DEVELOPING CHILDREN´S AUTONOMY IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION FROM PARENTS PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This scientific study presents the concept of a qualitative research of children's autonomy in pre-primary education. It is focused on the issues of children's autonomy in kindergarten from the parent's point of view in Slovakia. The study presents representations of the mentioned construct and children's autonomy, which were thematized by sole actors in conducted focus groups. The results of the research in the form of the methodological interpretation of the phenomenon studied are conceptualized by a metaphorized description. Based on our findings in focus groups, we report that participating subjects (parents) are interested in the issue. They are thinking about the phenomena that are characteristic of the present and directly affect the education of children, their manifestations of autonomy.

Keywords: children´s autonomy, focus group, qualitative methodology, pre-primary education, parents

1 Family education

The process by which a human individual goes through his or her development is very complex. Various changes are underway in this process, which are conditioned by four basic factors: the inheritance, education, environment and active participation of the subject. Family-based education is the process of transferring socio-historical experience to prepare the young generation for family life and work in new social conditions. It is the initial stage of the whole child's educational process, in which schooling and out-of-school education will later arise. The family is a small group whose members are bound by strong emotional connections (Rozinajová, 1988). The first years in education are the most important, because their influence is the longest. The child most needs the certainty of dealing with its immediate family. To survive at all, it must have people around who provide him / her with help and protection. Helping a defenseless and helpless child must be a deeply rooted psychological need, because otherwise the mechanism would not work. "Human maternal love," and this relationship is a miraculous mechanism of mutual satisfaction of psychological needs (Matejček, 2008). Childhood is the first stage of our life, our personal history (Helus, 2004). The experience and experiences of childhood are stored in memories, but they also form the personality of the child. It is the responsibility of the parents to make the child at this stage acquire everything that is important and necessary for the next life, so that it can be a reflective bridge for fulfilling dreams, aspirations and goals. An important prerequisite for good education is to know what we want from a child, "what to order him / her to do and what to ban". To raise a child, however, is not only about prohibitions and orders, but also about his / her strength and ability, about certain freedom in his / her manifestations, because the possibilities of a child's development are manifested in spontaneous and natural activity. Education is an activity of conscious and purposeful acts which have affect on the educated and the educator (Rozinajová, 1988). If the child is a subject of education, it means that it is actively involved in achieving educational goals, in its own formation. It is essential to provide conditions in which education goes hand in hand with self-education, for which the child itself is more and more responsible (Helus, 2004). Parents should encourage the child to develop traits that are necessary for being not only educated, but for an individual who is involved in their / its upbringing. Based on this, we can say that the success of parenting depends, to a large extent, on the active participation of the child in his or her own education. Education influences the knowledge, the development of abilities, interests, needs, feelings, will, convictions, character and the whole personality - its thinking and action (Rozinajová, 1988). This can be achieved with the active participation of the child if it is internally identified and convinced of the relevance of his / her own participation in the process. The role of parents is therefore to convince their child of the need for such cooperation, of the importance of its participation. In order for a child to be able to self-educate, parents should combine initiative, activity and independence in their education. First, parents are active but gradually abandon this position and give this opportunity for the child. They later constantly create the conditions and space for the child to show / demonstrate its autonomy and initiative. Consequently, they do not remain in the same educational methods, but change them according to circumstances. They create enough opportunities for a child to act as a self-acting individual, whom they will be able to counsel, help, explain without embarrassment or humiliation. A child's natural activity is a condition for developing self-reliance and independence. The success of the education process also depends on how the parent can direct and support the child's own transformation efforts (Rozinajová, 1988). Parents want a self-acting, self-confident, autonomous child, but these personality traits can sometimes turn against them, their ideas and wishes. The stronger the parents bind their child, where some make it impossible for them to develop and become self-reliant, the more effort the child spends to backpedal from them. Parents should not withhold their child from their own experience. Children need parents who support, help, carry through, but do not detain.

1.1 Educational styles

The way parents can harmonize their demands on a child with the child's needs, how they can attune the emotional and rational aspect of education as they communicate with their children, we call educational (parenting) style. Care must be taken to ensure that family education is unified, positive, and parental behavior is targeted and conscious. A loving relationship with children, the right demands, the understanding of their needs and desires, creates a healthy family environment which has a great impact on the child and helps it resist the various hazards and temptations from the outside. Depending on the style of parenting, parents give their child the opportunity to acquire different abilities and quality of independence, based on their own experience and experiences. A serious deficiency in parenting is sometimes that it forgets to address the relationship between the child's need to assert and the pursuit of parental educational intentions. Both components have their place and importance in education and should form a unity. When unifying these components, it is often the case that, parents slip into some unilateralism. Styles of education in families are various. Depending on what demands parents have on their children, how they meet their children's needs, how they manifest their love, what communication they have between each other, we can determine what style of education they prefer. At least four different styles are recognized, combining two areas of parental behavior. The first one is based on the contrast of care demanding / controlling and the non-demanding / uncontrolling. In the second area, childcare is contrasted as accepting / responsive / oriented towards the child and childcare as rejecting / non-responsive / oriented towards the parents. Their combination brings forth the four educational styles mentioned above: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved (Fontana, 1997).

1.1.1 Authoritative parenting style

It is a style that is equally focused on the child, as well as on the parent. Parents are interested in their child, its opinions, needs, feelings and interests. The child has a certain degree of freedom, making some decisions for himself / herself. Parents place demands on their children adequate to their abilities and expect them to behave accordingly. Parents support their child's initiative, act by their own example, use fewer orders and prohibitions in education, explain and justify their demands. A

child who is educated in such a style is independent, friendly, cooperative, striving for the best possible performance, successful (Fontana, 1997).

1.1.2 Authoritarian parenting style

In preference to this educational style, parents require obedience from the child. There are many orders, prohibitions, rules, threats in their upbringing which causes that parents do not see what their child desires for, what is it capable of, what is its knowledge enabling the child to do. The child must show respect towards tradition and authority. This style is missing two-way communication. In relation to the child, the behavioral demands are too high, perfect performance is required. But not every child has enough strength to meet such demands. Parents do not put up with child negligence, with some mistakes that a child might make, do not tolerate unfinished activity etc. Average achievement is not accepted. The child is under constant pressure; parents decide about everything where the child's opinion does not meet with any interest. This leads to the fact that the child loses joy in activity because it constantly focuses on performance. Due to high demands on the performance of the child, some serious disorders may occur, causing disorders of self-confidence. Children suffer from feelings of inferiority, leading to self-underestimating, isolation tendencies and lack of spontaneity. Girls often suffer from subordination and boys tend to be aggressive (Fontana, 1997).

1.1.3 Permissive parenting style

The child manipulates with his / her parents and is the master of the family. Education is thus confined to protecting the child, justifying its weakness and inappropriate behavior. Little is required from the child, its demonstrations are impulsive. There are no demands in this education, not even age appropriate. The child is not burdened with any duties and is uninvolved in family life. If the child has all permission, it does not recognize prohibitions and orders. Parents give in to everything, are unnecessarily lenient, supporting a selfish and aggressive individual who can not rely on him / herself (Fontana, 1997).

1.1.4 Uninvolved parenting style

Parents are too busy with themselves so they do not show interest in their child, its needs and interests, they do not take part in their child's life. Opinions and feelings of the child are indifferent to them. They often entrust the child to the care of different people, simply to avoid communication. Parents do not feel obliged to provide their children with their needs and requirements. A child whose parents behave indifferently and coldly ends up as an individual which matures egoist and socially dissatisfied, moody, with little ability to concentrate (Fontana, 1997).

2 Education versus development of the child in the family

Today's parents know a lot about the upbringing / education, but minimum about the child's development, which can cause many problems. Not only the parental style of education is reflected in the child's behavior; patterns of child behavior are at the same time a manifestation of the stage of development the child is currently experiencing, and are also an expression of its temper, character and individuality (Rogge, 2007). With age, the child changes not only physically but also mentally. For instance, the thinking, will, feelings undergo major changes, leading to a different understanding of its position among people. Its relationship is changing not only towards people but also to itself. These changes also mean higher demands on parents. Because the child is constantly developing, it is necessary for parents to develop hand in hand with their relationship towards each other. It is also important that parents take into account the developmental changes of the child, because it is beneficial for the well being of the child. Parents should realize that in each age period "they always face a different object of education." As the age of the child changes, the content of education, methods, forms, etc., should also be changed. With an optimally

developing individual, parents should gradually increase the demands on the child and equally on themselves. In an accountably executed education, parents support the child's natural desire for knowledge, satisfy its need for motion, social contacts and appropriately guide its defiance. Such parents are aware that the family environment "is a basic forming factor", therefore they pay their love and care to the family. Deficiency of love and care in the family environment causes mental deprivation as a result of lacking emotional stimuli. One of the most influential positive factors involved in forming a child's personality is a personal positive example of a parent. It is a great contradiction for a child if parental behavior is not in line with their requirements (Rozinajová, 1988). It is important for parents to strive to determine the importance of balance and still create it in relation to children, to the family and to themselves, because only a balanced education can lead to a balanced personality. Education is a huge challenge which leads children to autonomy and identity - that are two goals suggesting a particular form of disengagement. Daily rituals and rhythm are the first factors promoting the balance of children. When parents find that their child is losing or has lost balance in some way, they should help to identify the causes of this condition by observing the day-to-day activities. Parents are obliged to take care of their children's inner life and their personal development. It is necessary to find the middle path, which is sometimes quite complex. It means to find harmony between the excessive organization of their children's lives together with the failure to respect their interests, and the condition in which parents do not have enough time and energy for their child. Many parenting accusative statements are related to the quantity problem. Parents should ask questions: Is there little? Is there a lot? Is that okay / enough? These are the mistakes that come from misdirection of different attitudes and feelings. However, a child can not yet predict the right standard, it can not naturally use its talents and apply the values it has gained so far. We can not ask children to be as balanced as we are, as we can not give them everything we have achieved so far (Ferrero and Pacucciová, 2007; Tománková and Kostrub, 2018). It is important and necessary for parents to provide a feeling of security for their child. It is usually the mother who performs this task. The question of certainty and insecurity, anxiety and defense is one of the fundamental questions in human life. In the early childhood, the foundations of trust, self-esteem, self-confidence arise. The child thus gains a solid foundation to further develop its social skills, manage anxiety and satisfy curiosity. The feeling of anxiety from the separation overcomes the child throughout the whole development period. For the first time it happens when its about one year and when the toddling begins. Its the first disengagement from confidentially known persons, even if for a minimum period of time. When it comes to walking, it's all about getting disengaged. The first steps do not only imply physical autonomy, but they also represent the first manifestations of psychic self-esteem and autonomy. The child begins to realize itself as a personality, as an individuality. This autonomy is affected and jeopardized by the emotional fluctuations of the child. Self-confidence may change very quickly into a feeling of inferiority, so it is important for the child to constantly receive parental support in the form of trust. In order for an individual to grow up in a self-reliant and self-confident personality, he / she must also go through periods of anxiety in its development. It is for parents to help children constructively handle these conditions. It would be a mistake to assume that it is better to make the situation easier, fun, or threaten the child, or more, try to avoid such situations. If a child has a strong emotional background, self-education should encourage the child to grow up in a self-confident individual who "can consciously deal with anxiety from separation" (Rogge, 2007). The period of defiance at the third year of life of the individual with the period of puberty are two stages, particularly, when the child is independent. These stages can not be skipped or accelerated, they occur in the development of a child, no matter what parenting has or has not done for them. Usually, a child does not develop equally in every aspect - social, emotional, linguistic, physical. It simply does not reach the same level. In each of these areas, the child has its own pace, and it may happen that in one area it will reach a much higher

stage of development in a certain period than in the other. Each child has its own pace and the way to get over the given period. The role of parents is to respect that fact (Rogge, 2007). As parents try to speed up or slow down the pace, children react with resentment. This is a necessary basic attitude of parents needed in education. Children want to be accepted as they are. In the period of the first defiance, around the third year of life, the child manifests its autonomy significantly. The child displays the power and strength that it constantly and persistently endeavors. It constantly emphasizes its will for self-reliance - myself. Children's awareness of power develops with increasing awareness and control of their bodies. The period of defiance is an important stage in a child's life, as it becomes aware of his or her own competence and independence. Through education parents try to achieve harmonized development, so that their child is independent, confident, competent on all levels. Account must also be taken of the child's stubbornness, the promotion of its own will, the lack of tolerance to frustration, the exercise of its own power without which it would not achieve the necessary level of autonomy. The frequent cause of child defiance is the misunderstanding of the stages of development by parents (Rozinajová, 1988). The child enters the stage of self-determination, self-awareness and self-reliance over a period of three years. This is particularly evident in the effort to act without the help of an adult. For the child's further emotional development, the period of defiance is important because it is also a period of self-confidence. Resistance is a manifestation of internal tension which results from a move in developmental milestones (Rogge, 2007). The child is proud of its competencies, but must adhere to, and respect certain limits, limitations, rules. Many it still does not know, many it can not or is not allowed to do. It wants to do something on its own, but he / she can not / is not able to do it. The defiance is not directed towards a particular person, it is not in the child's interest to interfere with the relationship, therefore it must be distinguished from disobedience and stubbornness. Children who are aware of their competencies and have experienced a sense of independence require that they be taken seriously, so that they can decide on certain matters, that they can express their opinion, which will be respected. They need to have a minimal sense of power at least. They need to experience the feeling that they can assert their own will. Who does not understand the child as an equal partner causes an imbalance of power. Parents often struggle within this "battle", because the child causes them helplessness by its perseverance and reluctance to surrender the competencies it has once obtained. In the process of self-realization, the teacher, parent is only the one who is supposed to make easier - facilitate. Every person has his / her individual goals, but also goals that are generally valid. These new goals and values are not seen as final, but as process values. Such values are considered to be a self-actualization process, in which the value and dignity of each person increases by developing own choices, moving towards enriching and stimulating experiences and individual creativity adaptation, to the ever-changing world (Zelina, 1995). Self-confidence, personal development, may be a danger which threatens the development of the personality, if powered by an insensitive management of a child's life. Various ways of control and manipulation bar the child's ability to be itself. This means, that a child can not express what it wants, solve a problem solo, discover something new, or try out what it can do by itself. A child has its own way of understanding, thinking and feeling. And it therefore needs such a goal which enables it to reach a new milestone, further from its current developmental level. In such a shift, it has a feeling of freedom and satisfaction. The child needs to be burdened with tasks and requirements that do not exceed its abilities and powers. It needs demands and requirements which will enable to self-seek, to self-develop, to be capable of self-realization. In this way, the child learns to respect him / herself, and to be responsible for his / her actions. In order for the child to develop, both external and internal potential is needed. For this development to be successful, their relationship is important. Outward possibilities are what surrounds the child, the world around it. The inner potential must be found by the child itself, so that it is in agreement with what he / she wants, what he / she can and is capable of doing. The role of family education is to

ensure a harmonious relationship between these two potentials, which is very demanding. Parents can not avoid this responsibility. Instead, they should ask themselves whether they have done everything to realize the child's inner and outer potential within its abilities, interests, creativity, etc. It is important for the child to receive incentives and to be actively led to such activities, where it can use its potential. Children then devote their interest to such activities, respond to them with an increased interest in continuing, improving them. The possibilities for child development are in the child itself (Helus, 2004). If parents take their mission seriously and responsibly, in order to approach their child's development, they must look for opportunities to actively engage their child, such as bringing it up with the child's own participation. When developing their own potential, it is important for the child to take adult help at crucial moments when acquiring competencies. The child performs various activities, improves them, and when it controls them at a sufficient level, it should move forward, making the next crucial step in knowing. It can not do it by itself, but it may be able to handle it with minimal help from others. For instance, in the form of an alert, suggestion, by asking a suitable question, etc. The direction in which the child will further develop its potential, what other knowledge, experience it will be gaining, is referred to as the "Zone of Proximal Development" (Helus, 2004). Most parents set it up intuitively, randomly, not purposefully, as teachers do. If parents appreciate their child and show proper respect, the child gains proper self-esteem. The manifestations of respect can not be "as if". They are a manifestation of trust and the increasing responsibility of the child. It is important for parents to give the child the opportunity to handle, at least, a minimum of autonomy and independence. The child perceives self-worth, which is self-esteem. It is a combination of information about oneself which comes from outside, but also from inside. It's a comparison of both. In addition to the confidence shown, other important points in the formation of the child's self-esteem are also the presence of attention (listening), observation, endeavor to understand, the perception of nonverbal expressions, etc. It is not a manifestation of the weakness of parents if they give children the chance to act in their own way, letting them succeed in different life situations. In the pursuit of greater autonomy, it is rather a requirement to respect their personality, their individuality. Stubbornness is paradoxically understood as a positive feature (in this case). Stubbornness, with which the various activities begin, resembles only an approximate estimate of the ratio between success and the risk of failure. It is not important to talk a lot, but to choose the right speech when we talk to children. It is important to talk to children, speak less and listen more, to give them the opportunity to express themselves, not to talk for them, not to complete the beginnings of their ideas, thoughts, sentences, etc. Talking with children is demanding and not all parents can master it. The essence of the narrative with children is to teach them the basic rules of good communication and basic rules for solving problems. A child "equipped" with such competencies is more self-confident. Also friendships are made with ease. The best proof of parental interest for the child is to listen to its stories attentively to the end, although they may be sometimes boring for an adult. Only when listening, the logic of the child's stories can appear. This will allow the parent to point to another aspect in which the child can discover certain advantages and new possibilities of solving a problem. Teaching a child to think is challenging and one of the best methods is to put forward indicative questions. It means not to require the right answers to the questions asked, but to require their own thoughts, their own opinion about the matter, without fear of being ridiculed, embarrassed, humiliated, just because their opinion does not conform the opinion of adults. Its the parent's fault when they speak with their children in a "childish speech" and talk to their child in such a way. When the child discovers the differences between the normal language and the language used by its parents, it does not take their words seriously. The older the child is, the more it realizes these differences and the communication between the child and its parents gets worse. A child who has sufficient self-confidence, relies on his / her own judgment, can express his / her opinion, easily manage new and ambiguous situations, and focuses his / her energy on

performance (Kostrub, 2007). The best encouragement for a child is to help it acquire its own self-evaluation, to help it see itself positively, to let it know that its thoughts are important. Its important to create a family environment in which the child will feel good, confident. It will feel that it is needed, that it is an integral part of the whole, and that it is doing well in this environment. Only commands, prohibitions, lectures, or negative evaluation, do not encourage the child. In addition to assisting the child with self-evaluation, parents should help children also develop self-control, in particular, by creating sufficient space for both. By developing a sense of responsibility, the autonomy of children grows. It is precisely the fulfillment of everyday duties which are commensurate with their abilities. Even for small progress, recognition and praise must be given, together with allowing mistakes and errors. Parents should always let their children know that as parents they are on their side. This does not mean, however, that at the first failure or the fatigue of the parents, they should do things instead of them. Although parents should leave children some autonomy, they must always be ready to help them. They have to evaluate what is better for the child, wait and let him/ her solve the problem itself according to his / her abilities. In some cases it is best to intervene before the child gets caught up in the situation. Children need to have enough time to practice what they learn (e.g. self-help skills.: dressing, cleaning, washing, etc.). Parents should not forget that children need to learn to do certain activities themselves and need to feel self-esteem and pride, not shame and humiliation. Parents should not protect their children from failure by taking the initiative and their courage, as they will make children insecure and dependent on adults. New experience is gained by a child in the process of self-awareness and self-determination. It is primarily about emotions and the willingness of the child to experience something new. It is about the building self-confidence, and thus the new experience becomes the motivation to continue. New experiences enrich the child, show him / her things from another perspective, allow him / her to move further on the path for independence. On this road, the child often has to give up something to get something else. Experience is "non-transferable" and "irreplaceable", but very important in the process of gradually "releasing" children. It is important to encourage children to look at the world optimistically, from the better perspective, in order to help them to see the world around them cheerfully. The way to such a worldview is praise (Kostrub, 2007). "It's a profit." In addition, it is important to encourage, to show trust, to take notice and pay attention to people and the child, and to respect the child as a person. Positive thinking of parents assumes, that they believe in the good of an individual, believe in their children, encourage them, praise them for the deeds they do, to achieve more autonomy, more self-confidence. When a child does not do everything according to the idea of adults, it is important to be able to judge it properly (to accordingly criticize). It means not condemn him / her as a person, but evaluate just a specific performance. It is important to accept a person as he / she is, but to disagree with his current behavior (Zelina, 1995). Being competent means to adequately cope with the different demands from the surrounding environment and to succeed in evolving in different situations. It is the ability to use the competences achieved in the current situation, with a focus on the implementation of the various operations. Each child has the ability to control various activities, but the quality of real management is individual. A competent child is able to apply, act, perform operations with a variety of tools in different contexts and environments. A child becomes autonomous, by gradually becoming less dependent on different levels. It gains relative independence, which means that if it has space for exercising autonomy in the proceedings, it is capable of acting within a certain relationship framework. If a child is mentally free, independent and competent, it displays great creativity in its actions. The child, assisted in autonomy, develops its personality smoothly and qualitatively - "I am what I can do freely and by myself" (Kostrub, 2007).

3 Problematization of the subject matter

The research problem is an assumption of researchers which originated from observation, analysis, interpretation of cultural and discourse practices in the educational context, as well as in the extracurricular educational context. Inconsistency, randomness, disregard, inattention, incomprehension of the adult-themed (parents) topic, which is to promote the development of the child's autonomy, is considered a problem. This area is scarcely examined in our regional context. That is why we were interested in how parents perceive the subject matter. The subject of our research were the views of parents, their attitudes, their ideas of supporting the development of the child's autonomy. Within research, we applied the methodology of qualitative research, using the tool of focus group, to identify subjective and socially conditioned views. At the present, increased demand is being placed on a child in terms of expressing autonomy, especially in thinking. Demand is aimed at the child which is expected to express his / her own opinion within self-reflection. We believe that parents need access to new information in this area, and thus gain awareness of high-quality out-of-school education for the child. Parents meet their children's physical, psychological, social, emotional needs. As each child is different, each parent is different, which could mean, that different parents may have different ideas about the child's autonomy and the possibilities of their support and development. In our research, we focused on parenting which relates to supporting the development of the child's autonomy. Our role was not to evaluate them, to assess the performance and role of the parent, to determine what is right, wrong, what is better or worse. We only aimed to identify their knowledge about this area / subject matter and their views on the problem. Our task was to understand them, or to give parents a reason to think, because there is no instruction or model according to which it is necessary to promote the development of a child's autonomy.

4 Methodology, methodics and organization of research

For examining the problem, we were dealing with, we had decided to apply qualitative research. We came to this decision on the basis that since we examine opinions and attitudes, they can not be counted, expressed in percentage and put in a table. Qualitative research was optimal for us mainly because it places emphasis on individual and group understanding of the world. Qualitative research is in our case appropriate because it is used to identify motivation, attitudes and behavior (Kotler et al., 2007). The advantage of qualitative research is working with a small group of people / subjects where each person can interpret their own opinion, which does not get unnoticed due to a large number of other subjects (Gavora, 2006; Lehotayová, 2018; Wieruszewska-Duraj, 2015). Qualitative research captures life in an authentic environment. The subject is examined in his / her natural environment. Qualitative research is holistically oriented - a person, a group, their products, or an event are explored as far as possible throughout their breadth and all possible dimensions. In addition, there is an effort to understand all these dimensions in an integrated manner - in their interdependencies and contexts (Ferjenčík, 2010). The essence of qualitative research lies in the collection of broad data without a predetermined hypothesis. Such research is not dependent on the theory that anyone would have previously created. Qualitative research does not need to confirm or disconfirm it. Its task is to get as much information and data as possible about the research problem. After collecting the data, it establishes certain regularities between them and sets out preliminary conclusions. If the researcher has the ability to rely on other data, he / she can formulate a new theory. A qualitative approach is a process of exploring phenomena and problems in an authentic environment, in order to get a comprehensive picture of these phenomena based on deep data and the specificity of the relationship between the researcher and the participant in the research (Švaříček and Šeďová, 2007). The most commonly used methods in qualitative research include observation, in-depth interview, and focal group discussion. We have chosen a focus group, because in direct interviews with the participants the cultural and social aspect of the life of the people studied is highlighted and there is a lesser probability of diverting from the nature of the problem by moderating the discussion. Its priority is the direct contact of the participant and the researcher, it is communication face to face. The moderator

drives the discussion to find out the true feelings and thoughts of the individual and the group. The moderator discreetly directs the conversation to point to the central issue, so that it does not deviate from the original theme. He / she conducts the discussion in the given direction and, if necessary, addresses some of the issues in more detail (Švaříček and Šeďová, 2007). The advantage of this method is also "dynamic interaction between participants" which encourages a discussion in which members of the group react to one another. This dynamics is known as a synergistic group effect (Gavora, 2006; Severini and Kostrub, 2018).

4.1 Research objective

The aim of the study was to identify the significance in parents' interpretations of the possibilities of developing a child's autonomy.

4.2 Research Questions

1. How do parents explain (understand) the concept of child's autonomy?
2. What are the options and parental implications for developing a child's autonomy?

4.3 Research sample

The researched subjects were intentionally selected. It was essential for us that the group was homogeneously experienced, so that all participants had experience with the problem which we elaborated in our research. Since our research focused on supporting the development of a child's autonomy from the perspective of parents, we had addressed parents. Participants were parents of children attending kindergarten (other characteristics such as gender, achieved education, age, etc., were considered irrelevant). Parents have different life experience, come from a variety of environments, each of them perceive the world from an individual perspective. We approached the parents whom we already observed and found out that they had different demands, requirements on their children. We also revealed that they are not as consistent in guiding the fulfillment of the set requirements. By this, we wanted to avoid focusing on average cases. We assumed that they had different views on the topic, which could be of benefit to us, and help to intensify the group discussion. We approached twelve parents with whom we planned to discuss, but only nine parents, eight mothers and one father attended the focus group due to child illness. Our research was carried out at a kindergarten in Bratislava.

4.4 Elaboration of research material

Data analysis was a challenging task as a large amount of research material had been obtained. Its elaboration included countless hours of thorough analysis and re-entering into the field. Qualitative methodology requires a researcher to interpret subjective concepts, which are owned by research subjects, and to conceptualize them in a form of mental abstraction in such a way that they do not in any way deviate from the original concepts of investigated subjects. Within the analysis of individual reporting protocols of the subjects in the focus group, all their testimonies were included and a perspective was sought in terms of the possibilities of developing a child's autonomy; we searched for answers to the research questions. Conceptual designation has been assigned to individual events, cases, and other occurrences of the phenomenon. Categories represent the classes of concepts that appeared when the compared concepts seemed to belong to a similar phenomenon. The process of analyzing, examining, comparing, categorizing, coding and conceptualizing data was implemented by open coding. In each reporting / interpreting protocol, the main ideas expressed by the subjects in a particular sentence (concepts) were categorized. The perspective of the view on the possibilities of supporting the development of a child's autonomy presented by the parents was identified and used in interpretations of the research results.

Tab. 1 List of identified categories and concepts found in individual protocols for the key concept: How to promote the development of a child's autonomy?

Category	Concepts	
The parents performance	The parent reminds. The parent observes. The parent counsels. The parent helps. The parent motivates. The parent supports. The parent demonstrates. The parent shows. The parent provides information. The parent encourages. The parent praises. The parent orders. The parent compares. The parent threatens. The parent, through trust, supports the development of autonomy. The parent discusses with the child.	The parent plans games, activities. The parent assigns tasks. The parent creates conditions. The parent motivates through another child. The parent organizes. The parent creates problematic situations. The parent checks. The parent rewards. The parent supports the child's initiative. The parent allows the child to gain experience. The parent gives the child space for realization.
The parent's role	Parent as observer. Parent as an assistant. Parent as a counselor. Parent as an organizer. Parent as supporter. Parent as a teammate. Parent as a listener.	The parent who shows. The parent who performs. The parent who explains. The parent who trusts.
The child's performance	The child is able to „function" alone during the day for a few minutes without parents. The child performs a certain task, e.g. playing, tidying up toys. The child performs various age-appropriate acts. The child carries out activities without the help of the parent, another person. The child performs spontaneously. The child solves the tasks independently. The child expresses its own opinion. The child will assume some duty. The child will make up a play. The child chooses an activity. The child is thinking about what to do. The child decides for the activity. The child rehearses	The child discusses. The child performs activities that has not done before. The child takes on responsibility for his or her conduct and actions. The child engages in solving increasingly challenging tasks. The child realizes his / her ideas in play. The child finds solutions by self-realization. The child experiences different ways of solving. The child asks for help if necessary. The child uses space for realization. The child receives assistance from parents, siblings. The child practices the activity several times. The child discovers the essence, purpose of toys. The child improves

	and practices. The child independently acts out basic activities, dresses, goes to the toilet. The child is able to take care of itself appropriate to age.	in self-help. The child learns. The child can manage the first failure. The child is plays logical games. The child develops his / her skills in areas of interest.
Condition	Parents should not put pressure on the child, forcing it to repeat activities in case of failure. Parents should provide children with enough information from areas of (their) interest. Parents should appropriately motivate children to be active. Parents should praise children even for partial success. Parents should provide enough space for self-realization of their children. Parents should allow children to play logical games. Parents should ensure activity and experience in areas where the child is interested. Parents should support the development of autonomy in a playful manner / form.	

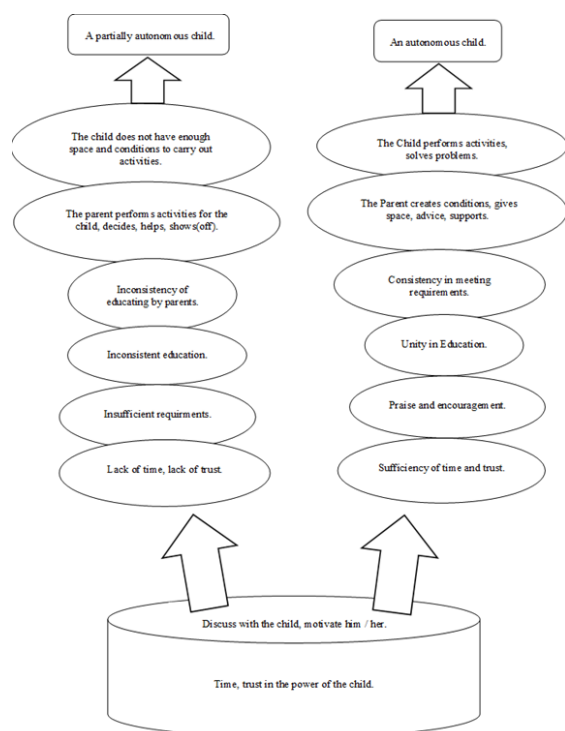Source: author's own elaboration

4.5 Research findings

Based on our findings in the focus group, we note that parents are interested in the issue. They think about phenomena that are characteristic of the present and directly affect the education of children, their manifestations of autonomy. They agreed that the biggest problem is lack of time, the fast pace of life and the sharp rise in digital technology. They notice that not all of them behave in the same way to their children, they have different demands on them, and they are not as consistent in their fulfillment. Sometimes it is quicker and more convenient for them to do some work for / instead of a child, even though they know it is not right. They are not satisfied with the condition, but always find a good reason (for themselves) for what they did or did not do. It is usually a lack of time, sometimes emotions, lack of trust in the strength of the child. Child care in the pre-school age is usually provided by the mother. Today's mothers also have job responsibilities, take care of the household or another child. To be able to handle these activities, which are physically and time-consuming, mothers have greater demands on the child and his / her autonomy than the father, who spends less time with their children. It turns out that parents have different views / opinions on the autonomy and competence of children, because they spend a different amount of time with children and / or have other social experience, memories of childhood. They also acknowledge the inconsistency of parenting which results in the child (miss)using it to his or her benefit. Inconsistency and non-uniformity in the requirements on a child together with lack of time give parents and, in particular, the child the possibility of violating the rules, if they are determined (rules are the most important element of education - they must be set. They must be determined / set by parents together with children first followed by parents and then the children, not the other way round. If not followed, as a result there are situations where parents can not find a solution. It occurs that the child does / completes one action / task without opposing, but refuses to do it again or to do another one. Parents are convinced that a child can handle it, but they can not adequately motivate him / her, even though trying to be a positive model, a counselor, a supporter, a friend. Parents respond to the changing needs of their children, their interests. Parents react by signing their children up to various extra-curricular and leisure time activities where they expect a high degree of independence from the child. Sometimes they are disappointed when the child does not want to be without them, because it constantly needs their closeness, help and support.

The child thus shows low self-confidence, low self-esteem, it experiences anxiety with which it can not adequately cope.

The notion of autonomy - most of the discussing parents refer to the child's independent play as one of the most important demonstrations of autonomy. It is important to them that the child plays for a certain period of time autonomously, so they could do other work / activities. Minimum parents support self-reliance of the child in self-help (care) skills (parents are willing to do a lot of activities for the child, including those that the child already masters). Instead, parents require that the child should manage its own program and play independently for a while. An autonomous child should use the information and experience of joint activities for internal motivation, for his / her own play, activity - that is what parents expect.

Supporting the development of autonomy - the majority of the participants are aware that the child's autonomy develops primarily in activity. They try to motivate the child, propose different activities, but leave little space for the child to demonstrate its autonomy. They show little confidence in the abilities of their children and most of the activities are done by the parents themselves. They often show, demonstrate, explain, but do not let the child act independently for an appropriate period of time. They try to transfer their own experience to the child (not accepting the fact that experience is non-transferable).

Problems in developing autonomy - the bulk of the disputants suggests that they prefer to do certain activities for children to avoid having to argue, persuade, motivate them. Parents can not adequately assess the child's level of autonomy. As if they already already knew that they would succumb / give in to their children, their appeals, or their perseverance with which they resist and refuse to do the / an activity. Children can use these parental failures to their benefit, remember them, and try to get their parents back into a similar situation they would benefit from - this is a cycle of addiction (Tománková and Kostrub, 2018). Parents have self-condemned the inconsistency in the requirements put on their children, which they justified mainly by lack of time. Organizational problems are especially in the early hours when leaving the house. It's a time when they ease-up on requirements. Lack of patience, inconsistency, and non-uniformity among parents also create conditions from which children can benefit from even in the evening when they are put to sleep. This opens up space for the emotional blackmail of parents and their exploit age to do some activities for the children. Parents do not create enough space and variety of situations to help the child develop its autonomy, just the opposite. They do not let children perform activities that they have enough knowledge and skills to perform.

Scheme 1 Supporting the development of a child's autonomy from the perspective of parents.

Source: author's own elaboration

We ensure the validity of our research by generalizing the results of the research. We have determined the degree of independence between what is discovered and the original context. At the same time, we seek for clarity in whether the constructions which have emerged come from researchers or terrain. We declare that we are impartial and unbiased to the field under investigation and to the findings from the research subjects. In this research study we present findings derived exclusively from the subjects of our research. We have used both constructive and interpretive processes, to work with research material. As evidence, serve the following questions: What is the dependency between the parent's influence and the behavior of the child? What represents the trust in the parent-child relationship, and vice versa? Can the theoretical stratification of educational styles be considered to be overcome with respect to the current practice of parenting?

5 Conclusion

Parents verbally declare that they have no problem with upbringing in their family environment. However, for example, in the focus group they began to discuss and publicly admit that there are several issues. Parents struggle to define some of their issues but moreover, struggle to define the cause of their problems. Their considerations are not subject to a more serious analysis, but they point out that they are to "educate rather than theorize". The aim of this research was to identify opinions on the support of the development of a child's autonomy, in cooperation (interaction) with parents of children attending kindergarten. The research explores concepts, interpretations of the experience of parents of children in Slovakia. Research results show that the concepts which parents have created are a conjunction created on the basis of what is expected from them (what the theories put forward) and what they do in reality. The findings are categorized based on the construction and design of supporting the development of a child's autonomy in the family environment. The purpose of the presented study was to provide a scientific reflection, to find out the views / opinions on supporting the development of a child's autonomy from the point of view of parents, based on the qualitative research carried out together with the presentation of the research results.

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