

Summary

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Theoretical-empirical study

The main object of the thesis is to demonstrate educational usefulness of techniques, methods, procedures and concepts developed within positive psychology for pupils/students? in age 13–16. The thesis consists of four chapters and the appendix.

First chapter “Perspective of school system’s stakeholders”, is a description of the situation of three main participants of school system: pupils/students, teachers and parents/caregivers. The most interesting for further analysis is psychological and sociological characteristic of these groups. According to different research, teenage students emerge as an individuals in a very specific and sensitive situation. It is difficult to ignore the fact that up to 50% of all mental health disorders leading to the abuse of psychoactive substances, aggression and violence and other antisocial behaviors originate from/begins in? adolescence and only 10-20% of adolescents having mental health problems can be diagnosed.. Furthermore, between 2002 and 2008, the number of people at the age 18/19 hospitalized in psychiatric facilities increased dramatically. Sociologists call this phenomenon a “psycho-wave”, seeing its causes in the process of clashing the individual with huge, often unpredictable social, cultural and political changes. In case of teachers, literature indicates problems related to burnout, mobbing and professional stress. An important part of the chapter is dedicated to the criteria of a “modern” teacher or – in other words – psychological profile of an educationally effective teacher. Therefore a heuristic model of teaching has been described. The third part presents characteristic features of a statistically “typical” parent/caregiver. The research shows that parents seem to be much more satisfied with the school’s functioning than their children (students) and at the same time most of them declare that the scope of their impact on the school is sufficient. However, detailed analyses of available information about parents’ activities shows that their involvement is mainly auxiliary, organizational and financial. It seems reasonable to hypothesize that both parents and teachers do not want, for various reasons, to make the involvement of parents stronger and more substantive. Finally, at the end of the chapter, the school is shown as a system, where communication between stakeholders is crucial.

Chapter 2, “Positive psychology in educational interventions – genesis, current state, perspectives”, contains description of concepts, which are sources of positive psychology: eudaimonia, humanistic psychology, theory of self-determination of Deci and Ryan. Than, the newest initiatives within positive psychology are described. In the second part of the

chapter, there is an analysis of cognitive psychology as a main base of the two most important concepts within positive psychology: Martin Seligman's model of attributional styles and Carol Dweck's "new theory of intelligence". They are analyzed in the further part of the chapter. The last section is dedicated to biological perspective in research conducted by "positive" educators.

Chapter 3, "Educational practices based on positive psychology", presents characteristics of the following: practice models developed within positive psychology PERMA model, the model of building students' psychological resistance, the model of balanced wisdom, the model of involving parents in school's activities and the leadership model in a school's context. Furthermore, for the first time, systemic implementation of positive psychology at Geelong Grammar School and BRAINOLOGY software are presented.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the author's own research. There were two main hypotheses: (a) the stronger attributional style, the better school grades and (b) the stronger believe that intelligence can be develop, the better school grades. The first hypothesis has been positively verified, which means that statistic analyze showed a significant correlation between score in test of attributional styles and average grade and conduct grade of students. In case of the second hypothesis the correlation has not been found. The chapter also includes detailed discussion about statistic procedures, results and conclusions.

The appendix is the author's training program for teachers, based on positive psychology. Its aim is to familiarize teachers with the basic knowledge about positive psychology and the impact of the beliefs about intelligence on students' assessments, as well as to develop teachers' ability to apply "positive" techniques to their own educational practice. The program is based on a model of cooperation between particular subject teachers and a class teacher.