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ABSTRACT - DOCTORAL THESIS

**The influence of parenting styles on achievement of rural secondary school
students.**

**Design and implementation of the experimental intervention programme
"Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!"**

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Key words: authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style, democratic parenting style, parental education, parenting, school involvement, parental attachment, school success, secondary school students, rural environment.

In the current context, schools are faced with new educational approaches generated by the diversity of societal problems and the multiplication of areas of educational intervention.

These include: the impact of technology on children's intellectual and mental development, internet addiction and its effects on children, parenting from a distance (divorced, immigrant or absent parents), and neglect of children by parents who are too busy to provide the bare material necessities.

In this paper, we aimed to emphasise the role of the relationship between parents and children, focusing on how parenting styles influence the school performance of secondary school students and the active involvement of parents in their education.

The motivation for choosing this research topic stems from the desire to investigate the impact of parenting styles on the school achievement of rural secondary school students.

Chapter I of the research provides a detailed and structured presentation of the issues related to the family as a fundamental element in the upbringing and development of children. We have proposed a conceptual analysis of the family portrait, which is based on an investigation of the historical development of the concept of family and its functionality in contemporary society. We also analysed the temporal evolution of the concept of family and its role in contemporary society, approaching them from a historical and sociological perspective, followed by the evolution and current trends of the family in the Romanian context. We set out to explore, in turn, diachronic and synchronic approaches to the Romanian family, as well as a critical analysis of these aspects, providing a complex perspective on the changes and trends in the evolution of the family in Romania and examining the role of the family climate in the formation of the child's personality, in his development, as well as in shaping his behavioural and emotional traits.

The first chapter concludes with a novel element, an own vision of the effects of parental stress on the formation and development of the child's personality.

Parental stress can have numerous effects on a child's personality formation and development. It can influence both their physical and emotional health, as well as how they perceive the world and relate to others. From this perspective, we have listed the effects of parental stress on children's psychophysical and intellectual development:

- emotional and behavioural problems: children may become anxious, fearful or depressed as a result of parental stress; they may develop behavioural disorders such as aggression or social withdrawal;
- poor school performance: stress at home can affect a child's ability to concentrate at school, which can lead to lower grades or learning difficulties;
- problems in social relationships: children who often experience parental stress may have difficulty developing social skills, have trouble forming healthy relationships or become more susceptible to bullying;
- negative modelling: children learn by imitation; if they see their parents responding to stress in unhealthy ways (e.g. excessive drinking, aggression, etc.), they are likely to adopt the same behaviours;
- cognitive development: in the early years, the child's brain is at a crucial stage of development; chronic stress can affect the way neural connections are formed, which can have long-term consequences for cognitive development;
- health problems: there is a correlation between parental stress and some health problems in children, such as sleep disturbances, digestive problems or low immunity.
- low self-esteem: children who constantly experience stress in the family may begin to believe that they are the cause of problems, which lowers their self-esteem and leads to feelings of low self-confidence;
- attachment disorders: when parents are too stressed to respond adequately to their child's emotional needs, the child can develop attachment disorders, which can affect the way they form relationships throughout their lives;
- increased risk for abuse and neglect: in extreme situations, over-stressed parents may resort to physical or emotional abuse or neglect their child's needs;

To combat the effects of parental stress, it is essential that parents recognise the signs of stress in their own lives and seek ways to manage it, such as counselling, therapy, relaxation techniques or talking to other parents. It is also important to provide a safe and stable environment for children and to communicate openly with them about their feelings and concerns. Everyday minor details, repressed feelings, the overwhelming atmosphere at work, fierce competitions, everyday experiences, children's academic failures, all of these can contribute to our feelings of intense discomfort.

Whatever the source of the stress, the impact on the child, according to early education research, is the elimination of the stress hormone cortisol, which forms a barrier to the child's

psychological development. The duration, frequency and severity of stress situations in the family are also significant factors.

Chapter II of the research defines and analyses the concepts and evolution of parenting styles, providing a comprehensive perspective on how they influence children's development and behaviour. In this chapter, we aim to delimit the concepts of parenting and parenting education, focussing on the relationship between parenting and parenting styles, and the importance of parenting styles in the formation and upbringing of children.

Parenting education is aimed at programmes that guide parents to refine their skills, to be more responsive to their children's development/needs, to discover ways of reducing tensions that may influence the quality of the parent-child relationship and to adopt different strategies when faced with challenges in interacting with their children (Small, 1990). This training focuses not only on improving parenting, but also on a therapeutic approach to alleviating the pressures arising from parenting responsibilities.

The main objective of parenting education is to strengthen the bonds between parents and children, stimulating constructive attitudes in parents and children and changing actions that are not beneficial or may be harmful. Training initiatives for parents tend to cultivate proactive and constructive approaches in parents, while aiming to eliminate attitudes that may be counterproductive for the child's development.

Parenting education aims not only to enhance practical skills, but also those of analysis and reflection. Parenting is seen more as a process of analysis and introspection, as a series of concrete activities or responsibilities, which strictly outline the traditional roles of mother or father (Golding, 2000).

According to M. Hoghughi (2004), the term parenting refers to a set of purposeful activities designed to ensure the survival and development of the child. These actions may or may not be carried out by the child's biological parent.

Parenting is about giving continuous attention and care so that the child grows and develops appropriately; it is a term that refers to the complexity of roles, responsibilities and techniques that an individual adopts in raising and educating children.

It is a process that involves more than just physical care, extending to the emotional, social, moral and intellectual education of the child. The term refers to the totality of practices, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs adopted by parents in the process of raising, educating and shaping children.

There are several key aspects of parenting:

- Evolution and adaptation. As children grow and change, their needs evolve too. So parents must continually adapt to new stages of their children's development, from birth to adolescence.
- Communication. Open and honest dialogue between parent and child is essential. Through communication, parents can understand their child's needs, fears and concerns, while offering guidance and support.
- Education. Parenting involves the transmission of values, norms, knowledge and skills necessary for children to integrate and function in society.
- Emotional support. Parents must provide an environment in which the child feels loved, understood and valued. This includes offering comfort in difficult times and celebrating successes.
- Involvement. Being present and active in your child's life, participating in and showing interest in their activities.
- Setting limits. While it is essential to encourage autonomy and independence, it is equally important to set clear boundaries and rules to guide your child's behaviour.
- Modelling. Parents are primary role models for children. The behaviours, attitudes and values they consistently display are often adopted and replicated by children.
- Protection. Ensuring children's safety and well-being by protecting them from physical and emotional danger.

Parenting can be likened to a journey that brings both challenges and rewards. Each child is unique, and what works for one might not work for another. Flexibility, understanding and patience are essential in this ongoing desire to guide a child.

This chapter presents a conceptual analysis of parenting styles, starting from a historical-chronological perspective and continuing with contemporary policies and trends in this field, with an emphasis on the specific Romanian evolutionary context.

Parenting styles represent distinct ways in which parents manifest their behaviours and interactions with their children. These styles reflect parents' general approaches to education, discipline, communication and emotional support for their children.

They refer to how parents exercise their parenting role and influence their children's development and include factors such as the level of parental control, the degree of affection and emotional support given to children, the rules and limits imposed, the way parents communicate and the way they approach discipline and guide their children's behaviour.

It is important to note that parenting styles are not rigid or definitive, but can vary according to the circumstances and needs of individual children and families. Parents may also adopt combinations of elements from different parenting styles or adjust their parenting style during the course of their children's growth and development.

The concept of parenting style developed by D. Baumrind (1991) refers to the specific way in which parenting values, practices and behaviours are structured through a certain ratio between parental control and parental affection. Initially, the author identified three parenting styles according to the dimensions of parental acceptance and control: authoritarian (characterised by high parental control and lack of parental affection), permissive (characterised by low parental control and a loving and permissive attitude) and democratic (1966). The same author recognised two dimensions of parenting behaviour that have a significant impact on child behaviour: parental acceptance and parental control. Furthermore, she combines the two dimensions and defines the three parenting styles mentioned above.

It is important to note that D. Baumrind recognises that parenting styles can vary and can be influenced by cultural, social and individual factors. She believes that an appropriate balance between parental control and emotional support is essential to promote children's healthy and balanced development.

The taxonomy of parenting styles is also presented from its own perspective, followed by an exploration of relevant theories on parenting styles and the parent-child relationship, providing a deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and how parenting styles influence children's behaviour and development in the family context.

I. Depending on the circumstances and the personality of the parents, we propose a taxonomy in which we include a wide variety of parenting behaviours and attitudes. Thus, we can find: the guiding parent, the partner parent, the protective parent, the neglectful parent, the balanced parent, the oscillating parent, the automatic parent.

II. Depending on the complexity of the relationship between parents and children, as well as factors such as culture, individual background, life experiences, mental and physical health, we propose another taxonomy of parenting styles: adaptive parent, traditional parent, mediating parent, mentoring parent, friendly parent, observing parent, reserved parent.

III. Based on cultural observations, individual experiences or developments in developmental psychology, we propose another taxonomy, which includes other types of parents. It is important to understand that, as technology evolves, parenting styles may adapt or change: drone parent, helicopter parent, swan parent, tiger parent, friend parent, counsellor parent, snowplow parent, coach parent, free-range parent, activist parent, gatekeeper parent,

naturist parent, nomadic parent, spiritual parent.

Each style has advantages and disadvantages, and what works in one context or culture may not work in another. These advantages and disadvantages are generalisations and do not necessarily fit every individual situation or family. Many parents will not fit neatly into one category and may combine elements from several styles, adapting to the needs and circumstances of their children. The parenting style adopted may also evolve and change as the child grows and develops.

Most importantly, parents need to be aware, empathetic and flexible in their approach to parenting.

In conclusion, the taxonomy of parenting styles provides a useful framework for understanding how parents' behaviours and attitudes influence children's development. The choice and adaptation of parenting style can have significant implications for children's long-term well-being.

Chapter III of the research explores the implications of parental education on the performance and academic achievement of secondary school students, investigating various aspects related to parental involvement in children's education and supporting their endeavours towards academic performance.

The defining and evolving elements of parental involvement were highlighted, providing a holistic perspective on how parental involvement has been conceptualised and understood over time. The dimensions of parental involvement and the factors influencing children's education were analysed, focusing on the various aspects that can contribute to the extent to which parents are involved in their children's school life.

In the Romanian school context, parental involvement was investigated, including forms, relationships, dimensions and motivations, providing a deeper understanding of how parents interact with the educational system.

Today's society sees the school-family partnership as a way of combining, supporting and assisting the influences of formal education. Co-operation between parents and teachers, constant communication and collaboration between them in different situations lead to more effective learning. The existence of commonly agreed boundaries and rules also facilitates learning. In any school, there is a network of people who have a strong influence on pupils' education, both positively and negatively.

Among these relationships we mention as relevant:

- teacher-pupil relations;

- pupil-pupil relations;
- relations between teachers and parents;
- relations between professionals supporting the child's development with parents and teachers (teamwork to make decisions and take action in favour of the child).

Co-operation between school and family implies effective and efficient communication, unity of demands and unity of action when it is in the best interests of the child. It consists of exchanges of views and discussions, but when it comes to decisions, both the school and the family retain their specific identity and input.

E. Vrăsmaş (2002) defines the existence of two main dimensions of family and school involvement for the benefit of the child:

- the parent-child relationship dimension - emphasises the monitoring of school attendance, homework, results obtained, as well as the completion of tasks, and financial support for the child's education;
- the family-school relationship dimension - emphasises the selection of the profile and school, direct communication between parents and school representatives. Communication can take place during lectures/seminars which take the form of negotiations between the school management team and parents' associations, but also during meetings/meetings to provide information on class timetables, school content, etc.

To these forms of collaboration we add today:

- parents' school;
- psycho-pedagogical counselling;
- family guidance according to individual or group needs, in a professional manner, by specialists trained specifically as support teachers and counsellors for problems involving risks in the child's development and adaptation.

We paid special attention to the influence of the family environment on the school environment, addressing both family involvement and the specific characteristics of the rural school environment, as well as the school achievement of secondary school pupils, correlated with the factors involved in their academic development. We have also emphasised the intellectual and non-intellectual factors of academic achievement, highlighting the multiple influences that can affect pupils' academic performance. At the end of this chapter, parenting skills development practices in the national context are presented, with a focus on parenting education and how it can influence pupils' success at school.

Research in the field of educational research and child development emphasises the importance of parental involvement and the influence that parenting styles have on pupils' school performance.

Chapter IV includes the experimental part of our research, aiming to analyse parenting styles, parental involvement and their impact on the school outcomes and trajectories of secondary school students, following the participation of parents in an experimental intervention programme aimed at developing effective attachment-based parenting styles.

The objectives of this research are:

Highlighting the child-parent relationship, revealing the influence of parenting styles on the outcomes of secondary school students:

- Identifying the relationships between attachment to parents and parenting style, as well as between attachment and parental involvement;
- Parental involvement in children's education, with effect on their school outcomes and further educational path;
- Analysing how parenting styles can lead to the success/failure of secondary school students in the school environment.

Research questions

1. To what extent can pupils' educational outcomes be influenced by their level of attachment to their parents?

2. How can secondary school pupils' educational outcomes and their school trajectory change depending on the parenting styles approached by parents?

3. What is the relationship between parenting styles parental involvement and the way parents are involved in their children's school life as a result of participating in the experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!"

We investigated **relevant issues** that supported the proposed general hypothesis:

We assume that parents' participation in the experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Students!" leads to the development of effective parenting styles, increased parental attachment and parental involvement, which will lead to improved academic performance of students and continuation of their school trajectory.

The following **secondary hypotheses** follow from the general hypothesis:

IS1 - We assume that the high level of attachment of secondary school students to their parents influences the increase of their school results.

IS2 - We assume that the development of effective parenting styles, following the participation of parents in the experimental intervention programme "Involved parents, successful students!" influences the continuation of the school trajectory of secondary school pupils.

IS3 - We assume that the experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!" helps to increase parental involvement in school life.

Research variables

- **Socio-demographic variables:**

- gender (male/female);
- age (20-30 years/30-40 years/40-50 years/50-60 years/ > 60 years);
- level of education (< 8 classes/8 classes/10 classes/ vocational school/ high school/ post-secondary school/ university/ master's degree/ doctorate);
- marital status (single/married/divorced/ widowed/ cohabiting/ not married);
- occupational status (working: \geq 40 hours/week, < 40 hours/week, not employed);
- number of children in the family (1/2/3/ >3);
- age of secondary school pupils (11 years/12 years/13 years/14 years/14 years/15 years).

- **Independent variables**

VI1 - parenting styles: democratic, permissive, authoritarian;

VI2 - the experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Students!";

VI3 - time.

- **Dependent variables**

VD1 - children's level of attachment to their parents;

VD2 - secondary school pupils' school results (annual averages);

VD3 - traceability (school trajectory);

VD4 - parental involvement assessed on the following scales: parent-child-school activities, parent-school relationship, parent-school-community collaboration;

Samples of participants

The research started in 2022, in September by selecting the rural schools to be included in the investigative lot, according to their geographical location (neighbouring area of Falticeni, Suceava County), as well as according to the number of classes of secondary school students.

Thus, out of a total of 39 secondary schools in the rural area of the Falticeni area, with a total number of 690 students enrolled in secondary education (in the 2022-2023 school year), we established the research in 11 secondary schools in rural areas, on a group of subjects consisting of 264 students aged between 11 and 15 years and 264 parents of the students.

We used the parallel sampling technique with a control and an experimental group. The samples were based on the aprioric power analysis in the GPower3.1. programme, which involves entering a desired power level and the estimated effect size.

Research methods and tools

We approached a mixed-methods research approach, including both quantitative and qualitative methods, in order to comprehensively and thoroughly address the proposed research topic. The simultaneous use of these two types of methods allows a triangulation of the data, increasing the validity and credibility of the results.

Quantitative research allows us to analyse on a much larger scale in order to identify all the cases where parents are involved in their children's education and school success, and the research methods chosen allowed us to select a larger sample. Using the questionnaire survey, we obtained accurate data on an individual or social group (secondary school pupils and their parents).

In order to verify the proposed hypotheses, we used the following research methods:

- Content analysis
- Documentary analysis
- Questionnaire and interview survey (questionnaires for parents/students - paper-based; interview with head teachers)
- The experiment

Instrumentele de investigare

Parenting Style Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ - Robinson et al, 2001)- questionnaire for parents short version (32 items), structured in three main dimensions, associated with the three parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive, democratic).

Parent and School Survey (PASS - Ringenberg et al, 2005)- questionnaire for parents, measuring parental involvement in children's education (30 items).

Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ - Kenny, 1987)- questionnaire for students, assessing attachment to parents (55 items).

Research stages:

Pre-experimental stage

The **pre-experimental phase** started with a study comprising a **qualitative analysis of the Romanian literature** on parenting styles, in which we used content **analysis as a research** method, followed by **documentary analysis** and a **questionnaire-based survey** on a representative sample of parents.

Qualitative analysis of the literature in Romania was carried out in order to obtain an overview of the approach to parenting styles in Romania between 2012-2022.

Aim and objectives of the study

This study aims to explore in depth the practices, attitudes and perceptions of Romanian parents in terms of how they may educate and raise their children, which involves obtaining detailed information about the parenting styles used in different contexts and communities in Romania, as well as understanding the factors that influence these styles.

The main **objectives** of this qualitative analysis of parenting styles are:

- Identification and description of prevailing parenting styles: qualitative analysis helps to identify the parenting styles prevalent in different communities or groups of parents in Romania; this contributes to understanding how these styles are influenced by specific cultural, socio-economic and educational factors.
- Exploring parents' perceptions and values: qualitative analysis can provide an in-depth insight into parents' perceptions of parenting and child-rearing, covering issues such as parents' expectations of their children, educational priorities, disciplinary approaches and the parent-child relationship.
- Identifying factors influencing parenting styles in Romania: these factors may include cultural, educational, economic, social and contextual influences, as well as parents' personal experiences.
- Understanding the impact of parenting styles: qualitative analysis investigates the impact of parenting styles on children's development and well-being; this involves assessing the psychological, emotional and behavioural consequences of different parenting styles, as well as identifying factors that may contribute to positive or negative outcomes for children.

The qualitative analysis of parenting styles in Romania offers a detailed and comprehensive insight into how Romanian parents fulfil their role, providing valuable information for the development of parenting support programmes and policies and for improving the parent-child relationship.

We consider this study to be essential in order to substantiate, strengthen and support the research proposed in this paper, because by analysing the literature:

- we highlight the particularities of parenting styles that are specific to Romanian culture and society;

- we bring a unique and contextualised perspective on how parenting styles influence the outcomes of secondary school students in the Romanian context;

- we provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and social factors that influence parenting styles in Romania, this contributing to the identification and exploration of the connections between parenting styles and the school outcomes of secondary school students;

- synthesise relevant previous research that has investigated the link between parenting styles and pupils' school performance, thus strengthening the arguments and conclusions of our research;

- identify possible gaps in existing research and propose future directions for investigating parenting styles and secondary school pupils' achievement in the Romanian context, contributing to the further development of the field and to the improvement of educational policies and practices.

The research questions this study aims to answer:

- How does the Romanian literature deal with parenting styles and their influence on students' academic achievement between 2012-2022?

- What is the impact of parenting styles on child development?

The content analysis aims to - identify and describe different parenting styles in the Romanian context, assess their impact on child development and identify common trends and patterns in existing research in Romania.

The results revealed that an authoritarian parenting style was correlated with lower levels of social adjustment, **higher levels of academic performance, life satisfaction and autonomy in children.** It emphasises the importance of adopting a balanced and open (authoritarian-permissive) parenting style in the Romanian context in order to promote healthy socio-emotional development.

It was found that a permissive parenting style was associated with lower academic performance, **while an authoritarian parenting style was correlated with better academic achievement.** This suggests that, in the Romanian educational context, a balanced and disciplined approach may play an important role in encouraging children's academic success.

Authoritative and permissive parenting styles were found to be associated with higher levels of emotional and behavioural problems in children compared to authoritarian democratic parenting. These results emphasise the importance of adopting a parenting style that combines limits and guidance with appropriate support and communication to promote optimal mental well-being among Romanian children.

Conclusions of the approach undertaken:

- Research in the Romanian context emphasises that parenting styles have a significant impact on children's psycho-physical and intellectual development. In this regard, it is essential to inform parents and provide support and resources to encourage the adoption of positive and effective parenting practices in Romania, **which is why we considered it necessary to carry out an experimental intervention programme suggestively named "Involved parents, successful pupils!"**.

- Studies on parenting styles have shown that parenting styles can affect child development in many aspects, including identity formation, relationships, social adjustment and academic success. The continued importance of research and exploration of parenting styles in Romania is linked to the impact they have on child development in a specific environment.

Thus, after finalising the study presented above, in order to continue the research activity in the direction initially proposed, we decided that also **in the pre-experimental stage** we would carry out a documentary analysis (**in September 2022**), which started by collecting significant data from the school documents of the secondary schools involved in the research, data that highlight the school performance of the pupils (reflected in the annual averages in grade VII), all of which was obtained with the consent of the school principals, respecting the GDPR rules in force (T0 - beginning of the research).

To collect data on parenting styles, parental involvement in children's education and children's attachment to their parents, we used **a questionnaire-based survey** applied on a representative sample of parents of pupils from 11 secondary schools, rural Suceava County, in the area neighbouring the town of Falticeni (264 secondary school pupils and 264 parents of their pupils). For parents we used the instruments: PSDQ (Parenting Styles and Dimensions of Parenting Questionnaire) and PASS (Parental Involvement in the School Environment Questionnaire), and for the pupils, PAQ (Parental Attachment Questionnaire).

Experimental stage

Experimental intervention programme "Involved parents, successful pupils!"

Following the identification of the educational needs of the parents of secondary school pupils in the schools involved in the research, we designed and implemented an intervention programme in the form of parental education courses, with groups of minimum 10 - maximum 25 parents, a programme suggestively called "Involved parents, successful pupils!". As a parental educator, under the aegis of the HoltIS Iași Association, I organised parent education courses, between October 2022 and February 2023, in secondary schools in the rural areas of Suceava County that are part of the experimental group of the representative sample.

In order to develop parenting skills and competences among parents of secondary school pupils, at this stage we applied the intervention **programme „Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!”**, by conducting **parenting education courses** in the schools included in the experimental group.

The intervention programme is structured in 10 training sessions applied on groups of 10-25 parents, between **4 October 2022 and 24 February 2023 (T1)**.

Experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!"

extract -

SESSION 1

BE A TOP 10 PARENT!

APPROACHES AND TIPS FOR HARMONIOUS PARENTING

Module 1: Communicating effectively with children

- The importance of open and honest communication with children
- Active listening and empathy
- Establishing a non-violent communication environment
- Open questions and dialogue with children

Module 2: Managing behavior

- Setting clear boundaries and rules
- Applying appropriate and fair consequences
- Avoiding punishment and physical violence
- Peaceful conflict resolution techniques

Module 3: Cultivating confidence and empowerment

- Encouraging independence and taking responsibility
- Supporting exploration and self-discovery
- Building confidence and a positive self-image
- Promoting decision-making and critical thinking

Module 4: Building positive relationships

- Providing a positive role model for children
- Creating a harmonious and respectful family environment
- Promoting values such as generosity, compassion and respect for others
- Encouraging healthy communication and co-operation in the family

Module 5: Maintaining a balance between authority and freedom

- Setting appropriate rules and boundaries for children
- Understanding children's needs and wishes
- Managing conflict and negotiating with children
- Developing the ability to allow independence and provide emotional support

Applications:

1. Put yourself in their shoes! Parents are asked to choose a common activity or situation in their child's everyday life, try to put themselves in their child's shoes and understand how they might perceive and experience that situation. Discuss the feelings and perspectives they have experienced and find ways to better understand and manage them.

2. Parenting Challenge: This exercise proposes various challenges and practical exercises to help parents develop their 'wise parenting' skills. Each challenge targets a specific aspect such as communication, behaviour management or building positive relationships. Resources and tips are provided to guide participants on their development journey as a parent.

3. Questions and answers: Together with the parents, create a list of questions they can ask their children to better understand them. The questions can be about preferences, emotions, dreams or anything else that will help them to get to know their child better. Parents will be advised to encourage their children to answer honestly and openly and to pay attention to their answers to better connect with them.

4. Mindful Parenting: This app offers mindfulness exercises and techniques tailored for parents that will help them to focus on the present, on real situations, be more aware of their own emotions and manage stress and anxiety. By practising mindfulness, participants in this programme can become calmer, more present and more understanding.

This intervention programme was seen and understood by the parents as a real necessity, because living in rural areas, many of them did not have access to formal education, most of them have a low standard of living and do not consider school as an important factor in their children's education. The proposed parenting courses have supported parents, regardless of the age of their child and/or the socio-economic level of the family; they have led to the strengthening of the parent-child relationship, to an understanding of the needs that children have and how these needs can be met. The parent will know how to respond to the child's needs, which will lead the child to be more attentive to his or her requirements, and the relationship between the two will be one of co-operation.

Thus, during these courses, parents were instructed to ensure the best possible study conditions for their children, to establish a work/study regime for their children, to supervise them discreetly in their free time, to support them in filling the gaps in their knowledge through extra work, to use methods that will ensure their progress in learning, better school results - school success.

The proposed parenting education courses have led parents to better know their parental role, to raise their awareness, but also to understand the mission they have in the development of their children's education, their social integration. As a result of participating in this programme, parents became aware that a positive parenting style can be acquired through learning and practice and can lead to positive results in children's development, social integration and, of course, school work.

The "Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!" programme has created the necessary framework for the development of parenting skills in line with modern psycho-pedagogical recommendations, and at the end of the programme, parents will be able to give their children the support and guidance they need to succeed in school and in life.

Participation in this parenting programme was not understood by the parents as a lack of parenting skills, but as a way to improve and develop the skills they have, a way for them to get to know their child and his personality better, to respond appropriately to his needs, to help him reach his full potential in development and learning.

This intervention programme aims to provide practical knowledge and tools to become a well-informed parent and to support children's emotional, intellectual and social development. In this course, we have explored various topics such as: effective communication, behaviour management, promoting confidence and autonomy, developing positive relationships and maintaining a healthy balance between authority and freedom, organised in meetings/work sessions with parents, structured in several mo **Post-experimental stage**

This stage (**T2 - after the end of the Intervention Programme**) was carried out **from 29 to 31 May 2023** and consisted in collecting data on the degree of parental involvement in school activities (formal and non-formal activities), based on an interview with the 8 head teachers of the 8th grade pupils in the schools included in the experimental group. The head teachers consented to participate in the study and to the interview duties.

From 6 to 8 June 2023, we re-administered **the same questionnaires** to the same respondents as in the pre-experimental phase, comparing the results obtained in the two periods on family involvement, internal attachment, parenting styles and pupils' school performance. In addition, at the end of the current school year, a new data collection (**analysis of school documents**) was carried out on the results obtained by 8th grade pupils at the end of the 2022 - 2023 school year, measured by annual averages.

Retest phase

This phase (**T3 - retest**) was carried out between **December 2023 and January 2024** by administering the same questionnaires to parents and pupils now in 9th grade at secondary schools/colleges/vocational schools, who were part of the experimental group. The aim was to change the degree of parental involvement in the school environment. The retest was carried out on the same sample of 132 parents and 132 pupils included in the initial experimental group.

Ethical considerations

Before starting the actual research, by filling in an Informed Consent form, we asked parents for their consent to participate in the study and to administer the questionnaires to both parents and students, as the latter are minors.

We assured the research participants of the confidentiality of the data and information obtained by completing the questionnaires, but we also informed them about the benefits of participating in the research as a result of their parents' involvement in the parenting education courses.

We also explained to them that this research aims to process data and information and not to identify the people who answered the questions in the proposed questionnaires. The subjects were made aware that their participation in the research is voluntary, which is why they can withdraw at any time they wish, and the results of the research will be provided to them upon request.

Limitations of the research

The research may have certain **limitations**, among which we list:

- given the size of the sample, the results cannot be extended to the entire secondary school population in the country to obtain meaningful results;

- lack of candour of some participants, as there is a tendency for them to give answers that they believe the researcher expects;
- the level of educational attainment of the population (some answers may not be relevant due to the low comprehensibility of the items, reinforced by the fact that parents fill in the questionnaire without additional assistance and explanations);
- the very high number of female participants in the study;
- the participation of one parent, instead of both parents, in the intervention programme;
- the study groups were not equivalent at the time of the initial testing, with a difference of 0.40 hundredths between the annual averages of the 7th grade classes;
- possible difficulties and uncertainties in interpreting the data and the results of the research carried out;

Chapter V focuses on the detailed analysis and presentation of the research results, structured into four key stages: pre-experimental, experimental, post-experimental and retest. Each of these stages plays an essential role in validating the research hypotheses, allowing a rigorous evaluation of the effects of the experimental intervention. In this chapter, we will provide a detailed and well-structured picture of the progress and impact of the experimental intervention, thus providing a thorough understanding of the investigative process and the results obtained.

The pre-experimental stage is the starting point of the research and aims to establish a frame of reference for subsequent measurements. Through the initial assessment of participants, baseline data are obtained to allow comparison and identification of subsequent changes. At this stage, the aim is to ensure that the control and experimental groups are homogeneous, so that any differences observed later can be attributed to the intervention and not to external factors.

The experimental phase is considered to be the core of the research, as this is where the intervention programme is implemented. Its purpose is to induce changes in the variables of interest and to observe how participants react to the intervention. By carefully monitoring and analysing the data collected during this phase, the immediate effects of the intervention can be assessed and initial conclusions about its effectiveness can be drawn.

The post-experimental phase allows for the evaluation of the immediate impact of the intervention after its finalisation. This stage is important to verify whether the effects observed during the intervention are maintained and to analyse short-term changes. Comparison of post-

experimental data with pre-experimental and experimental data provides a clear perspective on progress and significant changes.

The re-test phase is essential for assessing the sustainability of the effects of the intervention in the long term. By revisiting participants at a time interval after the intervention has been completed, it can be determined whether the observed benefits persist or whether new changes occur.

This stage provides valuable information about the stability and sustainability of the intervention, contributing to the validity of the overall research hypothesis. In each section of the chapter, appropriate statistical methods are used to analyse and interpret the data collected. Techniques such as Pearson correlations, t-tests for paired samples or independent samples, analysis of variance (Mixed ANOVA), are applied to identify significant differences and to draw valid conclusions. In addition, graphical representations are used to clearly illustrate the evolution of the variables of interest and to facilitate the understanding of the results.

Analysing each stage in detail is essential to fully understand the impact of the intervention and to provide a solid basis for the final research conclusions. This helps to ensure scientific rigour and to validate specific hypotheses, thus making a significant contribution to a thorough understanding of the proposed research topic.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings at each stage, highlighting the evolution of the variables of interest throughout the research.

Research results

Hypothesis 1 - We hypothesise that the high level of attachment of secondary school students to their parents influences the increase of their school results.

To test this hypothesis, we calculated Pearson correlation coefficients between parental attachment and the average of the 8th grade, at T2, obtaining the following results:

There is a significant positive association between the average of grade 7 and the average of grade 8: $r = 0.97$, $p < 0.001$; we infer that the average of grade 7 correlates positively with the average of grade 8 (positive correlation because $r = 0.97$, significant correlation because $p < 0.001$).

There is a significant positive association between 8th grade average and parental attachment at T2: $r = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$; from this it follows that 8th grade average correlates positively with parental attachment at T2 after the application of the Intervention Programme, which means that when 8th grade averages (T2) are high, there is an increase in parental

attachment or when parental attachment increases, there is an improvement in the students' averages (positive correlation because $r = 0.19$, significant correlation because $p < 0.001$).

At T1 there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in parental attachment score ($p > 0.05$).

In T2 there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of parental attachment ($t(262) = -6.25$; $p < 0.001$), in the sense that the experimental group scored significantly higher ($M = 229.91$) compared to the control group ($M = 211.66$).

Thus, the marked difference in Q2 shows that the intervention programme has contributed to increased attachment to parents.

The values shown and the significant differences between the two time points of testing are further evidence of the success of the Intervention Programme applied to the experimental group.

In conclusion, there is a strong relationship between parental attachment and pupils' educational outcomes. Fostering attachment between parents and children can be an essential component of interventions to improve school performance.

This emphasises the importance of emotional support and healthy family relationships for children's academic success.

The results confirm Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 - We assume that the development of effective parenting styles as a result of parents' participation in the experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Students!" determines the continuation of the school trajectory of secondary school pupils.

Using mixed ANOVA we analysed the differences between the two groups, as well as the interaction effects between them, for the independent variables: authoritarian style, permissive style, democratic style at the two moments of the test.

The results show that the programme was successful, as at T1 there were no significant differences and at T2 there were significant differences.

What we have obtained from these analyses of variance is in fact an expected result, confirming the initial idea that, following the application of the intervention programme, some parents have developed an effective parenting style, as evidenced by the low values of authoritarian style in T2.

The obtained result could be an effect of the implemented Programme, but considering only this comparison which shows that the democratic style in T2 is higher in the experimental

group, we cannot assume that it is only the involvement of the programme, because other factors could have contributed: education and information, personal experience, behaviour modelling, communication and relationship with the child, understanding the child's needs and development, self-reflection and desire to change culture and social environment.

In order to determine the association between parenting styles and the average of 8th grade in T2, we performed Pearson correlations and obtained the following:

There is no significant association between the democratic style in Q2 and the average of the 8th grade: $r = -0.13$, $p = 0.127$), which shows that in the control group, the democratic style in Q2 does not correlate with the average of the 8th grade (in Q2).

Following the schooling of the 8th grade students from the schools included in the investigative group, we made a comparative analysis which shows that in the control group there is a higher number of students who did not continue their studies (3 students of which: one case - dropout, two cases - no-show at the National Assessment Examination in 8th grade), while in the experimental group there is only 1 student in this situation (no-show at the National Assessment Examination in 8th grade).

The previous statistical analyses demonstrate that there is a significant positive association between authoritarian style at T2 and parental involvement at T2: $r = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$) and there is a significant positive association between permissive style at T2 and parental involvement at T2: $r = 0.53$, $p < 0.001$), after the application of the intervention programme, there is no significant association between democratic style at T2 and the average of the 8th grade, but only a significant negative association between democratic style at T2 and parental involvement at T2: $r = -0.44$, $p < 0.001$).

The associations support that Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed (for the authoritarian and permissive styles) and not confirmed for the democratic style.

In conclusion, the results obtained by the comparative analysis on school traceability, as well as by the Pearson correlation analysis (between parenting styles and parental involvement at T2, between parenting styles and school averages at T2) partially confirm Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 - We assume that the experimental intervention programme "Involved Parents, Successful Pupils!" contributes to increasing parental involvement in school life.

To test this hypothesis, we performed Pearson correlations between the average of 8th grade at T2 and parental involvement in school life at T2, on the experimental group to which the proposed intervention programme was applied.

It was found that there is a significant positive association between the average of the 8th grade and parental involvement at T2: $r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$), in the sense that in the experimental group, the average of the 8th grade correlates positively with involvement in school life at T2, which proves that there is an association / link between the increase in the average of the students and involvement in school life (in the experimental group) after the application of the intervention programme.

This again validates the effectiveness and success of the Programme. The intervention programme had a significant and beneficial impact on parents, strengthening the link between involvement in school life and academic performance.

The fact that there was a positive association between the increase in averages and the level of parental involvement in school activities suggests that the intervention implemented was effective in motivating parents to be more active and involved in school life.

The obtained results confirm Hypothesis 3.

Re-testing phase

Between December 2023 and January 2024, we carried out the re-testing phase of the 132 subjects in the experimental group and applied the same series of questionnaires (PSDQ, PASS, PAQ) to validate the initial results and to verify that the results obtained in the two previous phases are consistent and reproducible.

The variable school results (annual averages) was no longer analysed, because at the time of retesting, the school statements (pupils' annual averages) had not been finalised, as the current school year had not been completed.

Pearson correlations between parental attachment and parental involvement at T2, T3.

There are no correlations between parental attachment in T2 and parental attachment in T3. This may indicate that parental attachment may be influenced by temporal factors or specific events that are not permanently correlated between the two time points.

There is no correlation between involvement in school life in T2 and involvement in school life T3. The absence of a correlation between the level of engagement in school life at two different points in time (T2 and T3) suggests that the level of engagement in school life is not constant or predictable over time for the same individual, which may be influenced by changes in the school environment, the pupil's personal interests or other individual factors.

Pearson correlations between parental involvement and parenting styles in T3:

A change in dynamics is observed in T3, as there is a significant positive correlation between these variables. This suggests that, at a later point in time, greater involvement in school life is associated with a more democratic parenting style.

However, with the passage of time (T3), as children grow and develop, parental involvement in school life may be associated with a tendency for parents to adopt a more democratic style, indicating an increased interest in communication, collaboration and joint decision-making with their own children.

Pearson correlations between parental attachment and parenting styles:

No significant correlations between parental attachment at T2 and parenting styles at T3.

The absence of a significant correlation may suggest that parents adopt different parenting styles according to the specific needs and context of their relationship with their children, rather than being strictly determined by their level of attachment to them.

There are, however, other factors that may play an important role in determining the parenting styles adopted by parents at T3. These could include cultural, social, economic influences or even individual circumstances and life experiences that may modify or attenuate the link between the parent's attachment and their parenting styles.

The absence of a significant correlation may also indicate that the parent-child relationship has developed in a direction in which parental attachment is no longer a strong or unique predictor of parenting style.

Research findings

A significant correlation between parenting styles and academic achievement of secondary school students was demonstrated, two of the specific hypotheses were fully confirmed (Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3), and Hypothesis 2 was partially confirmed.

The intervention programme succeeded in providing parents with adequate resources and support to develop their skills and fulfil their potential in school, as the intervention included elements of mentoring and counselling harmoniously combined with attractive and useful applications and activities that stimulated their interest and participation in their free time.

The results suggest that increased parental involvement in children's school life has a positive impact on pupils' academic performance, reinforcing the idea that education is not just

about teaching and learning in the classroom, but also about active participation in various school activities and initiatives.

The relationship between parenting styles and the educational outcomes of secondary school pupils is influenced by parental involvement in their children's education, the degree of attachment of parents to their children, and the parenting styles adopted. The importance of these factors has been emphasised, not only in the context of the achievement and success of secondary school pupils, but also in terms of the continuity of the educational pathway to the later stages of education.

In conclusion, as a future direction for research, it highlights the importance of investing in intervention programmes that encourage and support parents' involvement in school life, thus providing them with a necessary and useful holistic experience.

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