«OBEDIENCE» IN EDUCATION:

AN EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

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The article presents an attempt to explain the causes and consequences of unrestricted obedience of students to teacher`s authority. The experimental studies carried out in 2009-2010 and 2014, which was partially a replication of Arthur Poskocil`s. These studies proved the following:

1. The obedience behavior is developed in two successive phases: doubt and protest phase and acceptance and obedience phase.

2. The behavior of the learner who moved into acceptance and obedience phase is characterized by lowered self-esteem, intellectual inertness and meekness.

3. The most significant effect on the obedient behavior in the class-room environment has the situation that requires a learner to remain in his role, even if it involves the performance of absurd actions. The main characteristics of the situation that determine obedient behavior of the learners are:

* The perception of the situation as displeasing, but necessary for the purposes of education;
* The perception of the teacher, as the legitimate authority, with all the attributes of their genuineness;
* The normative and informative influence of the teacher and the group members upon the student.

4. The gradual involvement of "learner» to the "agentive state" (during the process of socialization, learning how to behave in a prescribed role) can be considered as a factor contributing to the formation of the obedience in the educational environment.

5. The presence of opposition or denying figure or figures in the group can act as factor that might provoke disobedience in a minority and reinforce the compulsive or pro-group behavior of the group’s majority.

 6. The degree of influence of personality characteristics upon obedience are rather insignificant, only such personality traits as emotional instability, caution and distrust, anxiety and sensitivity to the others estimates, distrust to authority, criticism, liberalism can be considered as features that reduce obedience of a learner to legitimate authority of the teacher. Personal traits can act as the critical factor in the situation when the participants might feel reluctant to undergo the testing, due to the presence of disobedient members in the group.

7. Excessive obedience in the learning environment can be seen as a factor which reduces the quality of education, through the transformation of educational motivation, decreased research activity, skills of logical thinking, analysis, dialogue and discussion, personal responsibility for learning outcomes, the development of intellectual inertness and convergent thinking, narrowing of intellectual horizons that leads to instability, fragmentation of knowledge.