



Family Education as a Part of Quality of Life

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Abstract

Socioeconomic growth, mobility and technology development have changed the goals, the borders, and the content of education. In a society of globalized information, education concerns to all domains of life, including family, which is traditionally considered to be the most fundamental element of statehood. A possibility for each individual to integrate into a number of social systems and to be personally effective into promoting their quality of life is acknowledged to be dependent on the development of one's personal competences [1]. The individual competences and the knowledge owned by family are instruments for personal growth and a possibility to gain satisfaction, as well as welfare, thus promoting the quality of life. Family is a linked system which undergoes inner interaction, and interacts with various surrounding structures [2]. On the one hand, family involvement into actions of community and cooperation between families and professionals during various stages of family development take place; on the other hand, insufficient quality of life and limited access to education resources for families do exist. Only a family which is capable at learning has a future paradigm. Family activity corresponds to the society it belongs to; unfortunately, the current situation of Latvia is strongly characterized by a lack of understanding of the significance and the meaning of family education.

The aim of the Paper is to affirm that development of family education means a promoting understanding of quality of life.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used. An analysis of scientific literature, a survey and a statistical analysis of data (IBM SPSS 20) is used.

During the research, the aspects of understanding of family education have been identified, and the levels of quality of life have been measured. The objectively and subjectively identified goal of family education is to overcome the lack of understanding and to develop innovative methods of family education corresponding to the present situation.

Key words: family education, quality of life.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, education is a significant process related not only to the formal education, but also to education in all domains of a human life, including a family. The family is a social institution which is affected by socio-economic factors in the same way as the whole society. Nowadays, families are looking for new development opportunities to combine the work and the family life, to revalue family values, to regard an individual by society as a precondition of achievement. However, cumulative transformative processes taking place in society set new requirements all the time, thus, creating high sensation of unsteadiness. Negative social processes threaten to cause deformation of relationships; family possibilities to resist them are endangered when relationships change, it is expressed as a loss of succession of socially historical experience [3]. Each family functions within a certain relationship pattern related to experience, values and possibilities. The basis of family education is a concept that the family is a small unit of social community which has to be supported and encouraged in order each individual and the family as a whole could enjoy a happy life. Education may make an individual more satisfied with life, increase his/her happiness [4]. Behaviour of each family is subjectively interpreted and objective reality is constructed [5]. Individual's competence and also family's competence is related to the quality of life. Nowadays, the education system has to ensure a possibility for each member of the community to obtain and improve his/her competences – to obtain education, to train for a new occupation, to increase knowledge throughout their lives according to the needs of an individual and community, thus, providing an opportunity successfully to take part in socioeconomic and political processes [6]. Family education is related to development of individual's potential within the context of sustainable education. The basis of family education is human goals, emphasizing experience as a tool to develop knowledge, abilities, attitudes and values which help act responsibly and take responsibility for consequences of one's own actions. The quality of life is related to welfare



of an individual and also of the family, and to possibilities of the families to meet their needs both material, and emotional. French psychologist P. Bourdieu believes that human's behaviour allows obtaining an advantageous social position for those who choose to act and strive for action, thus improving the quality of life [7].

2. Materials and Methods

The basis of the article is the multi-factorial approach of the family education concept found in the works by J. Thomas, M. Arcus (1992) [8], and of the term of the quality of life based on the theoretical analysis of the works by J. Habermas (1971), etc.

The quality of life is a multi-dimensional term which is used for various domains of life. Concepts of the quality of life are created when the existing quality of life comes into contact with the desirable one, when the individual has an opportunity to compare various examples of how other families live. Impact of the community reflects family's identity with its settlement and its impact to possibilities to improve one's quality of life [9]. The quality of life of families largely depends not only on resources available to the family, possibilities to be involved in the cultural life, as well as on self-realization, but also on surrounding environment and its compliance with the needs of families. The quality of life is featured by consumption level available to the family, possibility to obtain education, to receive qualitative and available services, to live a long life in well-being, to participate in and to impact social and political life. The quality of life is largely determined by the state where we live, and by opportunities and support provided by the state both for each one individually and for families as a whole, however, the quality of life is affected just as much by the desire and opportunities of each individual to be active and responsible. R. Veenhoven relates the quality of life to the level of person's satisfaction affected by positive and negative experience [10].

Education provides greater possibilities for material welfare and accessibility to resources; it means also to have less stress and sufferings [11].

Concerning the surrounding environment as a factor affecting the educational system, there are processes taking place and developing, creating necessity to shift the previous paradigm regarding the system as a whole and individual its parts. Within the context of educational policy of Latvia and also the European Union Member States, the main processes initiating the shift of the educational system's paradigm may be considered as follows:

- globalization processes taking place in the world;
- demographic and economic processes;
- shift of values in the society of knowledge.

Globalization, within the general network of interactions, independently on the borders of states, can be described as a process involving:

- human resources;
- markets (international trade);
- technologies;
- finances;
- information;
- management [12].

The paradigm of the 21st century is focused on adapting, enlarging and improving obtained knowledge, instead of teaching everything, in other words, on developing competences. The research of family education has to be carried out through the understanding of the term competence. According to J. Habermas, the term "competence" was not understood as knowledge accumulated, taught in the certain area which could be updated, but as an ability to apply knowledge. J. Habermas emphasized competences as a significant pedagogical category where competence as an ability may be applied, developed and improved. The task of pedagogy is also to further its development [13]. Nowadays, competence has become a pedagogical category, and it has its own forms and explanations. Competence approaches expressed in the process of its obtaining nowadays are related to education for sustainable development:

- Education is the most important tool for shifting to sustainable development, as it increases individual's possibilities to implement his/her ideas;
- Education furthers values, behaviour and lifestyle necessary for sustainable future;



- Education for sustainable development is a learning process during which long-term decision making is mastered affecting issues of fairness, economy and ecology within all levels of society [14].

To solve issues of understanding family education, we cannot neglect experience which a researcher I.Tilla emphasizes as an important part of the competence structure.

Table 1. Structure of content featuring competence (adapted from Tilla, 2005)

Individual combination	Subjective ↓ Objective ↑	Group of abilities based on individual experience									
		Cognitive abilities	Emotional abilities			Voluntary abilities	Physical abilities		Social abilities		
		Meta-cognitive abilities									
		Possibilities to obtain experience throughout the lifetime									
		Own experience			Experience of others			World's experience			
		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world	
		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world	
		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world	
		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world		Personally important knowledge	Abilities obtained for activities of life		Attitude towards person himself/herself, others, the world	

The structure of content featuring competence consists of interrelation of two components. The first component includes cognitive, emotional, voluntary, physical, social and meta-cognitive abilities based on individual experience which is individual potential of a person. The second one includes abilities to obtain one's own experiences and that of others and the world. Own experience, in its turn, is made of personally significant knowledge, skills obtained throughout the life, and attitudes towards person himself/herself, others, and the world. Experience of others means knowledge important to others, abilities observed in lives of others, attitudes of others towards person himself/herself, others, and the world, and the world's experience means declarative and procedural knowledge, various abilities applied throughout the life, and multiple existing systems of attitudes [15]. According to the opinion of the author of the article, it is possible to improve the quality of life depending on individual's personal experience. Any person is able to create material and mental values.

The research of the quality of life tends to fix and understand a situation within the main domains which are important for achieving a good life. To research aspects of family education understanding and to relate them to measurements of the quality of life, qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied, and responses provided by 40 respondents were analysed. The respondents



of the research were asked to answer to 18 questions to determine aspects of family education understanding and to determine aspects affecting the quality of life. The IBM SPSS 20 package was used for quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistical indices were stated, and statistical criteria were calculated. Results obtained by help of qualitative and quantitative research methods were compared, and integrated conclusions were made allowing obtaining a view on family education understanding and on criteria affecting the quality of life.

3. Results and Discussion

It can be stated from the responses of the respondents concerning family education issues (significance of career, possibility to prepare for career, and effort) that in general group 1 assesses opportunities to prepare for career higher 2.65 (2.45 in group 2), career significance for the family both groups assess alike 3.15 and 3.15, family members of the group 2 make more effort to further their learning or career than group 1.

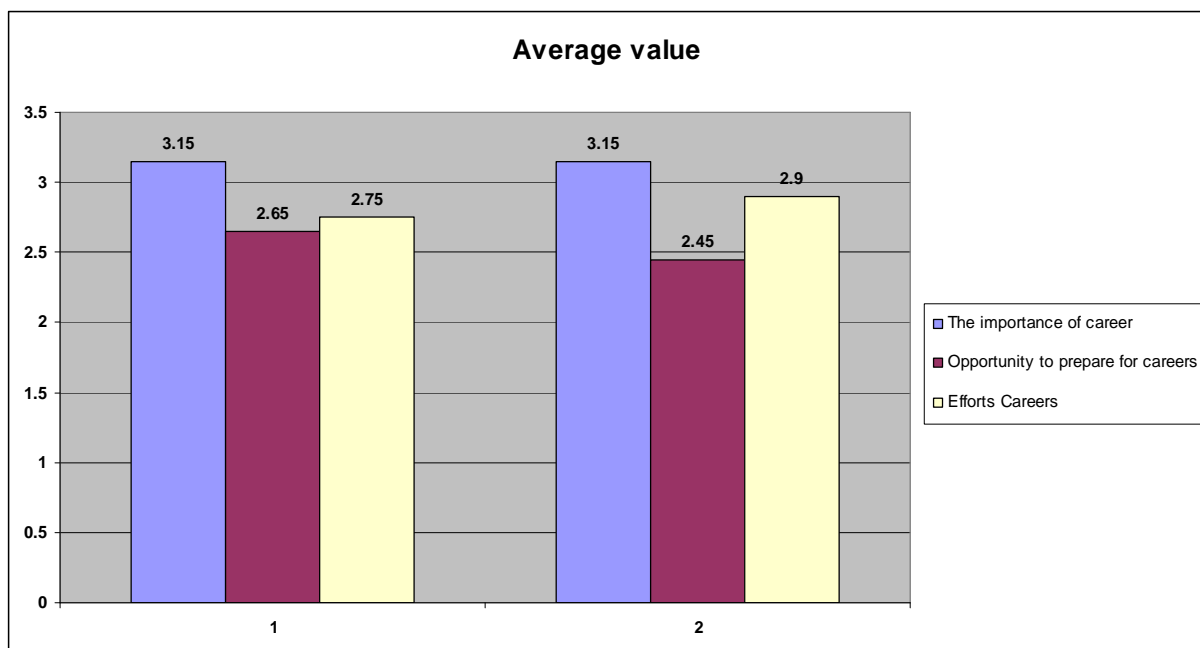


Fig.1. Understanding of family education

According to the charts, the most differences are concerning health and family income issues. More efforts for staying healthy are made by group 2 (3.5), however, group 1 assesses the health issue higher than group 1 (3.35)

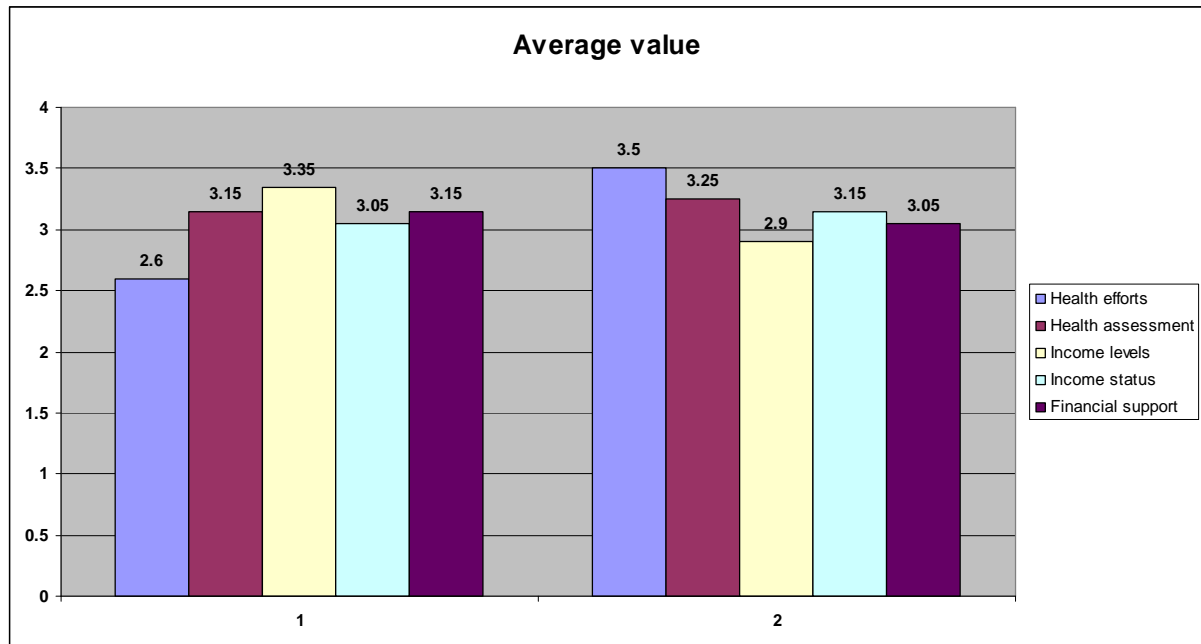


Fig.2 Components of understanding the quality of family life

4. Conclusions

- The quality of family life is determined by subjective and objective circumstances, the quality of life includes issues significant to an individual and the family – welfare, security, and sustainability, material conditions only partly determine the quality of life.
- Nowadays, the family has to be active, able to learn, education is only a tool to ensure the quality of the family life. Based on theoretical findings by J. Habermas, family life takes place within the living space affected by structures and systems developed by society, as well as by values set by culture and individual ability to handle resources.
- Family education is related to development of individual's potential; new solutions of family education, families' involvement in community processes, thus, developing competences – the ability to adapt, enlarge and improve obtained knowledge - can improve the quality of the family life and to minimize restrictedness of family education resources.

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