

New study: Overbearing parents foster obsessive children

September 18 2008

A new study has found that parental control directly influences whether a child will develop a harmonious or obsessive passion for their favorite hobby. Conducted by Professor Geneviève Mageau, of the Université de Montréal's Department of Psychology, the study will be published this fall edition of the *Journal of Personality*.

Mageau focused on 588 musicians and athletes between the ages of six and 38 who practice their hobby at different levels (beginner, intermediate and expert). Mageau used a Likert-type scale to measure how parents support the autonomy of their child.

She also evaluated the psychological well being of the child regarding their hobby, which in this case was piano, saxophone, skiing or swimming.

"The more controlling parents are, the harder it is for the child to have a harmonious passion for their favorite activity," says Mageau. Her concept of supporting autonomy means allowing a child to face up to his or her responsibilities, while considering the child's point of view and also providing answers to their questions without being authoritative.

"Youngsters with a harmonious passion had parents or an entourage that supported them, while those with an obsessive passion were raised in an oppressive environment," she says.

According to Mageau, adults often admit exercising abusive authority

over their children and sometimes forcing their offspring to pursue an activity against their will. "The child learns that by obeying their parents they will be loved," she says. "The risk is that as adults they continue to pursue the activity to maintain their self-esteem."

Source: University of Montreal

Citation: New study: Overbearing parents foster obsessive children (2008, September 18)
retrieved 4 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2008-09-overbearing-parents-foster-obsessive-children.html>

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