as some more complexes, such as feelings, attitudes and moral patterns. J. Piaget (3) has analyzed the characteristics of training and acquisition of moral schemes, admitting their supply through parental models, but allowing importance to some specific aspects, such as the role of imperative rules by the action of the consequences. The preschooler interiorizes the rules and the rewards or the punishments, reaching to surpass himself. The most complex problems which are manifested at this age are the negativism and the intentional lies. The negativism can be manifested as a form of inadaptability or inadequacy. As a form of inadaptability, the negativism is not so noisy and it is manifested through the difficulty to participate in existing activities in a different environment than usual.

2. The Family Environment - As An Important Development Of The Preschoolers Personality

"We all come from certain families. Families are big, small, extended, nuclear and multi-generational, with one parent, two parents and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks or as permanent as forever. We become a part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage or from desire for mutual support. As members of the family we feed, we protect and we influence each other. A family is a culture unto itself with different values and unique ways of realizing its dreams. Together, our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity. Each Family has strengths and weaknesses that vary depending on individual members and family as unity." (Report of the House Memorial 5 Task Force on Young Children and Families, Washington, 1990).

J. Bruner (4) considers that all people are human in their essence, but this humanity represents the childhood he had. For the formation and development of the child, the family is the first social group of which he belongs.

"The family represents one of the oldest forms of human community, a stable institution with fundamental roles for individuals and for society." (5).

Malinowski (6) considers that education is one of the fundamental needs, along with the need for subsistence, kinship, housing, protection, activity and hygiene of human beings. The nuclear family represents the cultural response to these needs. In the first years of life are laid the foundations of human personality and the family represents the whole society for the child. Through the influences that are exercised on him, the family constitutes the synthesis of a triple dependency towards his parents: biological dependence, social dependence and educational dependence.

"How family relationships, the affective environment and the socio-cultural model are important for social integration and the establishment of the social behaviors." (7).

From the point of view of individual development, the family offers:

- first social group in which the child exercises the social behaviors and reveals himself;
- the affective safety environment necessary for the development of personality components;
- is the first environment for growth and intellectual development, motivational, affective, aesthetic and moral;
- represents the first model of the social behaviors from the future;
- is the development framework of individuality and the possibility of individual valuing due to the affectivity which ties its members.

The primary experiences have a crucial importance to the child's internalizing culture and the role of parents in children's education is very important.

2.1. The Family Environment and the Child's Personality

"The family environment represents a psychosocial formation that is very complex, which comprises all the psychic states, interpersonal relationships ways, attitudes and level of satisfaction that characterizes the family group for a longer period of time." (8).

The family environment is either positive or negative, because it is interposed between the influence of education exercised by parents and psycho behavioral manifestations acquired from live outside the family life. An educational influence exercised in a good environment will have more different effects than an influence exercised in a bad family environment. M. Gilly (9) said that "the child needs an enough firmly pattern of discipline, and also to know that his parents share the same level of exigency." The family environment can be analyzed according to several indicators. The most important are the following: the parents' way of relating to an interpersonal level; all attitudes of family members concerning certain social norms and values; the unity level of those in the family; the manner in which the child is perceived and considered; the manifestation of parental authority; the acceptance of various behaviors of the children; the level of satisfaction felt by family members; the dynamic of the appearance of conflict and tension states; the way in which the rewards and the sanctions are applied; the openness and honesty manifested by family. Cattell (10) highlighted the socio-emotional richness of the family environment. There are families where parents don't propose to achieve a unitary educational actions, and one of the parents is sometimes considered harmful for the education of the child. In such situations, the child is confused and has the impression that he is standing in front of two opposite camps and he is forced, without realizing that, to be on side of one parent and repel the other through attitudes and gestures.

Dissociation and behavioral discrepancy of parents in the relationship with their children can manifest itself in two forms: mother is overprotective and father is exigent; father is hyper-tolerant and mother is hyper-exigent. Thus, the child has two different ways to have a relationship with both parents: affection and attraction for one of them and indifference, coldness and even antipathy for the other. Berge (11) said that an important place is occupied by this imponderable element: the family atmosphere to the wishes of the child, namely the atmosphere is from cheerful to worries, warm or effervescent, numb or restless, tolerant or intolerant, sensitive or insensible. By the family atmosphere, depend on feelings of safety or uncertainty of the child, which influence his development? An environment where are always tensions, quarrels, acts of violence and which is distorted, deformed by the lack of a mutual affection of the members or because to some feelings of affection that are poorly understood and exploited, constitutes a traumatic environment for the child. The lack of support, continuous scandals and the show of hostility between parents produce a serious disorientation in the child's mind. The family environment acts on the child helping him to evolve, but in an unfavorable environment will be very difficult to develop a personality that structure of his inner unity.

2.2. Disorganized Family Environment and Child's Personality

The most monoparental families come from nuclear families that are broken or split by death and this is devastating for child, because he feels an acute lack of love from the missing parent. Most social adaptation difficulties of the preschool child have the origin in the family dysfunctions. The marital conflict in which exists emotional tensions and communication issues between parents, and also parental meaningless attitudes, produce in the child's personality deep cracks that are hardly corrected or its will not heal ever. A child with such family problems is emotionally immature, even though sometimes he evolves intellectually in an exceptional way. The child abandoned by one of the parents or neglected and dismissed does not have self confidence, is devaluing himself, becomes inhibited, lacks the initiative, is shy and often takes upon himself the imaginary guilt. In such cases, the preschool failure is very frequent and it is not a consequence of some low intellectual abilities or a weak will, but is a result of some emotional disturbance that undermines self-image. The child who has a parental malfunction is marginalized or marginalizes himself and he can manifest in a violent way and unstable or shy, inhibited and labile or emotive and anxious, so it would be very hard to integrate him into society. The child who is part of a monoparental family will face difficulties in his evolution as a person. To develop the child's personality in a harmonious way, he needs both parents.

3. Parental Authority

All the children want to feel safe and this feeling is given by the parental authority. Families whose members are working together can succeed much better than those in which family members try everything on their own.

Children need to know what means the discipline imposed by parental authority, by which he is directed on the right way. The parents must be an example for children, to lead, to guide, to direct, to correct and encourage them. Some parents try to become "friends" with their children and treat them as equals. In reality, there is no equality between parents and children, and the discipline means to be able to teach the child to choose the right way. Making the education without sanction or punish the child when he make mistakes is a utopian, because there is no child who does not make mistakes.

"If not penalize the mistake, means to encourage it. So the punishment is necessary and it has an educational role."(12).

3.1. Educational Styles

Educational style is the indicative model of the educational activities in the family, but also the most important element of which depends the quality and the efficiency of education in the family. Unfortunately, some parents use certain educational styles, which lead with a series of negative consequences concerning the formation process of child's personality. Examples of negative educational styles:

- the excessively severity with many rigidities and interdictions leads to installing the phenomenon of tiredness, fear of failure, induces punishment, apathy and emphasizes indifference towards what the child must undertake or regarding the relationships with people around him, but also an attitude of protest and revolt against the new influences exercised on him;
- hyper-protection leads to a discrepancy between self-image and the real possibilities, smugness, ego exacerbation and overvaluing their own possibilities;
- limiting the freedom and independence of action leads to mother addiction, the loss of initiative spirit, the induction of unjustified fears toward action, the isolation by himself and the undervaluation of his own possibilities;
- free training of their children leads to the removal and the alienation of children from their parents.

In some families, the educational style is manifested within the meaning of overwhelm the child with an exaggerated affection, and the start is given most times by the mother. This style is harmful due to consequences that appear in the behavior of children in the relations with other people. The child raised in such environment is selfish and has head in the clouds and he finds very difficult to establish friendly relations. There are also families who use an extremely authoritarian educational style, the start being given by the father. The sociologists call the family as the first team in which the child is working and in which the child needs rules and authority manifested with calm.

3.2. Parental Styles

Every family is different and has its own educative style related to parental style, and it is often confused with it.

"Parental style refers to the acting way of the parents toward the children and it is a harmonic or disharmonic unity between the personal styles of education of both parents." (7).

Parental styles signify the manner in which the parents express their own beliefs about how children should be educated. Parental style in which is manifested the rejection and neglect means the lack of love, understanding and emotional involvement. Permissive parental style means a lot of love, but less rules and low limits. The permissive parents are agree with child's developmental and emotional needs, but they have difficulties in establishing firm limits. Democratic parental style means the existence of love and limits too. It is characterized by equality and trust.

"The personality must be allowed to manifest, to develop normally, but is mandatory the supervision, a severe intervention when it is needed. The severity is corrective of them when it is necessary."(12).

For preschool child, a democratic parental style favors the feeling of security, self-control and self-assurance. Unfortunately, permissive style leads to child immaturity, lack of self-control and low interest to explore novelty. The authoritarian style can induce anxiety, irritability and withdrawal itself. The best way is the middle way, namely the existence of love and limits.

3.3 Overprotection And Rejection - Influences On Personality

Hattwick (13) claimed that "over - attention in family" is characterized by the tendency to always give the righteousness to the child, to replace him in many actions that he could fulfill alone, to show an exaggerated concern and anxiety to everything that means his own person and to organize entire family life according to the child. Levy (14) observed that, at over protected children, the life into a group and friendships are less intense. These children are dependent and are distinguished by egocentrism, selfishness, deficiencies of will and initiative. Symonds (15) said about these children that are inclined to stubbornness, state of anger and food fads.

"A relationship centered on hyper protection and suffocating love, leads in time to the establishment of a weak personality, lacking initiative, passive, abolish, confusing and without their psychological resources of greeting and addressing any difficulties and obstacles in life." (16).

Pride, superiority complexes, selfishness, individualism and contempt for others arise when the parents start continually boast their children.

"A relationship centered uniquely on hyper severity, hyper coercive will cause the formation of a personality structure, frightened and depressed or irritable, spiteful, vindictive, rigid." (16).

Research Methodology

1. Objectives

This study aims to highlight the relationship between the family environment and the development of preschool child's personality by emphasizing the positive and negative influences of this environment concerning child development. Also, through this study I wanted to observe if the differences that appear between family members, approached parental style and the disorganization of family may influence the personality development of the preschool children.

2. Research Assumptions

General hypothesis from which began this study is that the family environment represents the factor of psychological patterning for the preschool child's personality.

Specific assumptions are the following:

- if the family environment is characterized almost always by accented differences concerning the child's education, and not just when is necessary, in the child's behavior appear moments of inadequacy;
- if the family environment is characterized by an accentuated parental authority, then this will spill on the dynamics of sociability of the preschool child;
- if the family environment is monoparental, disorganized or parents are absent too much from the child's life because of their work, then this will spill on the affectivity of the preschool child.

3. The Instruments

In this study, I used the following instruments:

- to discover the divergences that are present in the family environment, I used a questionnaire for parents that aims to highlight the possible conflicts that are between members of a family that can influence in a negative way the preschooler's personality, applied first as a pilot questionnaire on 10 parents, others than those used in this study;
- to diagnose the behavior of the preschooler I have used sections from *File sheet for psycho pedagogical characterization* ;
- To measure the parental authority I have achieved a structured scale on three dimensions.

The Scale Of Parental Authority aims: the family authority refers to the parent's attitude towards the manifestation of love in the relationship with the child, the attitude towards norms and rules present in the child's education, but also the attitude towards the use of the punishment as a way of correcting the child.

4. The Procedure

Every parent received a questionnaire to find the possible divergences from the family environment and a questionnaire to measure the parental authority. Testing them was done collectively in the meeting with parents.

The tests for preschoolers (sociometric test, the bird fable) were applied individually to each child, in the presence of educator during the creative games.

File sheet for psycho pedagogical characterization was completed by educator for each child based on observations made throughout time.

The variables were the following: **dependent variable:** the answers given by each subject to the applied tests (the answers of the parents, educators and children); **independent variable:** the tests used in this study, the subjects with a family situations, but also the possible problems that exist in the family environment to which they belong. The scaled used have an appreciable validity and fidelity and the presenting way was standardized; **control variables:** standardize the presenting way of applied scales.

This was the same for all subjects; training was the same for all, explaining them clearly the tasks that needed to be met and giving them additional explanations were it was indicated; time was not limited, the subjects responding at their own pace.

5. The Processing and the Interpretation of the Data Obtained

The results obtained after testing were processed using SPSS (statistical software), using Pearson Correlation Test.

The first hypothesis argued that if the family environment is characterized by accentuated divergences than it is expected that will affect the preschooler personality as a negative behavior. Numerical indices obtained are presented in Table 1 and allow acceptance of specific hypothesis.

Table 1

Family environment		The behavior		Pearson coefficient
Harmony 52	Divergences 48	Positive 57	Negative 43	R=0,378

As shown in the table above, 48% of preschoolers, which were present in the study, live in an environment characterized by accentuated divergences. Of this 48%, 43% manifests a negative behavior. Using Pearson Correlation Test I obtained the following data, presented in Table 2.

Table 2

		Divergences in family	Behaviour
Divergences in family	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.378**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	100	.000 100
Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.378**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	.000 100	100

From the results we may conclude there is a strong connection between the divergences from family environment and the behavior of the preschool child. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient indicates that between the two variables (divergences and behavior) is a directly proportional connection. Therefore, the more a family environment is stronger rocked by divergences, the more the behavior of the child will be negative.

The second advanced hypothesis was that the parental authority is influencing the dynamics of sociability of the preschool child. Numerical indices obtained are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Parental authority		Sociability		Pearson coefficient
High 46	Normal 54	Low 33	High 67	R=0,376*

*P=0.0

It is observed that in 46% of subjects on which were manifested a high parental authority, 33% have a low sociability. Processing the data using Pearson Correlation I obtained the following data, presented in Table 4.

Table 4

		Parental authority	Sociability
Parental authority	Pearson	1.000	-.376*
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Sociability	Pearson	-.376*	1.000
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

The correlation coefficient being over 0.30 denotes that between the two variables exists a strong connecting "-" sign of the correlation coefficient indicates that the two variables are inversely proportional, meaning that if one increases then the other decreases.

The third advanced hypothesis was that the monoparental family environment affects in a negative way the affectivity of the preschool child. Numerical indices obtained in the last hypothesis are presented in the following table.

Table 5

Family environment		Affectivity		Pearson coefficient
Monoparental 48	Biparental 52	Normal 54	Fluctuating 46	R=0,358*

P=0.00*

The obtained results on statistical processing are the following:

Table 6

		Family environment	Affectivity
Family environment	Pearson	1.000	.358*
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Affectivity	Pearson	.358*	1.000
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

The correlation coefficient is 0.358 and we can affirm that between the two variables exists a bond and the safety threshold (p = 0.00) shows that the two variables is correlating. The sign "+" of the correlation coefficient claims that the two variables are directly proportional, so if one increases, the other increases automatically. Finally, we can affirm that all specific assumptions of this study were confirmed and we can affirm that the family environment constitutes a psychological structuring factor for the preschool child personality. To strengthen the results obtained from the statistical processing, remember the following observations: Regarding the sociometric test, the answers of the preschoolers relating to the question "Who I enjoy being friend and why?" were similar, given that the test was applied individually, as follows:

- The preschoolers were rejecting "bad" children, "who are beating", "who are always punished," "who do not listens the Mrs."
- The preschoolers prefers good children, quietly, "that listen the Mrs.";
- Another category of children rejected were those who "not playing ever", "just are sitting on the table", "don't talk".

These observations support the idea that the preschoolers who manifest a negative behavior are not approved within the group. The preschoolers withdrawn, isolated with sociability problems are not approved. Unfortunately, even if a preschooler with a negative behavior wants to join the group, frequently, they are rejected. Therefore, the preschoolers without behavioral problems and with a high sociability are better integrated into the group.

Conclusions

The structure of the family environment in which live and train the preschooler is very important for the normal development of his personality. Data obtained from our study shows that a family environment characterized by accentuated divergences are a negatively influence the behavior of the preschool child.

Parents serve as a model for children and often we can find a few details about adult relationships just observing the child's general behavior. A child who lives in a hostile and aggressive environment learns that aggression is a way of life. Often, the child, from an environment in which the parents have time just for contradictory discussions, is trying to get remarked in the social environment through aggressive, brutal and negative behaviors. Also, the different views of the parents concerning the child's education represent divergences that may affect the preschool child. There are situations where divergences can manifest in a form of undermining the authority of one parent over the other parent, and this has negative repercussions on child, developing him a general feeling of disorientation that is mentioning outside the family, namely the social environment as ignoring the rules given by adults. The child from this family environment will be remarked through difficulties in adaptation, mistrust, uncertainty in achieving the actions and failure to comply with rules and norms.

Discussions

The researches throughout time and this study showed the negative effects that the monoparental family has on child's personality, also on the parent in whose care the child remains. An abandoned child who doesn't feel the affection of both parents is a child with a sad prevailing mood affective, fluctuating, who can't ever enjoy totally because he feels that something is lacking. This child will see lower than other children and will never understand why his parents are separated. Unfortunately, the parent who take care the child will try to turn against the other parent, unknowing what negative effects will have this thing on the child's personality.

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