

Summary

Pedagogic awareness of contemporary parents and the sources of the awareness

The theoretical analyses and empirical studies presented in this dissertation deal with parents' pedagogic awareness, understood as a state of mind which involves knowledge and beliefs concerning the education process, the subject of upbringing and the relations between both sides. The study is founded on empirical investigations that describe the phenomenon of consciousness, understanding and pedagogic awareness, and also the issue of conditioning and sources of pedagogic awareness among contemporary parents. Survey questionnaires were used on 214 parents. The results of this research, analyses and conclusions refer to the objectives of the study: firstly, to understand the pedagogic awareness of contemporary parents (their knowledge and beliefs concerning the issues of care and upbringing) and their own educational activities, as well as how they and their child functions in educational relations; secondly, to determine the circumstances by which parents develop pedagogic awareness and to indicate its sources. The paper also presents the results of research into the correlations between selected aspects of pedagogic consciousness of parents, the circumstances and sources from which parents develop pedagogic awareness, and also parents' selected personal characteristics and environmental factors.

Parents understand (or can understand) many issues associated with upbringing and child care. Findings on parents' awareness of the conditions of child development show that according to the vast majority of parents (74.6%), child development depends on environmental factors, mainly parental influence. Just over half of parents declare that they had possessed such awareness before the study. One in four parents realised this issue when they were trying to answer the questions on the questionnaire.

The overwhelming majority of parents (89.1%) understand the need to constitute the purposes of education, which allow them to act in a conscious, directed and planned way.

Studying parents' knowledge and beliefs concerning the consequences of exercising punishments (including corporal ones) showed that the majority of the parents studied (82.9%) are aware of the negative effects of doing so. Parents do realize that punishing evokes negative emotions such as fear in children. However, there are parents (one in seven) who not only point out the negative effects of punishing but also some positive ones, amongst which they see positive changes in the child's behaviour.

As for using rewards (including material ones) in raising children, half of the parents studied highlight their positive consequences, although over 40% of the parents see negative results in offering rewards. Amongst the beneficial consequences parents see are changes in children's motivations and mainly in children's emotions (children try to behave well). On the other hand, mothers and fathers emphasize that children can become more self-interested.

Almost 90% of the parents discern positive results in applying the method of persuasion (explaining certain issues to their children and convincing them to behave well). According to parents, this method influences the child's cognitive and moral development, because this modus operandi leads children to start thinking about their behaviour. The children also understand more and evaluate their own demeanour more accurately.

The awareness of the parents' educational activities was the next area studied. The findings show that parents pay relatively great attention to imagining their children's future adult life. Over 90% of the parents had thought about the future of the child before they took part in the study. The majority of the parents believe that giving some thought to their child's future is essential, because it helps to plan their child's upbringing and also gives a great chance to achieve its objectives.

Parents choose diverse approaches to their children, and the one they select depends on the circumstances. When the children behave against their parents' expectations, parents apply the method of persuasion. When the children behave well, they reward them.

Just over half of the parents give some thought to their own pedagogic competence. They think about this especially when they experience some difficulties during their educational activity. Almost 3/4 of the parents assess their own pedagogic competences as average, which means that they evaluate their own abilities and knowledge about education and care as sufficient (moderate). Just over half of the parents also express a wish to develop their own pedagogic competences, especially the ability to deal with educational problems.

The last issue in this study concerned the sources of pedagogic awareness among contemporary parents. According to the research, over 85% (85.5%) of the parents have great knowledge of such forms of supporting pedagogic awareness as books on upbringing and care. What is interesting is that nearly 75% of parents are well acquainted with such sources of pedagogic awareness as meetings with specialists: teachers, psychologists, and educationalists. Lectures and talks are the most poorly recognized form. The study also shows that usually parents do not use the forms of supporting pedagogic awareness. A significant number of parents declare that they use certain forms several times a year – 25% of parents watch films and TV programmes, while 18.7% meet specialists.

Analysing the pedagogic awareness of contemporary parents is a basis for creating projects to support parents in their educational and child-care activities. It allows us to establish the reason for the ineffectiveness and successes of parents' actions. Moreover, thanks to the information concerning which sources of pedagogic awareness parents know and how they use them, it is possible to plan more effectively which forms of support should be used.