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Explanatory Characteristics and Mechanisms of Family Influence in the Development of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This article outlines and shares one view related to the interlink between emotional intelligence and the social environment of development – the family. I gathered information in regard with the theoretical explanatory characteristics and mechanisms of the emotional intelligence concept and the family influence as the main socialising agent. I explained the importance of the familial context in the emotional intelligence development at the preteenager age and its necessity when it comes to ensuring success and keeping a healthy mental state as well as coping in stressful situations. Out of the complexity of psychiatric and psychosocial factors which contribute to the development of personality, the small circle, intrafamilial, in which the child's personality is developing, can have a major influence on him. The grounds of emotional intelligence start and evolve especially in the social environment of development. The emotional intelligence offers a stable support and solid structure out of which all evolutionary maturity can be sustained, leading to a healthy and mature interaction with the people around him. Throughout a continuous learning process, family becomes the initial engine in the human growth. Family ensures personal and social identity caring a positive impact on the emotional development and behaviour of preteenager personalities.

Key words: Emotional intelligence; family; familial influence; family climate; mecanisms; preteenagers

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1. Introduction

The complex educational avenue which is passed by the human being from the biological existence to the social existence is the civilisation road from nature to society. This process happens gradually through the amplification and continuous improvement of the connections with the environment, which equals with its expansion from primary, inferior behaviour to the social, superior ones. We are part of a society which is too adapted to the performance concept, where everything is assessed on a quantitative, and not qualitative scale of things, including the human being. The man is a social being who exists in social relationships. The collection of these relationships is internalised and embodied by each individual, forming the core of their personality. The quality of it largely depends on the quality of social relationships. Out of the complexity of psychiatric and psychosocial factors which shape the personality, the small circle, intrafamilial where the child's personality evolved can have a major importance over him (Pavelcu, 1982). The familial environment disturbed by the transitory period in which our country is, influences the development of preteenagers personality. It is necessary to focus our attention on the identification and transformation of those psycho-socio-cultural environmental factors which can become damaging, and on shaping a harmonious personality of preteenagers, the adults of tomorrow. Thus, to ensure a harmonious personality, we should build and form a psycho-socio-cultural environment where these social relationships are present.

Out of the social environment, the family has the deciding influence as the socio-cultural and affectionate environment. The social-cultural environment gives substance to the personality. Family, the place where the future conduct grounds are set, is today within a period of radical changes, either through divorce/ break-ups (the divorce rate is growing, while the lowering marriage rate becomes a threatening reality, demographically speaking), or through the disruption of familial relationships, which has an immediate and remote psycho-pathogenic impact. Family represents the natural, normal habitat of the child, the most intimate and necessary environment for the formation and development of the child (Druță, 1998). Inside the family, the child creates its own principles, wishes, certainties, passions, will and character traits. Neglecting any of his needs - such as being part of a familial environment, or emotional and affective incentive, cognitive, motor, of autonomy and assistance incentive – due to the need to satisfy other pressing constraints, or due to the impossibility of ensuring them, reflects the violation of the most fundamental child's right, the one of being a whole human being (Zamfir, 1994). Every human group creates its own basic personality. The influence of the social factors is essential. Personality forming cannot be designed outside the social. V. Pavelcu (1982) states that: "Each of us is a character to the extent that we occupy a position in a social system, and we are personality, to the extent we integrated in a system of social values". An increased degree of social aggression, in a period when moral, spiritual, ideological and political values are dropping and we are looking for their restoration, is reflected in the preteenager stage, but also a result of family transformations, especially its socialising and educational functions. (Crețu, 2011).

This article begins from the affirmation that prepuberty represents a developing period characterised by increases and fast physical, intellectual, socio-affective changes which are often accompanied by disorders, doubts and confusions. Preteenagers should be emotionally trained during these modern times, taking into account the conditions that surround an agitated, rushed life, times that can redirect them to an unacceptable social behaviour in the cultural and social context. They are in a disturbed internal state, they are confused, repressed, depressed and in descendance with their social developing situation. They live in a rooted ambiguity state. Often, during prepuberty, depressive symptoms can manifest, character disorders, or of sexual identity. Physical transformations are associated with equally significant psychiatric changes, with conflicts which can show up and numerous efforts to adapt.

2. Characteristics of emotional intelligence at preteenager age

The complexity of this development stage is sustained by prepuberty neurocognitive changes which create logic and abstract thinking, the development of moral personality, of the core of the personality and the internalisation of the object relationship, affirmation of self-identity and self-image (Verza, 1997). Of major importance at preteenager age is establishing of identity, of the sense of life. This period is characterised by the classification and intensification of the goals' elaboration, through an intense personality development, through obvious solidification of the world concept and life, through an intense evolution of the cognitive, affective and voluntary aspect (Schiopu, 1997). Closely tied to the inclination of self-affirmation is the preteenager curiosity as to 'discover himself', to develop the self-consciousness, self-characterisation and self-realisation. That is why, they have moments of segregation, self-analysis, undeniable concerns as to their interior life, obvious tendencies towards self-improvement, by taking dynamic action, developing their value judgements, building their trusts, and their own lifestyle (Cuznețov, 2004). By summarising data from various research, significant factors in prepuberty are represented by anxiety, tendency towards frustration, rigidity and nonconformity, the need of setting free of controversies, redirecting towards the inside or outside, defensiveness, self or external punishment, neuroticism, or tendency of hedonism (Minulescu, 1966). When taking contact with the unfair structure of social life, the preteenager becomes a protestant being towards social order, often through messy means or free gestures, sometimes even offences (e.g., violent theft).

Emotional states are very important in preteenager lives, and the way information coming from the external environment is understood, how the alarm system that informs them how they are, how they function, represent defining qualities in developing emotional intelligence. By looking at emotions progressively, it can be seen they have adaptive and informative value in relation to meaningful interactions. Emotions creates three types of processes which show at different levels:

- a psychosocial level, which consists of attributing the personality traits, of social skills, of the individual style of behaviour where emotions meet relevant functions through neuro-muscular expressions.
- a biological level, which entails the dynamic process of body growth and biological maturity.
- a cognitive level, understood through learning, attention, memory, language, thinking, rationality and creativity.

These three levels are co-dependent and have different implications in emotions functionality. According to preteenagers emotional changes, the need of education based on emotions as answers to the requirements of contemporary society is obvious, such as: anxiety, depression, violence, drug addiction, behaviour disorders, eating disorders, etc. (Crețu, 2005). Simultaneously, the assimilation of hypothetical-deductive thinking takes place step by step – thinking which includes new concepts about the universe, about connections with adults, phenomena which happen unpredictably and make reality seem uncontrollable. On one hand, this thinking helps preteenagers in the slow evolution towards adulthood, on the other, it is a form of showing conflict.

The pre-teenager can live sometimes the so-called "juvenile originality crisis", when they consider their family "out of fashion", they himself not being integrated in the adult social environment. During this crisis, they can live a gap between wishes and possibilities, which is where the tendency towards rebellion begins, in front of the disparity of reality and the fictional ideal. Another cause of conflicting reactions in their behaviour is represented by authority parental conflicts, between the independency desire of the preteenager and the familial authority

(Neculau, 1996). During this period, the undeniable detachment from parents begins, which externalises through refutation conduct, leading even to avoiding their physical presence and rising suspicions in relation to their principles. The 'liberation of parents' process, this need of separation from them and from the familial circumstance, favours the assignment of a radical degrading behaviour. This confers them an emptiness, hesitative, indecisive feeling, an inner storm which can transform them in easy victims of the negative influences of the environment. Between preteenagers and parents rise conflicts between the parents' 'outdated' ideas and their own emotional opinions. A tactless attitude of the family can only lead to the preteenager's opposition, but can also generate behaviour disorders (CSCPT, 1994).

3. The role of the family in the emotional development of preadolescents

Defined as the fundamental unit of the society (Druță, 1998), the family does not escape these changes, its stability being threatened by external stress and social uncertainty, which can reflect greatly on its internal stress. Even for parents, this transitory moment of the preteenager age is tender. They have to find an emotional and educational balance, which entails a significant adaptability and the reinterpretation of the preteenager image, as to understand how they feel and what they message they want to send. This leads to the identification of another need of the preteenager, the need of being understood. Dialogue between the parents and them in this period is absolutely necessary. The truly remarkable learning of the dialogue is represented by the emotional climate, in the tone used. But what is understanding? It certainly means to understand the words' semantics, the developing speech, the understanding of the distinctive construct, the understanding of the affective disposition which represent the ground of this behaviour. Through this acceptance, maintaining the emotional disposition active is feasible, and exerting the parental influence.

Family can be widely defined as a social group where the members are tied through age relations, marriage or adoption and who live together, cooperate under economical report and take care of children (Murdock, 1949). In the narrow sense, the family appears as a social group formed by a married couple and its children. The core family (including husband, wife and children) is, apparently, universal. It contains the main four fundamental functions for the social life: sexual, economical, reproductive and educational. As a result, one of the core functions of the family is to raise and educate the next generation (Zamfir, 1998). In every society, the family represents "a human community form, composed out of at least two individuals, bound by marriage and/or paternal ties, realising, more or less the biological and/or psycho-social side" (Mitrofan & Ciupercă, 1991, pp. 141-145). We will stop by this point further on, trying to establish to what degree is the family involved in children's development. R. Vincent defines family as a "endowed group with its own characteristics, which lives by certain customs, respecting traditions unconsciously, which applies certain educational rules, in a word, creating an environment" (Cuznețov, 2004). The familial environment as a psychogenic factor which can be seen in the conformation aspect, of structure, of economical-social factors and of educational gaps, intricately sides.

Under the structure side, the familial environment can present diverse deficiencies of legal, social, moral nature, tied to situations as such: infidelity, abandonment, divorce, concubinage, death, addictions, sexual vices, or even full absence of the familial environment (Străchinaru, 1969). Familial dissociation is the most frequent structure default. It was defining as the social-moral anomaly in which the father or the mother of the child lack the familial home due to voluntary causes (separation, divorce, abandonment), or involuntary (death, imprisonment), which entail stressful consequences for the child. "There is a warning with regards to the high risks which this kind of family has on the child, in the sense that, when one of the parents is

absent, the family loses its capacity to function in a healthy manner" (Mitrofan, Zdrenghea, Butoi, 1994).

The socio-economical situation of the family in generating undesirable conduct of children can be seen in light of lack of work (unemployment) or exploited work, living space, management and administration of the family budge, of hygienic conditions of living, or illness cases. Certainly, insanitary dwellings have unfavourable consequences on the children's conduct, as well as on their somatopsychic health state of all family members. At the same time, in these sorts of living conditions, cleaning, order and organisation are poor most of the times (Străchinaru, 1969). In many families with conduct deviations, their budget is usually restricted, due to the fact that parents are often unqualified or underqualified. When the socio-economical level is low, the child with conduct deviations often presents limited intellectual capacity.

Educational deficiencies in the familial environment have the biggest importance looking at the deficitary conduct formation of the preteenager. There are many circumstances which could compete, in variable proportions, to the abnormal development of the preteenager. Together with the social-educational inappropriate conditions found in chaotic families with a financial and hygienic deficitary standing, other educational mistakes happen which contribute to giving the highest number of children with conduct issues. A series of educative mistakes is: lack of a separate parental room, using puerile language, threatening children with strong damaging expressions, the lack of seeing the potential of understanding of the child, the lack of sexual education or wrong approaches to it, the antithesis in relation to some school behaviours considered by parents as unwarrantable, provoking the child against other people considered enemies by the family, unrecognising and disrespecting their stages of affirmation and highlight (Radu, 1995). Due to psychiatric traumas suffered by one of the parents, the interest expressed in the child drops considerably. As a result, the child is psycho-traumatised when encouraged by one of the parents to ally against the other. Divorce provokes major emotional and behavioural disorders which lead to social maladjustment. (Ranschburg, 1979). "Lack of affection creates characteristic sequelae which can be reversible only if mother's mistake is reversed in due course. Thus, disorders can filter in stable forms only if these mistakes are persistent, shaping, at the preteenager and teenager age, as neuropathic and psychopathic features with offensive reactions, determined by the general state of adaptability.

Exaggerated affection on the mother side creates an overwhelming state which exceeds the emotional capacity of adaptability the child has, provoking characterizable developing disorders. Tender attitudes of some parents, which prevent dialogue from happening, injures the development process of individual personality and unleashes conflicting elements which take the shape of conduct rebellion. Under the conditions of a socio-cultural inappropriate familial environment, the normal process of mental life of the preteenager can be negatively impacted. A series of disorder symptoms can appear, such as: opposition reactions, prestige crisis, fatalistic inertia, a tendency towards vanity, pedantism. These can settle into negative personality traits.

Inequalities of educational attitude between parent or between the same one at different times determine these kinds of pathological effects. Environmental, psychological, and social characteristics put their mark on preteenagers. The parents represent the guide for their children in the world of emotions (Gottman, 2018), names parent "Emotional entrepreneurs of children, which contribute at the understanding and recognition of negative effects, at developing the sense of control, optimism and the efficient regulation of it". Parenthood, as many human actions, is not easy nor exempt from failure. It is of major importance to be aware of the importance familial experiences have on children, and act accordingly. Too little importance is granted to the quality of the emotional, relational, familial state, which is lived by the preteenager and cannot be measured in numbers. Emotional capabilities are the ones which offer success and

accommodation in a provoking, stressful environment, which needs continuous analysis and emotional self-regulation. Children memorise the majority of emotional lessons from their parents. This includes the ability to control urges, to motivate themselves, to understand social clues of other people, to adapt to fast and spectacular changes of life, knowing how to manage agitation and anxiety.

Having 'emotional intelligence' does not mean being happy all the time, but it means to accept all the emotions we are dealing with, both pleasant (joy, love, satisfaction, gratitude etc.), as well as unpleasant (anger, fear, aversion, sadness, jealousy etc.), and manage them in a way that we can live our lives in the best way possible. Actually, any type of emotion is necessary. Any feeling deserves to be lived and expressed. It has to be managed in the best way, but never repressed. Having this starting point, that emotion does not have to be repressed, we cannot forget the emotional concept, and so, the emotional intelligence (Nelson, 2012). By studying this altruistic problem, out of various scientific concepts we can affirm the fact that emotional intelligence can be understood as being the human capacity of seeing feeling appropriately, as well as the capacity of adjusting and change their spiritual state, which leads to favour emotions, health, well-being control, and especially making decisions. Every decision-making process represents aa tight connection with emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence influences the quality of human life, of their relationships, ideas, projects, their way of dealing with hardship and life as a whole. According to Goleman (2007), "the key to correct personal decision-making is to be in tune with our feelings".

It is noteworthy that emotional intelligence is the result of a learnt set of attitudes and behaviours which has as long-term repercussions the optimisation of social relationships, the development of self-respect, as well as respecting personal rights, improving the ability of making responsible decisions, and good control and management of inter-personal relationships. In other words, emotions can become a very useful tool in controlling the options and decisions we are making. Emotional intelligence represents the main vector at preteenager age. Emotional intelligence comprehends a wide range of important emotional qualities in order to ensure success: empathy, feeling understanding, urge control, independence and the ability of controlling and adjusting our and other people's state of mind, motivation, self-respect etc. The intervention of emotional education and its development is necessary and vital, because a developed emotional intelligence means efficient control of negative feelings, positive thinking, growing the capacity of being emphatic and taking care of others, allows making connections through prosocial behaviours, allows reaching our objectives as well as tolerance of failure (Stein, 2003, White, 2011). As a result, emotional intelligence plays a central role in developing preteenager behaviour.

Learning about emotions, how to recognise, control and manage them is a fundamental objective of any education. Emotional education functions not only through words and actions, but also through examples offered by parents to their children, showing them how feelings work in their marital relationship. A proper education pointed towards developing emotional intelligence favours overstepping different life situations, managing the requirements of modern society in an adaptive manner. Parents serve as an example of behaviour for their children. The vast majority of models are learnt from parents. In order to develop emotional intelligence, it is essential that preteenagers parents have themselves an increased level of emotional intelligence. This feeling of security offers them a foundation to rely on when they need attention, comfort or affection. If preteenagers live in a space where emotional intelligence is high, they will develop good emotional intelligence fast and naturally. If the preteenager sees their parent admitting their emotions by understand their signification, as well as understand and expressing them constructively, he will imitate the emotional style of the parent. This way, they will optimise and develop a right emotional intelligence (Răscanu, 1999).

Family is the place where the child learns the pattern of first contacts with the adult, and the behaviour he adopts in the familial circle set the ground for his future conduct. The affective atmosphere in the family is very important for developing emotional intelligence. Gottman (2018), says that kids whose parents constantly practice this emotional training enjoy better physical health and behave better academically wise compared to children whose parents do not do this. These 'emotionally trained' children have easier friendships, less behaviour problems and positive feelings. In addition, these children express fewer negative feelings and more positive ones. In conclusion, they are healthier on an emotional level. Councillors, sociologists and other knowledgeable researchers in our country as well as in other countries researched in the context of behaviour disorders in children and teenagers, the influence of familial factors. The humanisation of the preteenagers and his personality are decided by environmental socio-cultural factors, in which his education in the familial circle has a defining role.

We will stop next on a number of causes which belong to the familial environment, more specifically to its diversity, which can have a negative influence on the development of the child's behaviour (Stănică, 1994), so:

- intrafamilial misunderstandings and home separation (can trigger in children's emotional disorders and pathological tendencies of evolution in time, fact that can lead to behavioural deviations);
- separation of the familial group through severe chronic diseases or through death of one parent (aside from economic hardship and emotional frustration, can also lead to anxiety and loneliness);
- the absence of one of the parents can negatively influence the development of the child's personality through the lack of an identification figure, necessary in the future forming of personality;
- divorce (leads to a series of ambiguous situations on the parents' side, which, aside from the anxiety and insecurity instilled into the child, can create some resentment or can be seen as a model to follow);
- parental mental pseudo debility (presents multiple behavioral implications with distorted character and is tied to multiple educational deficiencies present in this environment).

Paired with the traditional misunderstandings between parents, the mental discomfort caused by familial tensions, incapacity of parents or negligence towards children, represents the 'deck' on which the child steps, the future young adult towards antisocial behaviour. Parents play a significant role in determining preteenager performances in order to assimilate a solid and peaceful sense of reality. References coming from the external socio-cultural environment dictate human behaviour. These references, guided by cultural-scientifical, aesthetic, ethical, philosophical values, of behavioural models and uncertain situations impelled by socio-economic relations, are internalised by the human individual through the learning, training and educational process, forming a symbol of the external world and a behavioural programme, necessary for his accommodation in the socio-cultural environment he lives it (Molnar, 1999) By internalising the external conditions offered by the environment related to his personality, the man adapts to these conditions due to the plasticity of the cerebral cortex and its learning capacity, gaining new behaviours (Oancea-Ursu, 1998). "The first contacts with the environment", affirms L. Iacob (Neculau, 1996), "are more of social nature rather than physical, and his innate abilities (to feed himself, to cry, to ask and feel physical contact) prepare the ground for realising interactions with others.

The conscience of multiple forms of existence will be done gradually, during childhood and teenagerhood, but also during adulthood". It can be appreciated that on the level of personality development are confrontations, aspirations, and on another hypothetical level it can

be configured a range of affective, emotional disorders which generate depression and behavioural dispersion. By that, we refer to unit disintegration and the pattern in the psychic structure, being outlined the equation personality – environment.

Behaviour disorders have reactional character towards the environment conditions, out of which we mention the lack of affection which cohabits some preteenagers which are deprived of maternal and paternal love and attention, familial dissociation such as: divorce, constant disagreements between parents, concubinage, parental alcoholism, the place of the child in the family and the inequalities shown by parents between their children. It is crucial that education in family to be made in a disciplined, invariable, comprehensive manner, as that the preteenager to successfully overcome psychological phases in their lives, through which, the manifestations of liberty, sovereignty, need of affirmation, extravagance or affective diversity. A moderate parental authority, just and hierarchical can stop all rebellion reactions of the preteenager.

All parents' efforts must be directed towards creating an ideal familial environment for the child's development, in which there is no possibility of intolerance reactions from him. (Druță, 1998). As a result, the family is the first group the child is part of, it is the place where basic needs are satisfied: love and security, the need of new experiences, stimulation, the need to be appreciated and be recognised for his qualities, the need of taking responsibilities, the child's basic physiological needs. The familial context is the ideal place to learn and develop emotional abilities through interhuman relationships. This is where the first interpersonal relationships and affective connections take place, which have to be promoted constantly, through gaining experience continuously. In conclusion, through understanding and managing emotions, there is a personal and group influence in the family and then, in the following social context. The familial climate represents a fundamental variable of personal wellbeing. Familial and parental styles influence the improvement of social abilities and prosocial behaviours during this period. However, not all families assure the appropriate climate to favour proper development of emotional intelligence. Familial stress impacts the mental development and can then cause both mental and emotional problems (Parkinston, 1993, Dimitriu, 1973). Conflictual familial climates cultivate shortages in the emotional capacity of preteenagers.

3. Conclusions

The familial environment is considered the strongest factor in the emotional society, it is in fact the school where the first lessons in relation to emotional life are learnt, to the establishment of connections with the external and internal world reality, to developing the capacity of controlling the time course of emotion, to express feelings, becoming a demonstration of well-directed emotional intelligence. In this context, it is of major importance to promote emotional education in order to improve the development of emotional competency as a fundamental element of human development, with the ultima purpose of being trained for life, for personal and social growth.

The projection and implementation of education socio-emotional programs, as an emotional socialising strategy, both direct and indirect, favours the transposal of norms, values, support, affective and disciplinary actions, being the fundamental pillars in developing emotional intelligence and unravel conflicts. The best way of obtaining an appropriate education in managing emotions is to flourish the elements of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-control, empathy, motivation to achieve and social abilities.

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