

THE EMOTIONAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

The development of technology and mass-media, the parents' interest regarding their own careers, but also the teachers' ideal in preparing very good students with the aim of obtaining high performances, have a great impact on the emotional protection of children.

We consider that without a great control regarding both adults and children, kids presenting a special rhythm in learning and developing themselves, performances cannot be achieved or they can have a devastating impact on their evolution.

In this paper, we are willing to point out this delicate subjects underlining the importance of control and balance in using modern technology.

Key Words: *education, emotional protection, performances, modern technology.*

JEL Classification: [K10]

1. Introduction

Children must have not only an intellectual, physical harmonious development, but also an emotional one. Child's emotions can generate a certain behaviour which is to be accepted or not by the society, having in view the predetermined rules at a certain time. They represent a very vulnerable category of people, especially in the economic crisis' background.

Children can also be victims or witnesses of many crimes and lately also of digital crimes. The egocentrism which can be felt more and more in our daily activities can determine isolation, rejection, suspicions, untrust, things that don't affect only the individual but also the next generations, wheather we like it or not. This can create a chain reaction and it can also cause frustration, guilt and even contempt. Thus, we will try to explain in this paper all these aspects, inciting maybe, to a more appropriate analysis of our own person, of the environment or even of our relations and the things that are to be left behind.

2. The Legal Framework

From the historical point of view, even before the second world war, the polish pediatrician Janusz Korczak has militated for what he called "the child's right to respect".¹

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At the end of the second world war, a set of principles have been elaborated by the League of Nations and were included in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child regarding a special protection in 1924. Later this principles were also found in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 november 1959. Then the International Convention of the Rights of the Child was elaborated and adopted on 20 november 1989.²

In Romania, the legal framework in this area is regulated in the first chapter of the 3rd Title in the Family Code: “The parents’ rights and obligations towards their minor children” and it is completed with the legal provisions presented by Law No. 272/2004 concerning the protection and promotion of the child’s rights. According to the actual legal provisions the rights and obligations concern both parents weather the child is in, out of marriage or from adoption. Parental care is defined as the totality of rights and obligations offered to parents by the legislator in order to assure the growth and education of their children.³

We may notice that through parental care two goals are fullfilled in the same time. On one hand there is a personal objective which consists in the growth, education and preparation for life of the child. On the other hand, there is a social purpose which consists in the growth and education of the child according with the moral provisions and rules of social cohabitation.⁴

According to article 97, the second paragraph presents the fact that parental rights are to be executed only in the child’s interest.⁵ The same idea, regarding the minor’s interest is also sustained by another author which considers that the legislator creates an important legal guarantee which may assure the efficient protection of the minor’s interests against any possible abuses of the parents.⁶

Having in view the aspects presented above, we may notice the use of the terms “child” and “minor”. According to the first article from the International Convention of the Rights of the Child from 1989, the term “child” is defined as any human beeing under the age of 18, excepting the cases when, according to the applicable law to the child, the majority is considered under this age.⁷ Before Law No. 272/2004 was adopted by the romanian legislator, the terms “child” and “minor” were under the sign of equality.

The law No. 272/2004 defines the child in article 4 as the person under 18 years old and without having the full legal exercise capacity, according to the legal provisions. It may be noticed that this definition offers the notion of “child” a more limited signification than the “minor” one.

¹ Moroianu Zlătescu, I., *Convenția internațională cu privire la drepturile copilului*, Revista Drepturile Omului nr. 3/2012, p. 90.

² *Idem*.

³ Bacaci, A., Dumitrache, V.C., Hageanu, C.C., *Dreptul familiei*, C.H. Beck, București, 2009, p. 299.

⁴ *Idem*.

⁵ See www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/codul_familiei.php.

⁶ Banciu, M., *Dreptul familiei*, Canonica, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 341.

⁷ Bacaci, A., Dumitrache, V.C., Hageanu, C.C., *op.cit.*, p. 299.

3. Education and Mass-Media

The economic development of a country, the industry, the financial progress, the high quality standards, the professionalism, the financial insurances, the passengers protection represent just a few of the daily terms that can be encountered in mass-media. Every one tries to bring “something new”, which can impress, something that can raise the standards in different fields. Besides this purpose, mass-media is also known as the “watchdog” which is permanently keeping an eye on the way in which governments administer and develop education.⁸

We consider that mass-media should change its priorities. The main thing that mass-media should do would be to adapt its programs to the needs of society according to much higher standards. Its role in society is not only to be an observer but also an assistant in the education area. The actors that are using the latest technology such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. are not only children and young adults but also education authorities, educators, parents, representatives of the private sector. What is notable is the fact that communication through social networks must evolve into a very transparent conversation in order to provide the increasing of efficiency and efficacy of education.⁹

Having in view the emotive aspect of education, everyone who is involved in this sector should be forced to analyse and adapt their own activities according to the emotional needs of children and also keep up with technology development which is a must in this digital era.

3.1. Education

We may notice in educational institutions that the main purpose to be achieved is quality. The educational management is focused on the curriculum, in order to find the best methods of education and evaluation of the trainee. This is a good and desirable aspect for a country which is in full progress and educational reform. Unfortunately, the one to be forgotten is the child. The solutions that are to be offered are focused on the intellectual development of children, their inclusion in the mass educational system. We tend to focus on children with special educational needs.

According to Vasile Chis’ affirmation, in his “Pedagogical Foundations”, “only after the 90s, was the emotional and behavioral difficulties field in the specialists’ preoccupations in Cluj. The pedagogy of behavioral difficulties was not yet developed. “Instead, all over the world, in all educational systems a great “educational network regarding children with emotional and behavioral disorders was created.”¹⁰

During time, several definitions for education were presented:

⁸ See www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/98/74658.html.

⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁰ Chiş, V., *Fundamentele pedagogiei*, Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p. 33.

- According to I. Kant “education is the activity for discipline, cultivation, civilization and moralization of person and the educational purpose is to develop in an individual all perfection that he is susceptible of”;
- According to Herbart “education is the forming action of the individual with the specification that for him a lot of interests are to be developed”;
- According to Dewey: “education is that reconstruction or reorganization of the experience which adds to the meaning of the previous experience and which increases the capacity of directing the evolutions that must follow.”¹¹

After all these attempts to define this term we could say that education is the ensemble of all actions that influence an individual, at a certain time, in a well organized environment with the possibility of evaluating the educational actions. The education regards the relationship which is created between the trainee and the educator, the last trying to identify the native predispositions of the trainee creating opportunities and activities for learning in order to be able to develop or directing the learning process towards a very clear goal.

Over the years, great researchers tried to understand who has more influence on the human personality: native, hereditary or environmental influence. The hereditary influence (the hereditary theory) goes towards a radical direction sustaining that what we receive from our ancestors are defining upon one’s personality. On the contrary, the environmental theory reveals that the environment influences most the individual’s personality, minimizing the hereditary importance. In the end, the balance is offered by the duple determination theory which accords importance both to the hereditary and the environmental theory.

While heredity offers potential premises, the environment offers experiences, attempts, challenges, incentives. The duple determination theory’s beauty consists into three situations:

- If there are native predispositions, but there aren’t incentives for them to be revealed, then we have an unfortunate case, the native predispositions remaining unaccessed;
- If there aren’t native predispositions, but there are opportunities, challenges, we have once again an unfortunate case;
- But the best situation is when native predispositions are present and they meet the environmental incentives, accessing and identifying them, offering occasions of the personality’s development.¹²

Having in view this theory, we can affirm that the educator can be the link between predispositions and environment. He has the development’s resources of the individual’s personality. The importance of the educator is given by the activities conducted in a very organized framework, with access to material, financial and time resources so that the individual’s personality can develop according to a very precise purpose.

¹¹ Idem, p. 3.

¹² Idem, p. 60.

The types of education in a brief form are as it follows:

- The formal education – represents the education received by the trainee in an educational institution. The advantage of formal education is that it can be evaluated, controlled. The disadvantage is that it can produce monotony and unconcern from the trainee;
- The non-formal education represents the ensemble of all learning actions which unfold outside the educational institutions (for example: visits to museums, art school, Sunday schools at churches). The advantage of this kind of education is the fact that the learning activity is attractive and arouses curiosity in the learning process, but it can not be measured nor evaluated.
- The informal education represents the ensemble of all informations that act on an individual at a certain time, without having a particular purpose, without having a well-established target, but which however influences the individual's personality (mass-media, occasional discussions).¹³

3.2 Mass-Media

The influence on an individual, that is increasingly heard nowadays, is mass-media. Mass-media comes from the combination of two terms: “mass”, referring to a huge number of people and “media” referring to means, production and transmission technique of the messages.¹⁴

Mass-media can be an important instrument in providing information. The advantage in utilizing this instrument by teachers is that they can create a relaxed atmosphere and a better understanding of the different discussed themes. Going further in using the internet, for example, outside the school schedule, may provide a more elaborated research and even the discovery of new aspects of personal interest.

However if it used excessively it can generate isolation from real world, virtual friendships, emotional satisfaction being achieved only virtually where things can be controlled.

Nowadays this instrument is preferred especially by children because of its availability, disponibility and cost even if in this period of physical and emotional development it is not quite recommended.

“Children have an irresistible attraction for media, feeling the need to communicate intensively with each other because of the curiosity specific to the age, the wish of living unique experiences, the interest for a large amount of messages, the need of fantasy, the rich imagination, the intense participation, all these causing pleasure and relaxation.”¹⁵ These tools can generate aggressivity and a negative

¹³ Idem, p. 5.

¹⁴ Idem, p.19.

¹⁵ See https://beyondreamz.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/educatia_mass-media.pdf - I. Albulescu, *Educația și mass-media*, Cluj-Napoca, pag. 27.

behavior of children if they are not well controlled and balanced. The inner emotions can affect the human behavior and can help in making decisions or answer to certain situations. But emotions do not refer only to inner feelings but also to organic, vegetative, behavioral manifestations, an emotional experience with the world around.¹⁶

We consider that one's personality may form harmoniously if there is control and balance in using modern technology in educational institutions but also at home.

4. Parents and Careers

A very important role in the emotional protection of children regards the parents' responsibility. It is very important that they permanently verify the activities of their own children, to conduct them on an appropriate behavioral direction, not leaving everything in the educator's account. The child's behavior is an important signal of his/her direction already taken which may be noticed by parents or educators. So this is how negative behavior can be stopped and changed through prompt decisions.

Modern technology may be used successfully in different fields but it also provides slippery directions which can lead to devastating results if they are not very well controlled. We consider that without a great control regarding both adults and children, kids presenting a special rhythm in learning and developing themselves, performances cannot be achieved or they can have a devastating impact on their evolution. The control of using modern technology may also regard parents. A very suggestive example of this potential threat against children is represented by an 18 years old daughter from Austria who sued her parents for posting hundreds of photos from her childhood on Facebook. Thus, the images violated her right to a personal life.¹⁷

Or the right to private life means "an abstention across the whole area of the private life such as: to be unknown, not to be watched, followed, solicited, questioned, described or even not to be named in public, nor to make known one's biography or genealogy."¹⁸ This kind of acts may generate a non-pecuniary damage. So, as a principle the damages caused by harming the right to life, body integrity, honour, reputation, dignity can not be financially estimated.¹⁹

Nowadays the notion of private life in the sense of article 8 from the Convention was extended by the European Court of Justice. Thereby, it contains the right of person to private life, to social life and to a healthy environment.²⁰

¹⁶ See https://beyondreamz.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/psihologie_generala.pdf - V. Mih, *Psihologie generală și psihologia personalității*, Cluj-Napoca, p. 72.

¹⁷ See <https://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/teen-sues-parents-facebook/>.

¹⁸ Ungureanu, O., Juguștru, C., *Drept civil. Persoanele*, Hamangiu, București, 2009, p. 54.

¹⁹ Idem, pag. 57.

²⁰ Idem, pag. 56.

The same purpose is also sustained by Law No. 272/2004, article 27, which forbids any action that can affect the public image of the child or the right to private and family life.²¹ From this perspective the parent's role is to be responsible, to create appropriate conditions for the growth and development of children. Unfortunately, parents tend to focus lately on the material aspects of life and the things that really matter are forgotten.

Even if we can notice and measure the child's phisic evolution, from the emotional point of view we must admit that things become more complicated as emotional and spiritual experiences are difficult to be measured. In some situations it may lead even to the impossibility of measuring it. The parents' role in the emotional evolution of children is very important and nothing can replace them.

5. Teachers and School Performances

A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competences or values. Teaching someone is a noble duty which supposes a certain effort. In antiquity this kind of activities could be found especially in rich families. When we use this term, "teacher", we think of a person with very good knowledge in a certain field, who has precise goals in order to guide and educate children. A very important role of this person is to maintain a great communication with children, but also with their parents in order to discuss all educational aspects that are to be accomplished.

The most important thing is to form the pupils' personality, according to the society's requirements, and to help them achieve social integration. Nowadays parents are those to pretend high educational performances from theachers and their children, but they forget about kid's assimilation capacity or the emotional side. On the other hand, the remuneration and award system for teachers forces them to achieve high school performances despite the individual capacities of each pupil.

Romania is well-known, all over the world, as a country which prepares very good specialists in different fields such as mathematics, physics, medicine, chemistry and even sports.

A good teacher must always remember everyone's capabilities in a class and never forget the emotional protection and development which are the most important aspects in order to achieve motivation and self-motivation in the educational process. Unfortunately teachers tend to focus on the classical/traditional teaching which aims the assimilation of punctual information instead of being opened to personal opinions which could be shared for a better performance. Isolated cases talk about childhood depression generated by small grades.

²¹ Popescu-Slăniceanu, I., Enescu, C.I., *Aspecte privind reglementarea drepturilor copilului în România*, Revista Drepturile Omului nr. 3/2013, p. 53.

Conclusions

After the 90s, the information from all over the world delighted us but after almost 30 years of acceptance and absorption of all kind of freedom we may conclude that balance and moderation are the most important.

The development of technology and mass-media, the parents' interest regarding their own careers, but also the teachers' ideal in preparing very good students with the aim of obtaining high performances, have a great impact on the emotional protection of children.

On the other hand, electronic harassment, such as cyberbullying for example, represents a very complex social problem in the digital area. Unfortunately electronic harassment is much more frequent than the classical one and may expose the victim to major risks and psychological trauma.²²

We consider that without a great control regarding both adults and children, kids presenting a special rhythm in learning and developing themselves, performances cannot be achieved or they can have a devastating impact on their evolution.

However if we detect early such problems there is hope of solving them through emotional recovery. The implication of parents and teachers in childrens' activities remains an important instrument in providing a balance in the emotional protection of the little ones. "For whatever seed a man puts in, that will he get back as grain."²³

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²² Vasii, I., Vasii, L., *Criminalitatea în cyberspațiu*, Editura Universul Juridic, Bucharest, 2011, pag. 238.

²³ Bible, Galatians 6:7.