
Studies and Current Trends in Science of Education

Social - Human Positivity in the Context of Parental Education of the Small Age School Children

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Abstract

This article proposes a synthesis of the main concepts necessary for the process of defining and analyzing the parental education of young school age children, in the context of forming socio-human positiveness. It reflects at an operational level the capacity of forming and developing interpersonal relationships, based on trust. The influences that the family exerts upon children can manifest either directly, through more or less guided actions, or indirectly, through models of behaviour offered by family members, as well as through the psycho-social climate existent in the family.

Keywords: happiness, subjective wellbeing, family, socio-human positivity, parental competence.

It was written about happiness and how can it be achieved, very much. How many people there are, so many visions of happiness exist. This concept is difficult to explain because it represents a profound sense, experienced differently by people, depending on expectations, environment, context, society. A beggar is happy that he/she has received $10 which he/she has not expected, while a mother is happy when she keeps her born baby in her arms. We can, however, bring happiness to others and to us alike. So, the positive thinking and positivity were born, as an action and thinking to create the wellbeing, happiness.

Usually, we divide the world into optimists - those who trust that everything will be all right, noting the full side of the glass, and into pessimists - those who fear that something bad will happen, noting the empty part of the glass. It is said that what you think it will happen, even it becomes reality: you think you'll get very good results in the exam and get

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very good grades; you think that you will have something you have not learned, and it happens exactly that way.

Understanding the human behaviour and what motivates the human actions to obtain happiness, "strategies" to build skills to cultivate the positive thinking can be thought.

Man as a social being, not only enters into a relationship with other people, but it has a great need to be appreciated, to love and to be loved, to protect and to be protected. The science that studies the social rules and the processes that bind/separate people is sociology, a term proposed by Auguste Comte at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Comte is also the initiator of the sociological positivism, distinguishing three phases of the human knowledge: theological, metaphysical and positive. In the opinion of the French philosopher, positivism is a philosophical system that involves a model of the progress of the human knowledge and the phenomena are considered real and accurate, and the knowledge is the description of these phenomena, of their temporal and spatial order in terms of consistency and variation. In 1830-1842, in the "Cours de Philosophie Positive", Comte Auguste proposed the term of "sociology" for the science of society. Though the term of "psychology" existed then, he preferred to call “la morale positive” ("the positive moral") the science of the human behaviour (***, http://www.scrihub.com/sociologie/POZITIVISMUL-SOCIOLOGIC-DISCON71315.php).

In his view, there are three classes of phenomena to be approached in the scientific study of the human evolution: the biological phenomena, the moral or individual phenomena and the social or collective phenomena. Sociology deals with the latest phenomena, while the positive moral envisages the second class of phenomena. After the disappearance of the French philosopher, these areas will undergo a radical transformation.

Comte considers positivism as being characteristic of the modern societies where scientists are manifested in the speculative sphere (theoretical), while the real active power is represented by those who apply science in practice ("industrial"). They contribute to reveal the importance of the intellectual education in the society life, which has as effect the polarization of the social interest to science and to the ways of its practical implementation. This valuation provides, in the philosopher’s concept, the natural progress of mankind. Science, in turn, is based on rationalism and the positive methods have connections with it: observation, experiment, comparison. The people’s involvement beyond reason requires proper motivations. If in the theological stage the motivation was a religious one, in the modern stage, motivation should be profane. Yet, it’s not like that, all the time.
A prominent representative of the sociological positivism is John Stuart Mill, who introduces, since 1842, the term of sociology in England in the confrontation with Organicist doctrine promoted by Herbert Spencer. Mill says that the real active power in society is represented by ideas, to the extent that they constitute a guide to the practical business generating the general social progress. He emphasizes more the "laws of co-presence" and the "succession", dissociating himself from the sense of A. Comte regarding the relationship between them and the human behaviour.

He even proposed a new discipline – Ethology – the "science that determines the type of character produced in accordance with the general psychological laws, by any natural or legal set of circumstances." Therefore, he recognizes the epistemic status of Psychology, but unlike it, Psychology is a deductive science that should aspire to inductive methods.

"The logic of sociology" proposed by J. St. Mill opened a based debate for the Vienna Circle. Stuart Mill identified a failure in the moral utilitarianism. He does not believe that man would be naturally good. Man can only wish his happiness or what can contribute in getting happiness. But it’s not important the quantitative aspect but also the quality, because there are some quality differences between feelings: it's important strength, durability or it’s superior by the fact that the man who once tried the feeling of pleasure "will search it again."

Standing out among these higher pleasures are those related to the "heart" - dedication, altruism - sources of certain incomparable satisfactions. At this point, Stuart Mill’s philosophy meets with the Christian teaching, namely to promote a society in which Jesus’ teachings would reign: "Love one another ..." what would be the most enjoyable, both for individuals and for community. Experience and education appear in this way. Thus, the "social life determine people to act, to work, to support each other and to esteem each other. In these conditions it develops a favorable instinct of solidarity, both in the action plan and that of feelings” (apud Stere, 1998, p.388). In St. Mill’s conception, “man can not want his own happiness without regard to his neighbor’s happiness; moral man’s life, truly virtuous implies obligation and responsibility that would lead to the moral progress of humanity. In this issue, the state has an important role” (apud Stere, 1998, p.388).

Another study of development of the sociological positivism or the neopositivism corresponds to the third decade of the twentieth century, developed by the representatives of the Vienna Circle (Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Philipp Frank, Alfred Ayer). Among the members of the Vienna Circle, the person who was more concerned with the application of the positivist logic in sociology was Otto Neurath.

Broadly, the term of sociological positivism is applied in a diffuse way to characterize those works that adopt assumptions and principles of approach enshrined by the philosophical positivism. A basic idea is that according to which any knowledge is based on experience, which corresponds to the Phenomenalism rule from the neopositivist philosophy; it supports the elimination of valuable judgments and norms that cannot be validated by the experiential testing. Thus, it is extended the grant of the facts importance. The product or the final result of the sociological investigation approaches the method of the Natural Sciences method - laws logical generalizations.

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The term of sociological positivism came to have a high degree of semantic ambiguity. In the last two decades, the term "positivist" was invoked in sociology concerned with education, and psychology - linked to thinking and/or attitude.

In the study of happiness, two main orientations outlined (Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, the authors of the self-determination theory, 1985): 

- **Hedonism** appeared in the fourth century BC in ancient Greece and is based on the principle of sensual pleasures and avoidance of suffering. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jean-Marie Guyan formulated the principle of "minimum pain and maximum pleasure." The hedonism devotees believe that the "individual pleasure is the real reason and purpose of the human actions" (apud. Iluț, 2015, p.164).

- **Eudaimonia** also, has its origins in ancient Greece and it is translated by the fact that man is happy when he lives in harmony with its own daimon ("I" = "good", "daimon" = "spirit," "demon"). Aristotle believes that "happiness must be located among the activities worthy desirable in itself and not among those chosen for other things; for happiness does not need anything, it is self-sufficient " (apud Iluț, 2015, p.164). Therefore, the philosopher believes that happiness is within the human being and not in its sphere and it contains the following components: virtue and external goods.
Recently, there appeared the concept of "subjective wellbeing" formulated by Diener, E., Lucas E., Richard and Oishi, Shigehiro (2009), (apud Iluţ, 2015, pp.164-165) the “subjective wellbeing represents the cognitive and affective assessments of a person on his life. These evaluations include the emotional reactions to events, like cognitive judgments concerning satisfaction and fulfillment. Consequently, the subjective wellbeing is a broad concept that includes pleasant emotional experiences, the negative emotional experiences and the high satisfaction with life ".

Norman M. Bradburn (1969), researcher's findings are that there is a "tripartite hypothesis" of the subjective well-being (apud. Iluţ, 2015, p.165):

a) satisfaction with life - cognitive evaluation;
b) persistency of the positive mental state - presence of positive emotions;
c) the absence of the negative one – the absence of the negative emotions;

"Emotion" means the mental availability, the state and emotions associated with momentary feelings of the individual (apud Iluţ, 2015, p.165). So, the "Triangle of happiness" in Chelcea Septimiu (apud Iluţ, p.165) mind contains three aspects: “positive/negative emotions based on height”, the "mundane happiness" and the "transcendental happiness".

Starting from the axiom: "To be happy, people need other people," Stevens E. Laura and Fiske T. Susan (apud Iluţ, 2015, p.168) - professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts identified five reasons for the human behavior:

1) The need of belonging to a group;
2) The need to understand themselves and others, and the environment;
3) The need to control, to act effectively;
4) The need for self-assertion;
5) The need for trust – the perception of others in a positive way (apud Iluţ, 2015, p.168).

The modern people appreciate happiness more "mundane" that would better meet the five necessities identified above. Most researchers refer to these needs/criteria when explaining happiness, including those in our country. After the revolution, there were several theories, having as criteria the theory of the relative standards, the theory of needs, of the cultural factors and the assessing theory (Precupeţu, 2011, apud Iluţ, p.168). The strong point is also Abraham Maslow’s theory that established a hierarchy of needs: biological and safety, of the socio-cultural ones, of belonging and love, of the esteem, then cognitive, aesthetic and updating the self. There is nowhere a spiritual need.
Currently, one can identify the "psychologies" of different approaches on levels of what determines happiness: interpersonal level approaches, individual and group in different theories: theories of control; theories of improving the self-image; theories of confidence.

The state of happiness is subjective and influenced by many aspects studied by the positive psychologies. Happiness depends on the cultural context, very much - every nation has an image of happiness that differs from the image of happiness of another culture. Education, in this context, differs from a culture medium to another. In a family, children will be taught certain criteria that determine the state of happiness - different from one culture to another.

From the sociological point of view, the family is "a social group whose members are bound by relations of age, marriage or adoption and, who live together and cooperate in economic relations and care for children (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998, p.234). In a narrow sense, the family is "a social group consisting of a married couple and its children." (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998, p.234). The idea of family varies from one society to another. Currently, in most societies in the world, the most common form is the nuclear family, consisting of husband, wife and minor children or extended, including grandparents and other relatives.

In the 1970s, the traditional nuclear family has declined rapidly. One reason is the increase of the percentage of women employed in permanent activities outside the home. The advantage of this is the increasing economic independence of women, the possibility of career development for women etc. The major disadvantage is the impoverishment of the family life, reducing childcare (illness, surveillance). Women also with extra family activities can be overloaded because they also perform family activities which they did traditionally. Family conflicts may occur because of this, which can lead to divorce.

The consequences of women's employment in extra family activities depend on internal factors (e.g. division of family roles, degree of affection between the spouses having children) and external factors (the existence of social services for families) (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998, p.445).

In general, what underlies starting a family is love. This is the base of the individual and family happiness. The final image in tales is that of the marriage - "and they lived happily ever after." In a traditional sense, marriage "from love" has a "different sense" that is, often, it is based on an economic or socio-economic criterion (e.g. property). Some marriages are "arranged". Such "agreements" made in the idea of marriage are present all over the world, from ancient times until today (apud Ilu’, 2015, p.26)
Nowadays, love is the reason of marriage, in most cases. But there is a noticeable trend in the Western world to accept sexual permissiveness, with negative effects, even destructive (violence, profanity), excluding love. It is true, however, that today, marriage is based on the free choice of the partner "boyfriend", but this choice does not guarantee happiness or durability. We can also talk here, other factors that could influence the "success" of a marriage: whether or not the two are part of the same groups - ethnic, religious, professional (homogamy or heterogamic marriage). The "mixed" marriages have multiplied, but most are based on "finding" the right person, even using the Internet. What leads to a "hardening" of the link by love is "the proximity of various types" - finding the same space: school mentality, leisure (apud Iluț, 2017, p.27). Love, as a deep feeling, can generate happiness, but there are also other "sources" that can cause happiness. The contemporary psychology has developed the concept of "positive thinking" as a form of cultivation the "good psychic" of the positive feelings.

The positive psychology emerged in 1990, with the object of study the "people's positive characteristics that make life to be lived valuable" (Luthans, apud Iluț, 2015, p.29). Traditionally, psychology "deals" the negative aspects of the human behavior, even pathological. Starting from the society reality - inequality of opportunities related to ethnicity, religion, social groups - sociologists, especially, propose an analysis and explanation of "what is" society and not "what should be". Thus, the "sociology would have as object of positivity groups and communities, starting from those restricted to the global societal level" (Iluț, 2015 p.30).

Luthans, F., (apud Iluț, 2015, p.29) differentiates the positive psychology dimensions:

1. Valuing the subjective experience: wellbeing, contentment and satisfaction (result of the past), hope and optimism (about the future), fluent soul peace and happiness (at present);

2. Positive individual traits: the ability to love and vocation (dedication), courage, interpersonal skills, artistic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-oriented thinking, spirituality, high talent and wisdom;

3. Institutional and Civic Virtues urging individuals to be good citizens: responsibility, caring for people, civic sense, moderation, tolerance and ethical behaviour.

Therefore, the positive psychology examines, analyzes and gives advice on how you can be happy. The first researchers in this field ("Humanistic Psychology") were: Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. It should also be mentioned the contribution of NLP (Neuro
Linguistic Programming) and training programs for life with effects worthy of consideration. The methods of coaching and self-development (gratitude, revaluation, developing attention, changing the stereotypes of thinking) are rooted in psychology and philosophy.

People are different and, therefore, what it’s working for some people, does not apply to others. The strategies and beliefs that healthy people have approach the essential principles and methods supported by the positive psychology. The educators, those working in healthcare, public sector, business community are using positive psychology elements.

In the "Positive Psychology" (Style, 2015, p.6) presents the beginning of this field: "The meeting between Dr. Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi on a beach in Mexico." They discovered that they were working in the same field: Csikszentmihalyi was working on a new concept - maintenance of the "state of flux" and Seligman was searching for ways to make those helpless to understand those who can overcome difficulties.

The key concepts identified by them are: optimism, psychology based on the strong points, flow, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, happiness, choice, gratitude, time perspective, positive emotions, emotional intelligence, reaching goals, self acceptance and personal value, hope, resilience, meaning, purpose, wisdom, spiritual practice.

The general well-being is more than happiness, in C. Style’s conception. Happiness, well-being and "life satisfaction" are synonymous when trying to define the "functional" life.

"The positive psychology measures all things that affect man ‘quality of life' - from humour to how well we know how to solve problems and to recover from trauma (resilience) (apud Style, 2015, p.7)

A special concept deserves attention, the “emotional intelligence", proposed by Daniel Goleman in his book with the same title, which differs from the logical intelligence. The basic idea of the book is that we need to know to manage our emotions. The essence of the emotional self-regulation is to regulate the emotional impulse in the goal advantage. The author explains that every emotion is built on itself and every thought that reinforces that negative emotion causes a stronger emotional response. Therefore, if you live a negative emotion, like anger, the best method through which you can temper this state is to distract your attention from it, thinking about something else, doing something specific, so not being focused on those strong impulses that cause anger.

The author also shows that sometimes, more important than the academic preparation are the ability to face failure and to control all the emotions that come with it (resilience). It is very important from the point of view of the author, the ability to have positive relationships with those
around us, empathizing with them. We often hear the phrase "get into someone's shoes" meaning you put in his place to realize his emotions, his condition. In this way you can create an emotional harmony between people. When the people work in a group or a team, it is more important to create this harmony, because it allows the effective communication without conflicts.

In NLP there are used techniques by which you can reach a "state" of happiness and positive communication. These techniques aim at both the individual and the relationships between individuals.

In general, it appears that the positive thinking people enjoy more success, a better mental and even physical health. Studies have shown that patients affected by serious illness, but who have kept a positive thinking, survived longer than those who watched reality more objectively.

Both the negative and positive thinking are part of a person's normal psychological states. Depending on the state, we tend to look at things positively or negatively, but most important is to realize the effect of this perspective. The positive or negative attitude is sometimes "contagious": without realizing it, we affect those around us through a transfer of thoughts and feelings, through body language. Therefore, we prefer the company of optimistic people and avoid pessimists.

The concept of positive thinking was born from the desire to form families and schools that allow the harmonious development of children, especially, among other aspects: communities that promote civic engagement, jobs providing satisfaction and productivity at the same time. The parent-child relationship is complex and can be directed towards a positive communication. The positive thinking is cultivated, it is practiced, creating specific skills.

Specialists in positive psychology have found a "happiness formula" by identifying three categories of determined factors:

- **genetic structure** - 50% (native ability to be happy);
- **conditions of life, the circumstances** of 10% (things you can change or not: the environment in which you live and work, marital status, health, wealth);
- **all voluntary activities** - 40% (what you choose to do for your happiness in the short term / long term.

Style Charlotte (2015, pp.20-21) considers that the potential for happiness affects least the living conditions: health, money. The potential influences more what we choose to do voluntarily. Psychologists have found that the happiest people are those who have a full life, socially active, those who spend their time with family and friends; those who are grateful for what they are, they are generous and help the others. All these relate to a positive thinking and love. Thus, there is a direct link between the two.
The subject of the skills have an interest to any field of activity, but especially the term "jurisdiction" was related with the efficiency of work, being proposed by R. Boyatzis (apud Glăveanu, 2012, p.80).

Internationally speaking, the concept of *parental responsibility* was introduced into the specialty literature by the psychologist Lykken, T., D, 1998 ([https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competen%C8%9Ba_parental%C4%83#cite_note-BorleanVisu2010-3](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competen%C8%9Ba_parental%C4%83#cite_note-BorleanVisu2010-3)).

It is described by the parents’ abilities to actively encourage the needs of the child, to facilitate spending the personal time with the other parent, to actively involve the children in social and extra family activities in order to encourage the development of the social skills and moral competence thereof. Involving the child in family activities recognizes his position as a special and wanted member.

Nationally, the term of *parental responsibility* was conceptualized by S. Glăveanu in her *Modele de conceptualizare si diagnoză* (2012, p.20), coordinated by M. Milcu, W. Griebel and A. R. Sassu, and it represents a system of knowledge, skills, abilities and skills supported by specific personality traits that allow the parent to successfully fulfil his parental responsibilities, to prevent and overcome crises in the favour of the child’s development, aspect which objectifies positivity in the context of parenting education.

The explanatory dictionary of the Romanian Language (DEX, 1998, p.203), defines the competence as the ability to decide on something, on the basis of a deep knowledge of the issue in question.

The researcher X.Roegiers (p.31) identifies three different meanings of the term of *competence*: *disciplinary savoir-faire* (refers to behavioural skills such as: performing, construction), *general savoir-faire* (involving all the *transversal skills*: argumentation, structuring, expression, synthesizing, transposition) and tackling the competence as *contextualization of purchases* (knowledge, skills, abilities).

Generalizing the definitions of researchers in education science, we find that the concept of *competence* includes a number of components: *cognitive, operational - technological, motivational, ethical, social and behavioural*. Thus, it covers knowledge, skills, rules, behaviours, attitudes. The possession of skills is the guarantor of developing efficient actions, of analysis and synthesis of information, realization of complex tasks.

The concept of *parental responsibility* knew a wide recognition in Romania, by the appearance in 2010 of the *Integrated National Strategy of training and development of the parenting skills "Better Parents - more educated children - a better life"* supported by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport. Its purpose was to ensure each child an adequate family environment to reach his full potential for development and to become a
responsible adult, properly integrated into the family and society (apud Glăveanu, 2012, pp.144-145; Clipa & Iorga, 2013).

Under this strategy, the parenting skills development can be defined as a facilitation process of awareness and expressing by the parents of the parental and educational functions in the sense of optimizing them.

The parental competence is seen in terms of five dimensions:
1. care for the child and ensure his basic needs (food, hygiene, sleep, attachment);
2. the child’s education, carried out within a caring family environment, so his needs be balanced with the socialization process;
3. the parents’ participation in the organization of their child’s life in the opened environment by working on various improvement projects, the expression of opinion and negotiating the terms;
4. choosing the most suitable ways and solutions for the proper development of the child in the multitude of circumstances of life;
5. negotiation in choosing solutions, so as to achieve a balance between the child's participation in decision-making and the need of the adult’s authority (apud Glăveanu, 2012, p.146)).

From the perspective of the national strategy (apud Glăveanu, 2012, p.147) the policies related to the initiation, parental training and skills development must start from respecting the family and educational models existing in reality and not to impose models considered 'ideal', but to encourage the parents to analyze, to understand and to propose or to transform these models according to the children and families’ needs.

An important part of the life of every individual is under the direct influence of his parents and competence shown by them. From sociological sources we draw the idea that the valorisation of the parenting skills contribute to socialization, the formation of a balanced personality and to cultivate the social and human positivity.

Based on the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:
- the good development of the complex process of training and development of the parenting skills requires an initial/previous stage, embodied in the personality self-esteem, but also a final/later stage, of self-actualization, carried throughout life;
- to draft the parental skills training and development it must take into account the internal structure of the family, the exercise of the parental authority, the type of family interaction, educational principles of the family;
- the training and development of the parental skills should not be limited in time and space.
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