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The importance of parenting styles for the social development of children and teenagers in the opinions of students of teacher training courses

Znaczenie stylów wychowania w rodzinie dla rozwoju społecznego dzieci i młodzieży w opiniach studentów kierunków nauczycielskich

Abstract

The article focuses on the relationship between the style of upbringing followed by parents and the effects observed in the social development of children and teenagers. Theoretical considerations regarding parenting styles and their consequences for the social growth of children and teenagers are followed with a presentation of the methodological design of the present study. The subsequent part presents the analyses of and attempts to interpret the acquired results. The findings show that a significant majority of future teachers believe that a democratic parenting style is most beneficial for social development, while liberal and authoritarian styles are the least desirable. This is a very optimistic result, as experts specializing in this subject matter argue that it is indeed the democratic parenting style that brings the most positive consequences for the social development of children and teenagers. It is therefore important that future teachers are aware of this fact. The article ends with conclusions from the present study and with pedagogical recommendations for teachers and parents. The recommendations include a suggestion that they should educate themselves about parenting styles in families and for that they should use specialist resources. The importance of teachers, who can provide support to parents in taking informed decisions about the styles of upbringing, has also been emphasised.

Keywords: parenting style, parents, family, social development, students, teachers

Streszczenie

Problematyka poruszana w tekście dotyczy związku pomiędzy stylami wychowania, jakie wybierają rodzice, a tym, co dzieje się w rozwoju społecznym dzieci i młodzieży. W artykule podjęte zostały rozważania teoretyczne dotyczące stylów wychowania w rodzinie oraz ich konsekwencji dla rozwoju społecznego dzieci i młodzieży. Następnie przedstawiono założenia metodologiczne badań własnych. W dalszej części dokonano analizy i prób interpretacji wyników badań własnych. Zgromadzone wyniki

wskazują na to, że w zdecydowanej większości przyszli nauczyciele deklarują, że najbardziej korzystny dla rozwoju społecznego jest styl wychowania demokratyczny, a najmniej pożądany styl liberalny i autorytarny. Jest to bardzo optymistyczny wynik, ponieważ znawcy problematyki przedmiotu wskazują, że właśnie styl demokratyczny przynosi najwięcej pozytywnych konsekwencji dla rozwoju społecznego dzieci i młodzieży. Istotne jest zatem to, że przyszli nauczyciele mają tego świadomość. Na zakończenie opracowania przedstawiono wnioski z badań własnych i sformułowano rekomendacje pedagogiczne dla nauczycieli i rodziców. Wśród rekomendacji dla tych podmiotów znalazło się zalecenie dotyczące podejmowania samokształcenia w obszarze tematyki stylów wychowania w rodzinie z wykorzystaniem profesjonalnych źródeł. Podkreślono również znaczenie nauczycieli, którzy mogą stanowić wsparcie dla rodziców w świadomym wyborze stylów wychowania.

Słowa kluczowe: styl wychowania, rodzice, rodzina, rozwój społeczny, studenci, nauczyciele

Introduction

As suggested by Małgorzata Agnieszka Samujło and Teresa Sokołowska-Dzioba "Since schools do not operate in a social vacuum, they continue the parenting process taking place in a family, and besides that they shape the life in the local community."[1] In their conclusions the authors also point out that: "The quality of parental behaviours significantly affects social performance of their children."[2] Given the above, it seems important from the viewpoint of theory and research to understand future teachers' knowledge of and opinions about the consequences of parenting styles for the development of children and teenagers. This is because interpersonal relations occurring in a family are reflected for instance in the school settings.

Teachers who are aware of the possible consequences of parenting styles for the development of children and adolescents will be able to take various corrective measures, both individually and as a team, to address pupils' behavioural patterns determined by their family background. Certainly, the family plays a fundamental role in satisfying various needs of their children, nowadays however education, childcare and other forms of instruction are more and more commonly provided to children outside home at an increasingly early age. "There are various patterns and interactions between parents and children within the family system, and it is the parents' role to meet the physical, emotional, social and psychological needs of their children within the subsystem."[3] The rapid pace of daily life can often make it difficult for the family to meet a child's needs, especially those of emotional and social nature. The degree to which these needs are satisfied and the way parents communicate with their child are particularly important for the child's social growth which in this article is discussed in the context of parental styles.

[1] M.A. Samujło, T. Sokołowska-Dzioba, *Postawy rodziców a otwartość w zachowaniach uczniów*, "Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny" 2018, No. 4, p. 81, https://journals.umcs.pl/lrp/article/view/7363/6299 (20.08.2025), DOI: 10.17951/lrp.2018.37.4.79-91.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 89.

[3] *Ibidem*.

Spencer A. Rathus, making reference to the psychologist Diana Baumrind, points out that parenting styles make it possible for children to acquire an instrumental competence which is manifested by the fact that they are able to impact their environment in a way which allows them to achieve their own goals. These children are also usually energetic, assertive, self-sufficient, cooperative and curious about the world.[4] Such traits are definitely a desirable effect of upbringing in the family, especially if these are related to the children's social development.

Parenting styles versus social development of children and adolescents – theoretical considerations and research findings reported by experts in the field

Research in parenting styles has a long history. The related issues were first investigated by Kurt Lewin, Ron Lippitt and Robert K. White.[5] The subject matter was then studied by such authors as Diana Baumnind,[6] Earl S. Schaefer[7] as well as the Polish researcher Ryszard Praszkiera[8] and other specialists that I will refer to in this article.

Here is a brief presentation of the results of research conducted between 2009 and 2011 by Barbara Ostafińska Molik and Ewa Wysocka among 210 middle school students aged 14–16.[9] The respondents assessed their families of origin in terms of parenting style. In their study, the authors observed that mothers were more likely than fathers to use a democratic style (a trend towards high scores). As far as autocratic parenting styles are concerned, there was a lack of notable experiences among middle school students related to their parents (mothers and fathers) using this style. The authors also investigated loving and unloving liberal styles. As regards loving liberal styles, the teenagers also predominantly did not think their parents represented this style, but mothers were much more commonly perceived as liberal and loving. As for unloving liberal style, generally it was reported very rarely Here, however, the opposite trend to that observed with regard to loving liberal style

[4] S.A. Rathus, *Psychologia współczesna*, Gdańsk 2004, p. 171.

[5] As cited in: D. Borecka-Biernat, *Style wychowania w rodzinie a agresywne zachowania dzieci*, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis" 1992, Prace psychologiczne no. 26, pp. 125–141; *Strategie radzenia sobie młodzieży w trudnych sytuacjach społecznych. Psychospołeczne uwarunkowania*, Wrocław 2006.

[6] D. Baumrind, *Effects of Authoritative Parental Control of Child Behavior*, "Child Development" 1966, Vol. 37, No. 4, p. 886, https://www.jstor.org.stable/1126611 (23.08.2025).

[7] E.S. Schaefer, *A circumplex model for maternal behavior*, "The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology" 1959, no. 59(2), DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/h0041114.

[8] R. Praszkier, *W głąb szczerości*, Warszawa 1988.

[9] B. Ostafińska-Molik, E. Wysocka, *Style wychowania w rodzinie pochodzenia w percepcji młodzieży gimnazjalnej i ich znaczenie rozwojowe – próba teoretycznej i empirycznej egzemplifikacji*, pp. 224–228, https://rebus.edu.pl/bistreame/20.500.12118/21615/Ostafinska-Molik-Wysocka_Style-wychowania-w-rodzinie.pdf (14.07.2025).

could be seen: fathers were more likely to be perceived as liberal and unloving.[10] Although I did not distinguish between these two types of liberal style in the present study, the results presented by the authors provide an important recommendation for further scientific research related to these issues. Parenting styles are subject to dynamic changes. As I wrote earlier, their classifications and the characteristics describing their specificity are varied and often increasingly detailed.[11]

It is also important to understand why parents or other significant family members choose certain parenting styles. Of course, authors investigating this subject matter point to many issues. Maria Tyszkowa wrote that parents' approach to child rearing may, on the one hand, be transferred from their own family homes, i.e. their families of origin, and may also be a consequence of their personal experiences and personal characteristics. On the other hand, these preferences are also a certain result of the quality of internal communication.[12] Furthermore, parenting styles (especially the liberal ones) can be linked to trends prevailing in the society, particularly those promoted by the media. This is certainly very important from a contemporary perspective.

When attempting to define what parenting style is, one can say that: "The style of child rearing in the family home is a kind of emancipation (…) of the ways and methods used by all family members to affect the child."[13]

The authors investigating the issue of parenting styles mention various approaches, and they most commonly distinguish authoritarian, democratic and liberal styles.

Maria Ryś points out essential characteristics of the aforementioned parenting styles, namely:

1. Consistent autocratic assumption that showing positive feelings towards a child and rewarding him/her adversely affect the development of a strong character. Excessively high expectations towards a child mean that all accomplishments are treated simply as stages of normal growth that do not require reward, while failures are generally noticed and met with punishment.
2. Democratic belief in the importance of building a community life based on mutual trust, respect for rights and feelings, common planning of activities and solving family problems.
3. Liberal approach to building a family life based on a reduced distance and a lack of parental authority, with parents displaying submissive behaviour towards their children. In their opinion, it is appropriate not to make any demands on children, not to restrict their activity and spontaneous development, and to give them complete freedom without even sparing forms of control."[14]

[10] *Ibidem*, pp. 224–228.

[11] *Ibidem*.

[12] M. Tyszkowa, *Jednostka a rodzina* [in:] *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne*, eds. M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, M. Tyszkowa, Warszawa 2014, pp. 126–128.

[13] M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, Z. Włodarski, *Psychologia wychowawcza*, part 2, Warszawa 2014, p. 127.

[14] M. Ryś, *Systemy rodzinne. Metody badań struktury rodziny pochodzenia i rodziny własnej*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 17–18.

We should also look at the inconsistent parenting style, which is also mentioned in the specialist literature, as it is important from the viewpoint of the current findings presented later in this article. In this case, no predominant parenting style is observed in the family home. Parents choose different styles, with varied and at times random educational impact; the parenting style in this case depends on the parents' current mood resulting from their situation. Such parents may lack consistency in their expectations towards the child and in their assessment of their child's behaviour.[15]

In the literature related to this subject matter, the authors point out that the most desirable is democratic parenting style.[16] One can certainly say that it most effectively prepares children to establish and maintain social relationships in a democratic system and most beneficially impacts the social development of children and adolescents. According to Arkadiusz Wąsiński and Alina Górniak-Naglik: "It is based on openness to and acceptance of democratic principles that are respected by family members on a daily basis, as a result of which in practice the family becomes a community of vision, goals and actions in the process of bringing up the child. A community in which children also have a voice and are aware of their position and the importance of their involvement in everyday dialogue in the family."[17]

Consequences of parenting styles for the child's growth (especially the child's social development)

The following consequences may be identified as regards the parenting styles discussed in this article.

In autocratic style, the consequence of formally imposing one's own authority is a lack of internalisation of the norms and values promoted by the parents, which may lead to egocentricity and selfishness in the child's behaviour while he/she may tend to break rules that are inconvenient for him/her in the absence of external (parental) control. One could say that child rearing in this case is unsatisfactory.[18]

In the liberal parenting style, the child is left completely to his/her own devices, while parents do not interfere in his/her affairs, as a result of which antisocial behaviours may be tolerated. The child raised this way frequently has (inadequately) high self-esteem, may exhibit selfish and egocentric attitudes, and may lack internal discipline, perseverance in action and mental resilience. This style provides good

[15] M. Przetacznik-Gierczak, Z. Włodarski, *Psychologia wychowawcza* (2014), p. 128.

[16] M. Tyszka, *Społeczna przynależność rodziny a sytuacja rodzinna dziecka* [in:] *Rodzina i dziecko*, ed. M. Ziemska, Warszawa 1980, p. 294.

[17] A. Wąsiński, A. Górniok-Naglik, *Style wychowania w rodzinach miejskich i wiejskich. Zderzenie preferencji gimnazjalistów i ich rodziców*, "Wychowanie w Rodzinie" 2016, No. 1, p. 227, DOI: 10.23734/wwr 20161.215.256, https://www.edusfera.press/Numer-1-2026,12923 (30.06.2025).

[18] M. Łobocki, *Teoria wychowania w zarysie*, Kraków 2005, p. 313.

conditions for the child's spontaneous and independent activity, but the traits shaped by the parents make it difficult for the child to adapt to the demands of the peer group, as he/she lacks the ability to cooperate.[19]

In democratic parenting style, which (particularly in terms of consequences) is recognised as the most beneficial from the viewpoint of educational outcomes, parents establish friendly relationships with their children. This approach enables the children to make decisions regarding various issues of family life, to develop independence and the ability to take into account the opinions of others, i.e. decentration.[20]

The term 'inconsistent parenting style' is associated with the approach of parents who may respond to their child's behaviour in excessive and conflicting ways, e.g. they either ignore his/her behaviour or apply harsh punishments, they show interest and affection or they are indifferent or even hostile. In such situations, the child may feel hurt. As a consequence, he/she may exhibit instrumental behaviours (aiming only to satisfy their own selfish interests). The child, who in this situation may feel lonely because he/she often does not get parents' support, consequently exhibits feelings of insecurity, anxiety and even aggression, the latter being a means of coping with the frustration they experience at home.[21]

Reasonable consequences of the specific parenting styles were, many years ago, specified by Baumnind,[22] and although this typology of the three major parenting styles is different than the one discussed in the article and applied in the present study, it is worthwhile to point out a few issues. Firstly, the authoritative style to some extent is consistent with the democratic style, while the authoritarian style certainly corresponds to the one discussed in this article and the permissive style can be linked to the liberal style. Secondly, and most importantly in this context, different parenting styles foster the social development of children and adolescents to varying degrees. Certainly, the development of social skills in the youngest members of the family is most effectively promoted by the authoritative style, in which parents follow the rules and communicate well with their children, are emotionally involved, and treat their children with love and respect.[23] It appears that: "Children of parents who are friendly in their interactions are usually well equipped emotionally and their moral standards are more effectively internalized."[24] It also pays to stick to the rules, if this is balanced with common sense and affectionate attitude towards the child. Children of authoritative parents are more self-sufficient, have higher self-esteem, a greater need for achievement and better social skills than other children."[25]

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[19] *Ibidem*.
[20] *Ibidem*.
[21] M. Przetacznik-Gierczak, Z. Włodarski, *Psychologia wychowawcza*, Warszawa 2002, p. 445.
[22] S.A. Rathus, *Psychologia współczesna*, Gdańsk 2004, pp. 171–172.
[23] *Ibidem*, p. 171.
[24] *Ibidem*, p. 172.
[25] *Ibidem*.

Methodology of the present study

The survey was conducted in April and May 2025 and involved 164 female and male students of university teacher training courses or courses with specialisation in teaching. Detailed data concerning the respondents will be presented and discussed in three tables later in the article. The survey was conducted in direct contact with the respondents with the use of a specially designed questionnaire. The participants did not only provide responses to questions which are presented in this article. Another question was related to parental attitudes.

The research objectives were defined as follows. The theoretical and explorative objective focused on the theoretical analysis of parental attitudes and parenting styles from the viewpoint of their significance for the social development of children and teenagers, and on exploration of the opinions presented by the study participants about the importance of specific parental attitudes and parenting styles for the social development of children and adolescents. On the other hand the practical and implementation-related objective involved drawing conclusions from the present findings and formulating educational recommendations for teachers and parents. The subject matter of the study includes parenting styles and parental attitudes in the context of their importance for the social development of children and adolescents as well as opinions about these issues presented by female and male students of university teacher training courses and courses with specialisation in teaching. The main research question is defined as follows: What is the significance of parental attitudes and parenting styles for the social development of children and adolescents in the opinions of students of teacher training courses and courses with specialisation in teaching? The following detailed research questions were also formulated: What are the respondents' characteristics with respect to their occupational activity related to their course of study and with regard to their experience of being a mother or a father? What opinions are presented by students of teacher training courses or courses with specialisation in teaching about the importance of parental attitudes for social development of children and adolescents? What opinions are presented by students of teacher training courses or courses with specialisation in teaching about the importance of parenting styles for social development of children and adolescents?

Since this was a diagnostic study, the main research hypothesis was formulated. Appropriate parenting attitudes, according to Maria Ziemska, and in particular a democratic style of upbringing in the family, most beneficially impact the social development of children and teenagers. The study used a diagnostic survey method with a questionnaire technique and, as mentioned earlier, it applied a specially-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire contained closed and semi-open questions.

Analysis and tentative interpretation of the present findings

This article presents only the findings related to parenting styles and respondents' characteristics.

Table 1 shows detailed results related to the respondents' characteristics.

Table 1. Respondents' gender

Item	Gender	In numbers and % PESE-MD (5y)[26] full-time and part-time	In numbers and % English studies and foreign language teaching – English and Russian – full-time	In numbers and % TOTAL
1.	Female	115 (70.12%)	35 (21.34%)	150 (91.46%)
2.	Male	1 (0.61%)	11 (6.71%)	12 (7.32%)
3.	Other	0 (0%)	1 (0.61%)	1 (0.61%)
NO RESPONSE	–	1 (0.61%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.61%)
TOTAL	F+M+O+NR	117 (71.34%)	47 (28.66%)	164 (100%)

Source: present findings.

Female students constituted a vast majority of the respondents. This is definitely consistent with statistical data reporting the number of students in teaching courses in Poland in general.[27]

Table 2. Respondents' occupation related to their course of study

Item	Respondents' occupation related to their course of study	In numbers and % PESE-MD (5y)[28] full-time and part-time	In numbers and % English studies and foreign language teaching – English and Russian – full-time	In numbers and % TOTAL
1.	Yes	64 (39.03%)	22 (13.41%)	86 (52.44%)
2.	No	49 (29.88%)	25 (15.24%)	74 (45.12%)
3.	NO RESPONSE	3 (1.83%)	1 (0.61%)	4 (2.44%)
TOTAL	F+M+O+NR	116 (70.73%)	48 (29.27%)	164 (100%)

Source: present findings.

The data in the table above shows that slightly more female respondents than male respondents have an occupation related to their field of study. This is quite understandable, as over 90% of the respondents are women, and some of them (34 individuals) are part-time students.

[26] Preschool and Early School Education, uniform Master Degree course (5 years).

[27] *Szkolnictwo wyższe w Polsce 2024/2025 więcej studentów, mniej absolwentów, te same wyzwania*, (27.08.2025).

[28] *Ibidem*.

Table 3. Being a mother or father

Item	Being a mother or father	In numbers and % PESE-MD (5y)[29] full-time and part-time	In numbers and % English studies and foreign language teaching – English and Russian – full-time	In numbers and % TOTAL
1.	Yes	10 (6.10%)	0 (0%)	10 (6.10%)
2.	No	103 (62.80%)	47 (28.66%)	150 (91.46%)
3.	No response	3 (1.83%)	1 (0.61%)	4 (2.44%)
TOTAL	F+M+O+NR	116 (70.73%)	48 (29.27%)	164 (100%)

Source: present findings.

A vast majority of the respondents do not have children, which means they have no experience of being a mother or father. Generally speaking, in Poland most people in this age group (both women and men, not only individuals in these courses of study) have no such experience.

The respondents were asked to express their opinions on the importance of different parenting styles for the social development of children and adolescents. The question, prepared in a form of a table, presented the specific parenting styles, so that the respondents could refer to these. The following characteristics of parenting styles were included in the table.

I. Democratic style – the child receives support so that his/her development takes place in a natural and spontaneous way. This mainly involves assistance and backing in the process of growing up. By allowing their child to make his/her own choices, parents teach him/her to take responsibility and learn independently, but they still play a supervisory role in these decisions and intervene in an appropriate manner in the event of danger or poor choices. Democratic parenting encourages children to take active part in society, enabling them to function properly within it. The norms and values introduced are respected in a natural and understanding way. The guiding principles in this style include cooperation and partnership between the child and the parent. The parent mainly engages in direct dialogue with the child, provides assistance for and cooperates with the child in the choice of appropriate models of behaviour. It is not about imposing one's own opinions or goals, but about guiding the child by means of dialogue towards appropriate views and self-realisation, in accordance with prevailing social and cultural norms. The democratic style is not about giving children complete freedom, but rather about a need to follow pre-defined rules and norms that are applied in the family and society. The child does not only know these but also understands them and wants to follow them.[30]

[29] *Ibidem*.

[30] M. Łobocki, *Teoria wychowania w zarysie*, Kraków 2007, pp. 12–14.

II. Authoritarian style – the relations between family members tend to be rather cold. Parents do not show affection to their child and maintain a formal tone when interacting with him/her. They focus on giving commands and imposing restrictions. Authoritarian parents do not pay attention the child's needs, abilities or desires. His/her failure to perform the defined tasks or obligations is met with severe punishment. The child is not allowed to express his/her own opinions. Young people raised this way may later exhibit fear, lack of faith in their own abilities, or vulnerability to peer pressure or they may lead a life of a rebel.
III. Liberal style – involves complete freedom for the child, tolerance of antisocial behaviour and a lack of parental supervision. The child is the most important person and all their wishes are fulfilled. No rules or standards are introduced. All decisions are taken from the viewpoint of the child who does not make any effort to work for the benefit of the family. The consequence of this style may include a selfish and self-centred approach to the world. The child may present antisocial behaviour, believing he/she is the "centre of the universe."
IV. Inconsistent style, also referred to as occasional style – the parents exhibit conflicting approaches to raising their child. Parents often change their attitude to their child; in similar situations a specific behaviour of the child may be accepted at one time and punished on another occasion. The decisions taken depend on the parent's mood. There are no specific norms and rules to be followed by all family members. Inconsistent parenting style is associated with the fact that parents are unable to fully cope with their responsibilities, and to define expectations towards their own child. This is due to a lack of adequate knowledge about parenting.[31]

According to a vast majority of the respondents, democratic parenting style is the most beneficial for children and adolescents from the viewpoint of their social development. This is definitely consistent with the results of the studies discussed in the article. It is possible that the respondents had already acquired some knowledge about parenting styles through various educational activities which they had engaged in during their university course, and through self-study and earlier internships in kindergartens and schools. In view of the fact that the respondents are going to work as teachers, it is very important that their knowledge is consistent with what experts specialising in this subject matter write about parenting styles. Analysis of the results presented in Table 4 shows that the highest number of respondents (24.39%) did not provide an answer related to inconsistent or occasional parenting style. It is possible that the respondents were aware of the fact that their knowledge with respect to this style was insufficient and due to this they did not want to express their opinion. As regards the other parenting styles, the respondents were more willing to provide the answers, although liberal and authoritarian styles possibly were not easy for them to assess. either – lack of responses respectively from 17.07% and 15.85% of the participants. As I mentioned earlier, this may

[31] *Ibidem*, pp. 312–314.

reflect a lack of knowledge on the part of respondents and their reluctance to give hasty answers to the questions. It is also possible that students did not fill out the questionnaire very carefully. The lowest number of respondents failed to present their opinion in the case of democratic style (10.97%).

Table 4. Parenting styles and their significance for social development of children and adolescents

Response categories	I[32] Democratic style	II Authoritarian style	III. Liberal style	IV Inconsistent or occasional style
Highly beneficial in the context of social development of children and adolescents (desire to establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, willingness to follow accepted rules and social norms, willingness to engage in pro-social activities, e.g. volunteering, helping colleagues in need, ability to sense other people's mental states and accept their way of thinking (empathy).	44 + 92 = 136 (82.93%)	1 + 8 = 9 (5.49%)	5 + 6 = 11 (6.71%)	0 + 1 = 1 (0.61%)
Moderately beneficial for social development of children and adolescents (desire to establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, willingness to follow accepted rules and social norms, willingness to engage in pro-social activities, e.g. volunteering, helping colleagues in need, ability to sense other people's mental states and accept their way of thinking (empathy).	1 + 3 = 4 (2.44%)	6 + 19 = 25 (15.25%)	16 + 34 = 50 (30.49%)	17 + 11 = 28 (17.07%)
Minimally beneficial for social development of children and adolescents (desire to establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, willingness to follow accepted rules and social norms, willingness to engage in pro-social activities, e.g. volunteering, helping colleagues in need, ability to sense other people's mental states and accept their way of thinking (empathy).	2 + 4 = 6 (3.65%)	37 + 67 = (63.41%)	24 + 50 = 74 (45.12%)	27 + 68 = 95 (57.93%)

Source: present findings.

[32] Numbers corresponding to the parentings styles described earlier.

Conclusion

The main research hypothesis was confirmed by the findings of this study which are presented in this article. The democratic parenting style was considered by an overwhelming majority of the respondents to be the most beneficial for the social development of children and adolescents. The theoretical and explorative objective has been achieved as regards:

a) the theoretical analysis of the issues related to parenting styles in the context of their importance for social development of children and adolescents;
b) investigation of opinions presented by female and male students concerning the degree to which specific parenting styles are important for the social development of children and adolescents.

Likewise, the practical and implementation-related objective has also been achieved. The following conclusions have been drawn from the present study:

1. The respondents predominantly were women (91.46%). Slightly more than half of them were employed, and their occupational activity was related to their field of study (52.44%). Only 6.10% of respondents reported having children.
2. A large majority of the students (82.93%) believe that democratic parenting style is highly beneficial in the context of social development of children and adolescents (desire to establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, willingness to follow accepted rules and social norms, willingness to engage in pro-social activities, e.g. volunteering, helping colleagues in need, ability to sense other people's mental states and accept their way of thinking (empathy). Similar opinions were expressed by only 5.49% of the respondents with regard to authoritarian parenting style, 6.71% of the respondents with regard to liberal parenting style and less than 1% (0.61%) with regard to inconsistent or occasional parenting style. It is highly optimistic that future teachers hold these opinions, in view of the fact that experts specialising in this subject matter suggest that a democratic parenting style is most desirable and it produces the best effects for the social development of children and adolescents. It is therefore very important that young people in these courses of study are aware of this, and it is possible that for this reason they will encourage parents to apply this style and will themselves use a similar approach in their professional work.
3. Like in the previous conclusion, it is also optimistic that as many as 63.41% of the respondents believe that authoritarian parenting style is minimally beneficial for social development of children and adolescents. Slightly fewer respondents (57.93%) expressed this opinion in relation to the inconsistent or occasional style, and 45.12% of respondents with reference to the liberal style.
4. The largest number of respondents did not provide their opinion about effectiveness of inconsistent or occasional style. In this case nearly 1/4 of the respondents did not answer the question.

Based on the conclusions from the present study, the following pedagogical recommendations have been formulated to teachers and parents:

1. It seems reasonable for teachers to engage in self-study throughout their professional careers with regard to parenting styles, especially those that are currently preferable to parents. In this way, teachers will have up-to-date knowledge that can greatly assist them in diagnosing the causes of various behaviours or difficulties in their pupils. As a result the teachers will be perceived by parents as professional educators.
2. Teachers who have up-to-date knowledge about parenting styles and recognise the need to share this knowledge with others, e.g. parents, should do so in various appropriate circumstances at kindergarten or school. This is particularly important in the context of children's and adolescents' social development, since it is educators that often observe students' difficulties in interpersonal relationships, their unwillingness to follow accepted rules and social norms or to engage in pro-social activities, as well as their lack of empathy.
3. It also seems reasonable for parents to use specialist resources and learn about parenting styles. When they see the need to do so, they should also draw on the expertise of teachers, educators and psychologists working at school.
4. It is also important for parents to take an ongoing interest in their child's progress, not only in terms of cognitive development, but also social development, and to maintain regular contact with teachers (especially if their child's current situation requires it).

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