The Effect of Parental Treatment and Socio-Psychological Characteristics of Students on the Experience of their Own Academic Success

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Abstract

The phenomenon of the experience of success is important to study both in terms of the individual and in terms of the development of a community. Particularly, this experience is an important determinant of the value of personality and it has a strong influence on self-esteem. The feeling of success produces pleasure that motivates individuals to engage, which also contributes to the development of community and its stability. School experience is one of the first in which an individual measures his or her potentials and establishes a working identity. The experience of academic success of students is discussed through the impact of parental educational style and their socio-psychological characteristics. We make a distinction between parental educational style related to social support and treatment of punishment. Socio-psychological characteristics are observed as intervening variables (gender, class attendance, parent education, financial situation, modesty, anxiety). The survey was conducted as an empirical and non-experimental, using a sample of 800 students in primary and secondary schools of Montenegro. The obtained results indicate that there are significant differences in the perception of success when it comes to parental treatments, and the impact of personality traits is not negligible.

1. Introduction and Definition of Terms

School success is a significant determinant of the value of personality and it is a good basis for general life achievements. It is an unavoidable topic when it comes to the evaluation of skills. The sense of success produces satisfaction within the individual, and it also motivates one to contribute to the community and society in general. The school environment is the first in which individuals have the opportunity to work in terms of being measured and to form their working identities. An increasing number of authors deal with this phenomenon measured over the average scores of students achieved at school, but few have researched the complexity of relationships and interactions that produce it. Regarding the fact that the result itself is not only important for the psychology as such, and as the relation to it is a subjective matter by the one who provides it, we were interested whether certain factors that we believe to be important in the formation of attitude toward oneself (self-concept) represent significant determinants of perceptions of students in their own academic success.

The closest definition to the way we have looked at this phenomenon was provided by Milosević and Ševkušić (2005), who see academic achievement as a product of the relationship between teachers and students in which the identity of successful and unsuccessful students is formed. Long ago it was recognized that school performance is determined by many specific cognitive and non-cognitive factors, and that the outcome is the interaction of abilities, personality traits and motivation of students. Brković (1998) argues that the explanation of success and failure is considered to be incomplete if it is observed through the acknowledgement of intellectual capacities, because school encourages full development (intellectual, emotional and social) of student's personality. If there is an equal sign between accomplishment and acquiring skills, then failure transforms into inability, which makes the person appear more inferior in the eyes of others. For this reason, the experience of achievement must be followed through all three dimensions, with respect to personal and environmental standards. This is especially true, if we take into account that school does not only have the task to train and guide students in choosing their careers, but also to develop a sociable person who should answer the increasingly complex requirements of knowledge market. In this regard, we distinguish between socio-economic, cultural and personal conditions that determine the experience of success. It is evident that current educational institutions tend to instill fear of making a mistake, and the need to take risk, initiative is reduced. These are essential elements of entrepreneurial spirit. By studying students' experiences, we should not ignore that they function in a number of stressful academic circumstances that act jointly with developmental crises and the values of the observed age.

Previous studies have often dealt with the question of how an individual is successful, and less with how one experiences his or her own achievements. Since parents are the first instance in the individual's socialization, we

assumed that their corrective measures have a strong influence on child's perspective of experiencing his or her success in school. As regards factors that have strong negative impact on cognitive development and academic achievement, Bloom (1981) gives prominence to non-stimulating family environment. Parents' and teachers' expectations and the errors of making comparisons with others are often the basis for stressful reactions and failure. It is noticeable that younger generations learn less out of curiosity and more in order to achieve the expected average. In today's crisis of values it is necessary to determine the impact of the family on the development and socialization of children. Therefore, it is important to see all values prevailing among young people and how they reflect on children's own perception of school success. According to Rokeach (1982), values are enduring beliefs that allow the selection of a particular way of reacting.

Bearing in mind that we experience the world in accordance with our own perceptions and personalities, we were interested in the importance of modesty as a significant determinant of experiencing children's own achievements at school. This is a trait with too many opposite meanings, but we considered it as a social virtue described through moderation, reduced the need to impress others, shyness and withdrawal from social contact. Many consider it as a negative fore token of rejection, potential and inferior social status. Studies have indicated that when a trait is present in men, it is perceived by others as inability to manage, and when it is observed in women it is perceived as a virtue. The reasons why the values of these characteristics are likely to fluctuate lie in the modification of general social values. That is why many pro-social traits become disadvantaged in the way of personal affirmation and achieving success. In the earliest stages of growing up, parents' influence the development of observed characteristic along with with a variety of social events. Since these characteristics belong to character traits, overall social environment is responsible for its development. Nowadays, there is a big dilemma whether this trait should be seen as a virtue and value that needs to be nurtured by generations.

Anxiety is treated as a psychological trait rather than a state. It is usually defined as a nuisance that has no clear source, and it is difficult to determine the cause of bad feelings. It is described by the following symptoms: constant tension, intense sweating, tremors, and problems with concentration, constant tension and fear, frequent withdrawal from social relationships. Perls (1964 to Shraga, 1991) notes that anxiety is a result of the discrepancy between the present and the future, and that in such case the fixation of negative forecast regarding the future could be noticed. Spielberger (1983) indicates a general disposition in the experience of anxiety states which are transient and alarm in functioning of the body to react in situations that are related to real threatening circumstances. The diagnosis of anxiety disorders is established in situations where anxiety seriously jeopardizes an individual's daily functioning. As the main criteria to distinguish normal and pathological anxiety Starčević (1997) distinguishes: the duration, the power which affects daily activities, the intensity in which it occurs, and environmental circumstances, and Endler and associates (1992) emphasize compliance and consistency in behavior. Thus, there is a difference between anxiety as a state and as a trait. The first one relates to the current status and it is situational, and the other is related to the general perception regardless of the circumstances.

2. The Objectives and Research Hypotheses

In scientific terms, the study aims to establish the direction and intensity of the impact of parental treatment and certain socio-psychological characteristics regarding the experience of students' own academic success in primary and secondary schools. This phenomenon is important to study because it is an integral factor of socialization and for the reason that the potential of the individual and the impact on community development are being realized within. Our goal was to expand the list of determinants of experiencing success and to affirm the work in this field, which is especially present in the observed environment. The study is relevant from the aspect of the individual's experience because the lasting impression of success or failure leaves a strong change in the students' personality. This would identify a group of individuals susceptible to certain social and personal influences. All findings would be within the function of labor support of pedagogical and psychological services through which practical measures would be implemented in order to raise the faith in their own capabilities.

We assumed that parental treatment, which essentially represents support for children, will create an experience for children to feel successful at school unlikely to punishing treatment that will often produce a negative image of their own achievements. We assumed that observed social status characteristics of students (gender, class attending, parent education, financial situation) will significantly affect the experience of their academic achievement. We expected modesty to be a significant source of differences in the observed phenomenon in such a way that the modest ones will be more satisfied with their success compared to those who are not. In line with a number of empirical verification that suggests that the anxiety is a barrier to achieving the success, we have assumed that it would create the experience of failure.

3. Method, Sample, and Survey Organization

The survey was conducted as empirical and non-experimental on a sample of 800 primary and secondary schools in Montenegro. Characteristics of the sample (we included schools from different regions, which are in proportion to students of different ages and social backgrounds, and the information given by those who regularly attend) and its size reduced the disadvantages of this collecting data method. As they respond to sensitive issues related to the characteristics towards relationships with parents, the students' confidence was gained by an announcement that teachers would not be present and that the survey was anonymous, as well as that the data will be used exclusively for scientific purposes.

4. Instruments

Data were collected using standardized measurement instruments and those that are designed for this kind of research. Information about social status characteristics was obtained from respondents through a questionnaire. We used Endler multidimensional scale for measuring trait anxiety, the scale of modesty is part of HeXaco Personality Inventory, a scale of parental treatment is designed for this study. Preliminary research on a sample of 150 students tested the intelligibility of questions as the instrument is employed at different ages. Based on this, created two forms of instruments are created and given to the students in primary and secondary schools. On this occasion, psychometric properties of instruments (which are satisfactory), duration and sensitivity tests are established.

5. Results

Table 1 shows the distribution of data on the scale of the dependent variable, and further analyzed by categories of *successful and unsuccessful.* First, we would like to emphasize that we treated the experience of academic success as the sum of the qualities of all interactions that students achieve at school. In addition, experience is followed through the assessment of the success in achieving knowledge in specific areas that are essential to further educational functioning, the assessment of the possibility of practical application of the knowledge obtained, as well as that the socially acceptable values are developed in school. The data indicates that four fifths of the respondents have a positive experience of their success, namely perceived themselves as successful. Observed distribution significantly deviates from normal and it is characterized by a negative curve, i.e., cluster of data around the maximum value.

By examining the data, we can conclude that students are far more likely to attribute the success of social relations, and general acceptance in that community. This is frequently supported by choosing the categories "*It fully refers to me"* and "*It generally refers to me"*, for good relations with other students (87.5%) and the acceptance from their own and teachers' side (85.1%) compared to the success that school reaches in achieving positive socialization effects (66.4%). Knowing that expressing dissatisfaction with school achievement can be an indicator of a need to eliminate this uncomfortable feeling through achieving better results, and the distribution of responses to that topic seems optimistic: "*I am dissatisfied with my achievements in main subjects*" simply because it is not to ignore that over 30% of responses are the category of dissatisfaction If you observe the answers to the statement: "*I hate going to school because everybody sees me as a fool who is not able to study"* (87.7), "*I can learn nothing. I always need somebody else's support"* (78.6) and *"From year to year, I achieve poorer results in school" (*74.4). It is clear that neither theoretically nor practically there is such a big percentage of students who think that they are limited in achieving academic success because of the general interior weakness or ability. When asked about the usefulness of the knowledge obtained in further studies, over 70% agreed to gain a good base, but we still do not know much about the usability of the knowledge of the theoretical and practical purposes, especially if students have not experienced an educational environment yet and their conclusions are perhaps more influenced by indirect experience (older students). This dilemma is supported by the fact that over 30% of those who expressed doubts about the good basis for mastering matters within the majority of subjects.

Table 1 - Presentation and analysis of data on the scale of experience of individual's own success

Claims	In which measure it refers to you?				
	It does not refer to me at all	Mainly it does not refer to me	It does not refer to me	It refers to me generally	It refers to me totally
1. I successfully accomplish all school duties.	26 3.3	30 3.6	153 19.3	308 38.6	281 35.2
2. I do not succeed to achieve good communication with teachers.	339 42.4	188 23.5	116 14.5	98 12.3	59 7.4
3. What I have learnt at school is „springboard" for my further education.	39 4.9	41 5.1	150 18.8	247 30.9	322 40.3
4. I have good prerequisites for acquiring matter for most of the subjects.	23 2.9	62 7.8	198 24.8	308 38.5	209 26.1
5. I get along very well with other students.	25 3.1	24 3.0	51 6.4	214 26.8	485 60.7
6. I am satisfied with my own achievements in main subjects.	228 28.5	137 17.1	179 22.4	157 19.6	98 12.3
7. In school, I developed working habits and readiness to fulfill my duties well and timely.	53 6.6	82 10.3	172 21.5	214 26.8	278 34.8
8. I am respected and accepted among students and teachers.	22 2.8	19 2.4	79 9.9	238 29.8	442 55.3
9. School helped me developed my social desirable attitudes and values: about the family, school, religion, country…	81 10.1	68 8.5	138 17.3	245 30.7	267 33.4
10. I hate going to school because everybody sees me a fool who is not able to study.	658 82.3	43 5.4	34 4.3	33 4.1	32 4.0
11. I have learnt at school that every failure should be treated as a challenge and that after that I become even stronger in achieving my success.	65 8.1	61 7.6	153 19.1	251 31.4	269 33.7
12. From year to year, I achieve poorer results in school	496 62.0	99 12.4	78 9.8	58 7.3	69 8.6
13. I am proud of my school success.	55 6.9	65 8.1	149 18.6	209 26.2	321 40.2
14. School helped me develop my desirable characteristic features (to study hard, to rely on my own abilities, to act fairly and unselfishly...)	73 9.1	82 10.3	179 22.4	205 25.7	259 32.5
15. I can't learn anything and I always need somebody else's support.	466 58.3	162 20.3	95 11.9	41 5.1	36 4.5

The above-discussed is consistent with the concept of people's inclination to attribute success to their own powers, and to justify failure through external circumstances, which argues the theory of attributions and self-attribution. In this regard, respondents significantly attribute their success to what is more likely to be under their control than to the power and abilities of school. In the foreground, they measure their success through the achievement of social skills (quality of interpersonal relationships with their peers and teachers) that was to be expected because they are in the growing period, which carries the importance of functioning with as others and as well primarily seeing the values of personality through acceptance of society. However, the distribution of data on a scale of parental treatment data shows that the answers are moving in the direction of support that in most of cases parents provide it for their children as being emotional and treat them as equal, encourage them to talk about the events of their lives, and sanctioning is more a verbal than physical. Moreover, it is not insignificant that around 50% of respondents report that their parents constantly remind them how much they sacrifice for them. At this age, the consequences of rejection are stronger because the value of this growing period lies in fact that an individual wants to be favorite in the group, to be loved and respected, and to know whom he or she belongs to. Furthermore, the difference in the perception of our own achievements in relation to whether they have parental support or it is missing is shown.

Table 2 - Developmental stimulating parental treatment and experience of their own academic achievement

When they percieve presence for their development of stimulative parental treatment	Assessment of individual's own academic achievement				Total
	Unsuccessful		Successful		
	f	%	f	%	f
Not present	120	30.0	280	70.0	400
Present	41	10.3	358	89.7	399
Total	161	20.2	638	79.8	799

Pearson Chi-square:48.299; df= 1; p=.000 ; c= .239

Based on the obtained data, we can conclude that there is a symmetrical relation of segments of crossed variables. Empirically, it is confirmed the assumption that there will be a strong influence of the environment in which one usually gains first experiences of themselves. Stimulating parental treatment allows a child more often to be seen as successful in relation to the ones growing up in a non-stimulating family environment. This is in accordance with the opinion of many scholars in developmental psychology who point out that confidence in their own abilities is built in the earliest stages of development. Usually, autonomy and basic thrust towards the environment is gained in family surroundings. In addition, in the collectivist environments such as this one, the importance of social support in many life's endeavors is easily noticeable. No success is important unless it is recognized by the surrounding as such.

Furthermore, we noted punishment as parental treatment as a source of differences in the perception of students' own academic achievement. A growing number of empirical findings indicate that long-term effects on the perception and behavior of an individual will be treated by praise. Punishment can generate fears and mobilize energy in unproductive patterns of functioning, and block the expression and impoverish the capacities.

Table 3 - Developmental non-stimulative parental method assessment of own academic achievements

When they perceive presence for their development of non - stimulative parental treatment	Assessment of individual's own academic achievement				Total
	Unsuccessful		Successful		
	f	%	f	%	f
Not present	55	13.6	349	86.4	404
Present	106	26.9	288	73.1	394
Total	161	20.2	637	79.8	798

Pearson Chi-square:21.875; df= 1; p=.000 ; c= .203

Reviewing the obtained results, we conclude that parents who do not apply punishment in growing period create a safe psychological basis for children to be experienced a positive way. This confirms previous findings of empirical studies which have concluded that the development and manifestation of undesirable sociable forms is a natural response to growing up in controlling and discouraging circumstances. We expected an influence of social status characteristics of students on the differences in the perception of their own academic achievement and found that, of the variables involved, the only significant determinant of the observed were gender differences. Information about the differences are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Gender and experience of individual's own academic achievement

Gender	Assessment of individual's own academic achievement				Total
	Unsuccessful		Successful		
	f	%	f	%	f
Male	102	29.0	250	71.0	352
Female	59	13.2	389	86.8	448
Total	161	20.1	639	79.9	800

Pearson Chi-square:30.642; df= 1; p=.000 ; c= .342

It is noticeable that girls compared to boys more often perceive themselves to be successful in terms of academic

achievement. This difference is probably a consequence of the different influences that socialization agencies have on genders. In the observed culture girls are raised to be submissive, oriented to the needs of others, and therefore they are more accepted in education and educational work activities. Girls are often socialized in the direction of a positive attitude towards school and active participation in class. In the past, education was prohibited to women, and so maybe this culminated through generations in a greater need to be numerous and more motivated to achieve success in these fields.

Conversely, boys are often taught that it is more important to manage in a wider social community, rather than in a protected environment such as school. Francesco and associates (2002) indicate statistically significant gender differences in terms of expressing a motive of achievement, i.e. some of its elements. This difference is reflected in the persistence in achieving goals and satisfaction in the outcome, in favor of females. Greater involvement is supported by good results that encourage persistence in learning, well-organization and commitment which in the learning process lead to better grades and a more positive self-image because it is a better psychological space to experience success. The analysis of the relationship between the observed psychological variables (modesty and anxiety) as determinants of success at school experience suggests that, in this context, significant differences produce anxiety. Below we show the value of the Spearman coefficient.

Table 5 - Relation between anxiety and assessment of individual's own academic achieve

Personal features		*Assesment of individual's academic achievement*
Level of anxiety	Spearman's coefficient	.185**
	significance	0.00
	N	800

** p≤ 0.01

Based on the data from the table no. we notice that there is a low and positive correlation between the level of anxiety and the evaluation of their own academic achievement. In previous research, results revealed a correlation with a negative sign meaning which shows the higher the level of anxiety when the achievement is worse. It is possible that the results are different than expected because we did not address school achievements but with experience of success at school. The experience of success may have a compensatory role and provide better individual psychological basis for the functioning of the social environment.

6. Conclusions

Data from this study provide an opportunity to perform more relevant conclusions and suggestions for practical action. Whatever we think about the current education and behavior of young people, the results of this research in the first place testify that the students usually consider themselves within the category of success. Of course, this experience does not necessarily have to be reviewed in the context of the school environment, but also as a product of hopes broader than social community. Empirical data show that gender, parental treatment (both praise and punishment), and anxiety are important determinants of the experience of academic success of students. Overall, in order to experience primarily, for success students, it is important to have the support of their parents, because they should be a shelter for the many adversities with which the child faces moving forward through critical social environment. In further studies, the values that govern the education should be determined, as well as the quality of cooperation between the family and the school community. Firstly, the society is expected to establish a systematic development of desirable values for young people to imitate, which would strongly encourage them to be more involved and promote their potentials. In these efforts, an important role should be assigned to the experts who deal with the human side of behavior at school. They are expected to support the parents in raising their children, and to develop the productive cooperation between schools and families. In the first place, it should be given an adequate space for psychologists to work on the preparation of environment for meaningful change, especially those in the sphere of the ruling consciousness that is resistant to them.

Excessively ambitious parents often try to engage their children in these areas due to their professional unfulfilled desires. Support of experts, who will clarify the real capabilities and aspirations of their children, is required in term of avoiding such mistakes especially if children can be capable in all areas. There are many ways to expand and improve communication (newsletters, e-mails, social network ...), but firstly it is important that the teacher "comes to the ground" his or her arrogance that he or she knows everything and that can assess the validity of all parental behavior, as well as a parent should not be defending the child in everything, and that they have equal responsibilities and to meet the demands for training in order to identify susceptible categories so the communities could find ways to strengthen their capacities.

In practical steps, pedagogical and psychological services should be more involved in guiding the development of psychosocial programs that would serve as a space for awareness of their potentials and to eliminate barriers in order to achieve success in school. It is certain that these barriers are higher if they come from personality, and a personality at this age is extremely sensitive on the happenings in the region. It is also important that in the earliest stages of socialization children are not raised in accordance with the ongoing stereotypes. In particular, it seems important to make teachers familiar with the impact which they could have on child through grading as well as to inform them of the potential errors that they may occur in that process.

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