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Parental Educational Practices and Life Satisfaction among Youth

Extended summary

Educational outcomes, in a broader sense, can be expressed through indicators of the optimal functioning of the individual being educated. One such indicator is life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is closely related to indicators of a person's physical and psychological functioning, as well as to their achievements in various areas. Therefore, the problem of the relationship between parenting practices and children's life satisfaction is pedagogically very important.

This paper presents the results of a study in which differences in life satisfaction among students were analyzed. The aim of the research was to examine whether life satisfaction among respondents differs depending on the parenting practices applied by their parents. In addition to a survey questionnaire used to collect general data about the respondents, a scale for assessing parenting practices was used. This scale measures respondents' evaluations of three types of parenting practices: expectations that parents had of their children and the level of demands they placed on them (expectations and demands); positive parental reactions when children behaved in accordance with those expectations and demands (praise and rewards); and negative parental reactions when children did not behave in accordance with expectations and demands (criticism and punishment). The research was conducted on a sample of 390 students studying at the University of East Sarajevo. Differences in life satisfaction were analyzed among groups of respond-

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ents formed according to whether they assessed that their mothers and fathers applied the mentioned parenting practices to a greater or lesser extent, as well as according to whether they believed their parents were consistent or inconsistent in the application of those practices.

The obtained results show that greater life satisfaction was reported by respondents whose parents were less demanding and had lower expectations of them, respondents whose parents used more praise and rewards, and respondents whose parents criticized and punished them less. The results also support the view that both the type of parenting practices and the consistency between mothers and fathers in those practices are important for respondents' life satisfaction, although they somewhat favor the standpoint that the type of parenting practices carries greater weight than parental consistency. For life satisfaction, it is not so much the consistency of parents in parenting practices in itself that is important, but rather that such consistency relates to practices that are otherwise associated with greater life satisfaction.

The implications arising from this research can be divided into two parts. The first concerns practical educational activity and indicates that children's life satisfaction is positively influenced by agreement between parents in parenting practices, but only when those practices are characteristic of the authoritative parenting style (such as praise, as a form of supportive behavior), whereas practices characteristic of the authoritarian style (such as pronounced criticism and punishment) have a negative effect. The second part refers to a methodological recommendation which is consistent with the views of some other researchers, suggesting that in research on parental parenting styles, attitudes, or practices it is necessary to take both parents into account and not to observe their parenting behavior separately.

Keywords: life satisfaction, family upbringing, parental parenting practices, parental consistency in upbringing

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