

Fundamental Changes and Their Impact on the Concept of Children's Education from Parents' Interpretations

Simona Chicevič^{1*}, and Dušan Kostrub²

¹ Podersdorf am See, Austria

² Bratislava, Slovakia

* Corresponding Author E-mail Address: chicevic1@uniba.sk

Citation: Chicevič, S., & Kostrub, D. (2023). Fundamental Changes and Their Impact on the Concept of Children's Education from Parents' Interpretations. *International Journal of Childhood Education*, 4(1), 12-28. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ijce.v4i1.296>

ABSTRACT

Education as a purposeful activity has its complexities and goals, and its process should be equipped with pedagogical principles. In the presented study, based on the authors' interviews with the subjects, the authors' aim is to identify the prevailing educational views of parents in the upbringing of their children; the views of grandparents in the upbringing of their grandchildren, and the critical moments influencing their conscious decision-making and behaviour related to their beliefs as parents and grandparents. Qualitative research tools were used to obtain research material, namely unstructured and subsequently semi-structured interviews. The strategy of the constant comparison method was applied in elaborating the research material. The research was carried out in Slovakia and the Czech Republic and was attended by parents and grandparents (total number: 11) of children and grandchildren aged 2-6 years. The findings show that parents' and grandparents' beliefs about the definition and meaning of education coincide in many aspects. On the other hand, they differ significantly in other aspects, such as destructive influences on the child or the beginning of education. From the theory derived from the research, the fact emerges that the belief and the forming educational thinking of the subjects of the research are influenced by the specific experience in raising their children and, at the same time, the education experienced during childhood. This fact is primarily based on the identified interrelationships between the individual categories of the investigated phenomena, while it is based exclusively on the statements of the subjects of this longitudinal research.

keywords: education; educational methods; qualitative research; pedagogical principles; pedagogy

1. Introduction

In today's society, obvious family education conflicts, parenting anxiety among parents of young children, and tension between parents and children are phenomena that have received attention from all walks of life regarding family education. With the rapid development of science, education, culture, and the legal system, the educational concepts and awareness of parents of young children have also undergone many changes, and the educational concepts of parents of young children can implicitly influence their parenting behaviors toward young children (Yuan, 2022). Education is more than what parents "do" to achieve certain results in the development of their children. It includes a comprehensive set of relationships between parents and their children, between other socio-material actors and between generations, which are incorporated in specific space-time conditions (Van Damme, Ramaekers, 2022). Education is incorporated in educational reality, an activity leading to acquiring and enhancing the abilities and qualities of a person. Education is an influence on the processes of human learning and socialisation, aiming at one's transformation in all aspects - physical as well as mental,

intended to transform a person from a social being to a cultural being. Different concepts of education were affected by sociocultural conditions, different concepts of understanding people, and by the accentuation of individual aspects of educational process (Piaček, Kravčík, 1999). The 'home education' as a term, represents educational impact of the family on children. It has been proved that in various family environments, children do acquire a variety of experiences, through performing various activities and is constantly exposed to a range of influence and expectations from the people he/she cohabits (Ceka, Murati, 2016). Two key questions are how children develop and what affects their development. They incorporate a wide range of theoretical perspectives. Many relating theories are available. Theories of the development of children and how parents influence such progress have existed for more than 100 years. Theoretical approaches to the study of relationships between parents and children differ greatly in different basic dimensions. They differ in their scope, such as an approach to relationships between parents and children either from an ontogenetic viewpoint (one's development within their lifetime), perspective or a phylogenetic viewpoint (development of a species in time) (Holden, 2015). Family is the primary socialisation actor, providing children with family education, and enabling children to create their own identity (Tománková, Kostrub, 2018). We agree that the education of children begins in the self-education of their parents, their willingness to develop continuously, to improve and cultivate all their components - physical, mental and spiritual. To raise a child means to improve and develop their possibilities, mental functioning, processes and positive personality traits (Zelina, 2010).

2. Initial Considerations of Parents Regarding Education

From birth, children are learning and rely on mothers and fathers, as well as other caregivers acting in the parenting role, to protect and care for them and to chart a trajectory that promotes their overall well-being. While parents generally are filled with anticipation about their children's unfolding personalities, many also lack knowledge about how best to provide for them. Becoming a parent is usually a welcomed event, but in some cases, parents' lives are fraught with problems and uncertainty regarding their ability to ensure their child's physical, emotional, or economic well-being (Breiner, Ford, Gadsden, 2016). Parenting knowledge, attitudes, and practices are shaped not only by each other but also by a number of contextual factors, including children's characteristics (e.g., gender, temperament); parents' own experiences (e.g., those from their own childhood) and circumstances; expectations learned from others, such as family, friends, and other social networks; and cultural systems (Breiner, Ford, Gadsden, 2016). Parenting is not an obvious part of life, but one of the possibilities from among several life plans. At the same time, requirements posed on parents have increased and changed considerably over the last few decades. They are more and more responsible for the behaviour of children and for their problems occurred during their lives. Due to this fact parents increase their efforts to educate their children. The rights of children are equal to those of their parents. Educational objectives such as obedience and conformity are achieved through open parental behaviour, demonstrating interest in the lives of children. The educational style not based on authority, but on considering the needs of children, requires much more work. Parents constantly seek to find a balance between safety and protection on the one hand, and freedom and autonomy on the other, and to do "everything right" in education. The main priority is "responsible parenting". It includes an expectation of the responsibility of parents for the lives of their children through care and education, and sending them to the world not sooner than when they become able to take care of themselves (Ferstl, 2016).

2.1. Educational Goals Followed by Parents

In the past 50 years, the world has seen a radical transformation, resulting in a shift in the parenting expectations and experiences of those who raise their children (Faircloth, 2013; Hayford, Guzzo, Smock, 2014). Many parents are more mature, have higher educational attainment, and generally have a smaller number of offspring (Hayford, Guzzo, Smock, 2014; Bongaarts, Mensch, Blanc, 2017). The role of education is personal development. Education is an influence on personal development, ensuring one's readiness and ability to achieve one's own progressive self-development. Deriving from this, the objective of education is not a comprehensive personal development and preparation for life, but it is a personal development ensuring that a person is capable of auto-creation in line with and in creative contradiction to the creation of the environment and society (Zelina, 2010). Many different factors influence children's development, and children are influential actors in their own development. Nonetheless, parents unequivocally influence children's development before they are born, contributing to children's biobehavioral patterns that begin early in life - influences that have been found to persist into middle childhood and beyond (Klasen et al., 2015; Matte-Gagné, Harvey, Stack, & Serbin, 2015; Sroufe, 2005). It is generally valid that the behaviour of parents is formed by their objectives and expectations. Parental objectives are a set of principles directing the focus in the education of children and pointing to what needs to be prevented (Spera, 2006). Like parental beliefs, parental objectives present cultural standards and values developed by a particular group in society, which function to provide an optimum regulation of their social life (Goodnow, 2002). The highest priority is on physical survival and health, which prevail over economic self-preservation and the final universal objective of the maximisation of cultural values (such as ethics, religiousness, wealth, intellectual achievements, etc.) (LeVine, 1980). The objectives oriented on the child include empathic objectives, highlighting interest in the child's well-being, as well as objectives relating to socialisation. Self-oriented objectives highlight a desire of parents to make their children behave according to their wishes, while objectives in relationships emphasise the efforts of parents to support balanced family ties. (Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

2.2. Educational Strategies Applied by Parents

Educational strategies applied in education of children are directly affected by parenting styles chosen by parents. This choice is influenced by one's education and memories of their childhood, as well as the level of their knowledge of child development. Family is the fundamental and important structure of the society that has an important role in one's life and in the society. The importance of the family as a social structure is something unmistakable. Although affected by society and peers, children are more influenced by the family. The influence of the family on the child and its roles in the creativity, cultural, social, and moral aspects are very great and important. Correct and balanced relationship between parents and their children is one of the factors influencing both their physical and mental health. Research has shown that interaction between children and parents and how parents communicate with children are considered to be the most important and fundamental factors among the various factors that affect children's fostering and healthy character (Kimble, 2014). Parenting styles can be defined as a set or a system of behaviors that describes the parent and child interactions over a wide range of situations and creates an effective interaction atmosphere (Maher & Komaijani, 2006). Parenting style is a determining and effective factor that plays an important role in children's psychopathology and growth (Seif, 2009). The essence of success is a suitably selected strategy as a certain intended and applied procedure (not algorithm) of achieving intentions and objectives. Strategy frames the process, prevents a diversion from the intention and objective, it affects the content of an action and gives it a specific form. In other words,

every selected strategy brings different outcomes (Kostrub, 2018). Parents are investing resources in their children in anticipation of promoting the children's social, economic, and psychological well-being (Breiner, Ford, Gadsden, 2016). Kalil and DeLeire (2004) describe how children's healthy development can be encouraged through two distinct elements: the offering of material, monetary, social and psychological resources, and the bestowal of love, guidance and warmth. Parenting is bidirectional. Not only do parents and caregivers affect their children, but children influence their parents/primary caregivers as well (Diener, 2022). Parenting is multidimensional. To respond to the varied needs of their children, parents must develop both depth and breadth of knowledge, ranging from being aware of developmental milestones and norms that help in keeping children safe and healthy to understanding the role of professionals (e.g., educators, child care workers, health care providers, social workers) and social systems (e.g., institutions, laws, policies) that interact with families and support parenting (Breiner, Ford, Gadsden, 2016). Authors further explicate that having more knowledge of child development is directly associated with the method of parents' interaction with children and their behaviour. The more knowledge parents have, the more positive is their communication with their children and more adequate are their expectations during different stages of child development. Many unsuitable disciplinary practices are thus avoided. A central issue in parenting is the degree to which parents take children's viewpoints and experiences into account. Such an orientation has been discussed in the literature using a variety of constructs that stem from different traditions, are studied in different age groups, assessed in different ways, and linked with various aspects of child development. Yet, findings using each suggest that when parents attempt to understand their children's experiences and take them into account in their parenting, child development, learning, and well-being are facilitated (Joussemet & Grolnick, 2022). Educational strategies undergo transformation in modern families. Parents differentiate between their own positive and negative childhood experience, while trying to apply the positive experience and prevent the negative experience. Respect for the child's personality by their parents is a strategy that is prioritised by contemporary parents in their education (their childhood experience does not always include respect for their own "child's personality"). Opinions of contemporary parents differ in what they respect in their child's behaviour, and what they do not consider as appropriate to respect. Whether parents believe that rules and boundaries need to be applied, whether they are sufficiently determined and strong to be consistent, or they do not consider the rules, boundaries and consistent approach as fundamental (Tománková, Kostrub, 2018). Parents who interact with their young children by responding appropriately and consistently to their needs, particularly during hard times, can help to form a secure attachment relationship. This type of bond provides young children with a solid foundation for healthy development. It can help them to create strong peer relationships and learn how to empathize with others (Bowlby, 1978; Chen et al., 2012; Holmes, 2006; Main, Cassidy, 1988; Murphy, Laible, 2013). Technology has introduced further changes to family life, modifying the way family members interact. In the digital era, parents can seek and exchange support and information more easily than ever (Radey, Randolph, 2009). Nevertheless, as the use of digital platforms, chat groups, and other less-controlled channels rises among parents, fresh problems appear. Parents, particularly those with low self-confidence, have always been susceptible to deceit and mistruths, but the "complexity and scale of information pollution in our digitally-connected world presents an unprecedented challenge" (Wardle, Derakhshan, 2017).

3. Methodology

We choose to use qualitative research for our study in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of research phenomenon. Subjects are able to share their experiences, opinions and thoughts without any restrictions. Qualitative methods provide interactive approach to research, allowing us to pursue responses given by subjects in the moment, leading to meaningful dialogue about the topic. Qualitative research involves a systematic inquiry into social phenomena within their natural settings. This inquiry can involve how people perceive their lives, how people and/or groups act, how organisations operate, and how interactions form relationships. Researchers are the primary source of data collection in this type of research, and they explore the reasons behind events, what transpires, and what the events signify to those who are studied (Bogdan, Biklen, 2006). Qualitative research is focused on understanding reality, which is composed of particular aspects as a result of historical construction, of the perspective of logic (realising) and experiences of its protagonists, or more precisely, of internal (subjective) perspective of a subject/subject (Kostrub, 2016).

3.1. Research Problem

We defined the problem as an identification of the prevailing educational practices of parents and grandparents in interaction with their children and grandchildren. We based the formulation of the research problem on a long-term repeatedly observed educational practices of parents and grandparents, while defining the forming components of considerations regarding education. This repeated behaviour is reflected in an application of specific educational methods, in drawing from particular sources on education and in particular interpretation of the significance of education. The educational behaviour of parents and grandparents indicates that their behaviour in interaction with children is often improvised. They have nothing to rely on in their selection of educational strategies, hence they experiment and constantly seek for acute solutions, hoping that they are suitable and beneficial to children in the long term. Repeating educational practices of parents and grandparents especially include the use of intuition, and exemplification, which they consider as the most effective educational method. Our research aims at uncovering the roots of such educational behaviour of parents and grandparents, and which of the key interpretive links are present.

3.2. Research Objectives

Our research objectives are to explore and interpret the prevailing opinions of parents and grandparents in relation to the education of their children and grandchildren. At the same time, we seek to identify the key moments affecting their conscious decision-making and behaviour relating to their beliefs as parents and grandparents.

3.3. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in the conducted qualitative study. What do parents and grandparents refer to in their considerations relating to educational practices? Which beliefs affect the educational practices of subjects? Which educational strategies do parents apply in education?

3.4. Research Priority and Plan

Research priority: In cooperation with the subjects of the research to interpret how they define their approach to the significance of education, which educational methods they consider as effective and what influences their considerations relating to parental issues.

Research plan: To conduct the first part of the research by research probes with the subjects of the research in the form of an unstructured and subsequently a semi-structured interview in an extent enabling an induction and interpretation of the effects of one's education. The objective of the first research phase (January 2022) was to select suitable subjects and data collection. The second phase of the research (February - July 2022) was focused on the elaboration of research material. Recordings obtained during the interviews were transcribed, and an analysis of iterative character and categorisation were subsequently conducted, as well as the saturation of separate categories was examined. In the third phase of the research (August 2022) a systematic data analysis and an examination of relations between codes were conducted. The fourth phase of the research (September 2022) was focused on theory construction on the basis of the interpreted research material, and on framing the research study.

3.5. Time Frame of the Research and Subjects of the Research

We have dealt with the research of this issue since July 2021, and the presented research was conducted from January 2022 to September 2022. The subjects of our research are parents of 0 - 6 year-old children, and grandparents of 0 - 6 year-old grandchildren. Eleven parents and grandparents were involved in the research. The choice of subjects was purposeful. All subjects of the research were addressed in advance by the researchers to participate in the research and they expressed their voluntariness and willingness to participate. The subjects of the research were granted anonymity in line with the research ethics. Characteristics of the subjects of the research: 11 parents and grandparents of 1 - 6 year-old children.

3.6. Course and Conditions of the Research

The first phase of the research was focused on a collection of research material from parents and grandparents. Unstructured interviews were conducted personally as well as using digital technology such as Teams and Facebook messenger programmes. Distance semi-structured interviews, conducted using solely digital technology, followed. Some interviews were repeated, as we needed to verify the correctness of our understanding. During these interviews we were sometimes disturbed by children, who needed their parents' attention for a certain time. The majority of interviews was recorded by a dictating machine, one interview was recorded in a notebook. In such cases, continuity of the ideas of the subject was ensured by reminding them of their last ideas so that the subjects could smoothly follow up on their own ideas and that the validity of the given interview was ensured. The analysis of the research material resulted in a gradual creation of categories and their growing saturation. A complete picture was gradually created, on the basis of which we could draft a concept map and subsequently construct theory.

3.7. Research Tools and Methods

Unstructured interview was applied as a research tool in our research. We used the concept of an interview without any established structure, in which questions are not even determined in advance, therefore a lack of structure enables the researcher to ask questions that come to their minds in the given moment and are relevant to the given interview. Unstructured interview encourages a mature and open type of communication. It also develops a personal sense of responsibility of the subject, who may reveal relevant information, which might be forgotten under stress, in a relaxed atmosphere. Unstructured interview also provides a possibility to deviate from a topic, share too much unrelated information, which may lead to an exclusion of specific information which we need to know. Unstructured interviews resemble natural

communication among people more. The interviewer can return to unclear or interesting points in a statement of the person interviewed. The advantage of non-standardised interviews is especially the fact that it enables an easier establishment of contact between the interviewer and the person interviewed, which can result in their more immediate and sincere expression (Chráska, 2016). Technology used today enables making audio-visual records, process them and keep them. This possibility unburdens the researcher from remembering every element, entity or factor, which requires an enormous engagement of the researcher's cognition with regard to remaining attentive in a long-term horizon and in the full dynamics of actions of the subjects of the research. Its advantages include a possibility of their repeated use, technological sophistication, a possibility to make copies, etc. (Kostrub, 2016). Methods of audio records collection using a dictating machine were used for audio track recordings. Audio records were repeatedly played and statements of the subjects were consequently recorded.

3.8. Elaboration of Research Material

Substantial amount of research material was elaborated using the method of constant comparison, which followed the saturation of identified categories in terms of the following:

1. comparison of events applicable to a certain category,
2. integration of categories and their characteristics,
3. definition of theory,
4. development of theory (Holstein, Gubrium, 2008).

Verbatim transcripts were created already after the first interviews. The researcher should choose a method of interview transcription which they prefer and which provides them sufficient orientation in the text. Verbatim transcripts of interviews help visualise the data sought, and subsequently enable their analysis applying the open coding technique, i.e. a text is divided into fragments - indicators, which are attributed a more general meaning, and codes are created.

Our interpretation of research material was inspired by a study of J. Attrid Stirling and it included three analytical stages. The first analytical stage was focused on text reduction and segmentation:

1. Coding of research material (Proposal of a coding framework, text segmentation using a coding framework).
2. Identification of themes (Abstraction of themes from the segments of coded text, theme specification).
3. Construction of thematic networks (Arrangement of themes, selection of fundamental themes, identification of a global theme, illustration of a cross-linked theme, verification and specification of a theme).

Text review was carried out in the second analytical stage:

4. Description and exploration of text.
5. Summary of thematic network.

Integration and exploration were made in the third analytical stage:

6. Interpretation of samples.

Indicators and codes are continuously compared, the same or similar meaning is sought among indicators, indicators are assigned to the existing codes, and new codes are created. The use of constant comparison necessitates a continuous and constant comparison of data, and a search for common and different qualities among them. The created codes are grouped according to common features and qualities, and categories and their sub-categories are created. The

accumulation of data from other interviews leads to constant comparison, classification and changes in the groups of codes, and to the formulation or reformulation of categories (Sprod, 2007). Strategy using the method of constant comparison was applied in the analysis and interpretation of the research material. We monitored factors that appeared serious to us. With such collected and analysed data we were capable of reacting to formulated problems. We used a systematic and critical reflection of the entire research process, aiming at contrasting it to theory on the one hand, and to practical outcomes on the other. An actual and rigorous process of understanding was concerned, in which we verified adequacy between the subject of the research and our thinking as researchers (Kostrub, 2016). The application of the constant comparison strategy is not to seek verification, but theory production. The scope and saturation of information included in a text is monitored, until the saturation level has been achieved (Kolb, 2012). W. J. Creswell (1998) presents the process of information retrieval as a “zig-zag” process, or manoeuvring, when the research field is entered, data are obtained and analysed, which is followed by a repeated entry in the research field, where data are obtained and analysed, etc. Manoeuvring was used during our research first in the field with the subjects of the research, and subsequently in analysing the research material. We were working with the gradually obtained data until a coherent set that made ultimate sense to us was created.

4. Findings

Detailed analysis of the research material (text) provided a basis for an identification of the given relevant categories, which were classified into the following nine primary categories:

1. Educational methods
2. Source of information on education
3. Interpretation of term education
4. When does education start?
5. Destructive influence
6. Educational concerns
7. Educational achievements
8. Educational challenges
9. Educational objective

The following Table 1 shows the saturation of separate categories and Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 outline four most represented categories and interpretations of their essence by the subjects of the research.

Table 1.

Saturation of separate categories

Order of appearance	Official name	CODE	Saturation
3.	Interpretation of term education	ITE	14
2.	Source of information on education	SIE	26
1.	Educational methods	EM	50
6.	Educational concerns	EC	7
6.	Educational challenges	ECh	7
7.	Educational achievements	EA	5
4.	When does education start?	WES	10
5.	Destructive influence	DI	8
8.	Educational objective	EO	1

Table 2.

Category Educational methods

Essence of the category	Saturation
EXEMPLIFICATION (Parents as an example)	13
DIGITAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION	6
EDUCATION WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS (Parents do not say “no” to children)	4
REGULATION (Setting of boundaries, setting of educational trends)	4
CONSISTENCY	3
EXPLICATION (Explaining)	3
Leading to independence	2
Motivation	2
Ignorance	2
Distraction	2
Physical punishments	2
Repetition	1
Involvement in activities	1
Empathy	1

Table 3.

Category Source of information on education

Essence of the category	Saturation
LITERATURE AND INTERNET SOURCES (Books on education and supporting on-line articles)	8
SEMINARS FOCUSED ON PEDAGOGY AND OWN STUDY (different on-line and off-line trainings for parents and studies of pedagogy)	6
EXAMPLE OF ONE’S PARENTS (Reflection of the experienced education)	5
INTUITION (Intuitive approaches and seeking one’s own journey)	3
OBSERVATION (Observation of the educational practices of other parents)	3
Advice provided by family and friends	2

Table 4.

Category Interpretation of term education

Essence of the category	Saturation
REGULATION (Setting of boundaries and rules)	6
EFFECTS (Direct and indirect effects on the child)	3
<u>Child’s perception - relationship between the communicator and the receiver</u> (Child’s perception of its environment)	2
Exemplification (Example of one’s parents)	2
Cooperation of parents (Cooperation between parents)	1
Mission	1
Education as a test and a challenge of sources	1
Systematic approach and regularity	1

Table 5.

Category When does education start?

Essence of the category	Saturation
PERIOD BEFORE CONCEPTION (By the education received by parents)	6
AT THE TIME OF BIRTH	6
By conception (During pregnancy)	1
In the period from the child’s five to six months	1

4.1. Concept Map, Phenomenon and Their Interpretation

This part of the study presents answers to the first, second and third research questions: “What do parents and grandparents refer to in their considerations relating to educational practices? Which beliefs affect the educational practices of subjects? Which educational strategies do parents apply in education?” To interpret our findings, the concept map was used (Figure 1), which is an outcome of the facts collected from the subjects of the research, who include parents and grandparents of 0 - 6-year-old children.

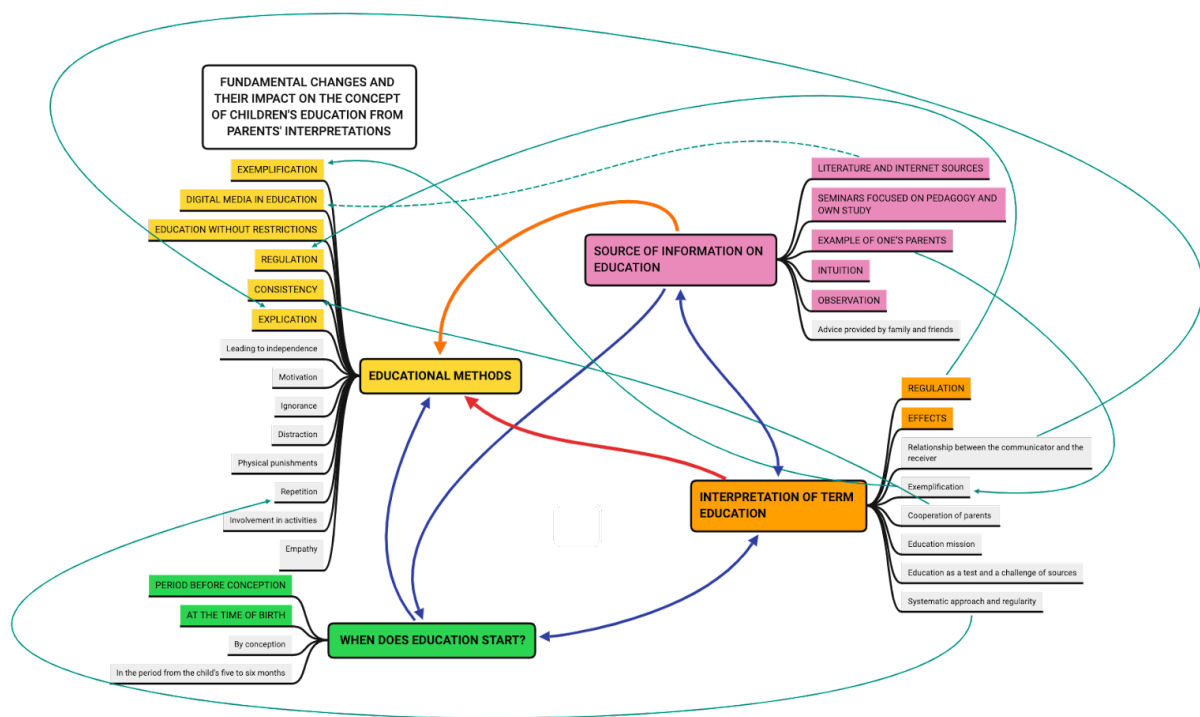


Figure 1. Concept map showing interrelationships between categories

The following uncovered relations and causalities are presented on the basis of our research findings: If parents do not rely on knowledge on education resulting from previous experience their education is improvised, applying intuition, advice from family members, partner or friends, and drawing information from articles on education. If parents cannot base their education on knowledge relating to education or if they did not have a parenting model they use empathy and education without restrictions. If parents use motivation, regulation and exemplification in their education these root directly from the identified sources of educational methods. If parents had obtained broader and more valuable knowledge on education they might use several suitable educational methods. If parents had more information on education they could rely on the fact that their education has a desired effect on children. If parents educate children on the basis of previous experience they consider attended seminars, internet sources, literature on education, examples of their parents from their own childhood, and observation of other parents as their guiding force. If parents base their selection of educational methods on a model of their own parents these provide both a positive and a negative example. If parents use digital technology in education it is used in two ways. If they appear in a demanding educational situation digital technology is used as a “picture babysitter”. If parents did not use digital technology in tense situations they would apply more drastic educational methods to the child.

The interpretation of research findings was focused on the prevailing, most saturated categories. On the basis of integration of the categories and their qualities we uncovered links that helped us understand the interpreted phenomenon.

In category When does education start, the subjects of the research most frequently indicated the period before conception and the time of birth as the beginning of child's education: *"Definitely immediately after birth..."; "Child is educated from its birth."; "I think that from the birth."; "Certainly immediately after birth...". "Already when we meet our partner and we seriously consider becoming parents..."; "Education starts much sooner than before the arrival of the child, or even before it is in the belly."; "In my opinion from the birth."; "And maybe even before the birth..."; "I don't know, it might sound strange, but I think that it starts mentally in the parents' minds and that it should start before conception."* The period which the subjects of the research consider as the beginning of education is directly associated with their interpretation of term education.

The essence of the most frequently indicated sub-category in the category of interpretation of term education is regulation of behaviour, which entails mainly the educational method of boundary setting. This method was considered as one of the most effective by the subjects of the research.

The subjects of the research perceive education as an implementation of rules and a setting of boundaries: *"... to set boundaries to the child."; "To have certain boundaries and stick to them."; "That boundaries need to be firmly set to children."; "Education means that we need to set boundaries to children..."; "Establishment of some rules to the child..."*. The essence of sub-category regulation of behaviour as an educational method was mainly a safe zone in which they can act in the form of boundary setting: *"We show him the direction."; "You show the child and teach them your principles, or what they can and cannot do, what they should deal with..."; "Basically, that I guide them, that you can do this, but you cannot do that."; "They need to be showed that enough is enough."*

The subjects of the research interpret education also as having a direct and indirect influence on the child: *"... the approach to communication with the child."; "It includes any influence, if I take into account the parent-child relationship, it is every single thing."; "To me education means a possibility to pass my knowledge and know-how onto my children..."*

Sub-category relationship between the communicator and the receiver suggests that the subjects of the research consider the child's perception of their environment, i.e. communication with environment, to be one of the perceptions of term education: *"Everything that a child sees or hears."; "... and that the child perceives what is going on with them..."*. The subjects of the research consider explication as a part of their educational influence: *"When he does something wrong he is explained why he should not do it."; "... explains, distracts attention to solve it."; "And I think that everything can be solved by a nice explanation."*

The subjects of the research highlight the importance of the integrity of education, which is ensured by cooperation between teachers and parents: *"... but the key is how a man and a woman cooperate."*. Consistent approach is an essential part of educational influence: *"... the same rule always applies, because if he found out that I sometimes don't stick to rules under certain circumstances, he would eat me."; "... and never stop sticking to rules."; "And it is important to be consistent."*

The subjects of the research perceive education as a systematic approach, predictability and regularity, which they consider as key in the education of their children: *"...well, when something is done regularly and systematically..."*. Repetition is also used as an educational method: *"That he always has the same table setting, that he always eats at his place..."*

Category interpretation of term education provided us the subjects' view of the interpretation of the meaning of education. Answers to question "What do you consider as education?" helped us categorise individual interpretations. Importance of the interpretation of term education showed a direct link to the sources of information in education and to educational methods such as exemplification, as stated below. Direct interconnection with the example of one's parents as well as with exemplification as the most saturated educational method was identified.

The majority of subjects considers literature and internet sources as the best quality, most trustworthy and best available sources of information on education. They most frequently draw from books and supporting on-line articles: *"I only have here what I have seen, what I have read..."*; *"But you have read that this..."*; *"I have made much effort to draw information from that book"*; *"and there were books Our Child, where I read about each period of age, what is good and what isn't, and then 400 Pieces of Advice in the Education of Dogs, which was my guiding force..."*; *"And supporting articles..."*; *"I drew information mainly from books"*. They rely on digital media in their educational methods: *"...I will turn on the telly for you and I can sit down for a while..."*; *"I turn on the TV for the child, the child is watching and I am sitting and doing my work..."*; *"We watch it together, while cuddling..."*. The subjects of the research use digital media in education in two ways. On the one hand, they serve as "picture babysitters", when they are used in demanding educational situations as a substitute for other educational methods: *"For example, let me be now, I will turn on the telly for you..."*; *"...the child is watching and I am sitting and doing my work..."*. On the other hand, the use of digital technology proved to be a prevention from applying more drastic educational methods by the subjects of the research: *"Yet it is true that if one does not use it from time to time, god knows how they would further ruin the child. They might yell at the child or speak to it with anger..."*; *"We play it every evening for her, as nothing calms her down so much before sleep..."*. The subjects of the research consider the example of their own parents as one of the significant sources of information on education in two ways. Parents of the subjects provide subjects with a positive example in the education of their children: *"And when I look back at my Mum and Dad, I just see myself in them. I know that they gave me this, because I feel I am 80 % of my Mum..."*; *"But they surely taught me this, I certainly did not get it just like that..."*; *"It was an example of my Mum..."*. Some subjects consider their parents as a negative example in their education, and they do not follow such example: *"We make mistakes in education, because mistakes were made in our parents' education..."*; *"This model often comes from the past..."*; *"But I think this happens because our parents taught us to set a face to a certain extent..."*; *"...my Mum was too friendly and we missed some boundaries and a guidance to independence. I later paid for it..."*.

The subjects of the research understand education as exemplification: *"...so that he has an example..."*; *"The main thing is to be an example to the child..."*. And they fully realise that their children perceive them as their models and they believe it is important to be their example: *"My behaviour is my tool..."*; *"I do myself what I later want from my child..."*; *"she was a guide, who is an example to him proving that I live what I declare..."*; *"And I try to be an example..."*; *"...so that he sees what we do and so..."*; *"Always when we are in contact with him he adopts patterns of behaviour from us..."*; *"...we will in vain require order in their room, if our own room is messy and in chaos. Or we will hardly make them read, if they have never seen us with a book in our hands..."*.

The subjects of the research consider the knowledge obtained from educational seminars, schools providing educational studies and their own study of literature and internet sources as a valuable source of information: *"...what I have read..."*; *"Well, you have read that this... and this and others do this..."*; *"I also read many articles on how to do it..."*; *"I had a book..."*; *"I tried a lot to draw information from that book..."*; *"I studied pedagogy, so from there, and in*

addition there were books Our Child, where I read about each period of age, what is good and what isn't, and then 400 Pieces of Advice in the Education of Dogs, which was my guiding force..."; "And supporting articles." The subjects of the research consider their intuition in association with parental educational practices as one of the possible sources of information on education. In their educational methods they repeatedly rely on their instinctive parenting abilities: *"I sometimes also use intuition..."; "I can say that I am taking my own path."; "...I tried to involve intuition."* The subjects of the research draw information on education also from their own observation of the educational practices of other parents in interaction with children: *"When I was younger I did not like the behaviour of some mothers to their children."; "I only have here what I have seen..."; "...and have you heard that this..."*.

Educational method education without restrictions was explained by the subjects of the research as a useful tool also in handling conflict situations: *"Our education is free, we do not restrict."; "I do not say no, you mustn't."; "...and I do not say no, no no..."; "Now I much prefer no restrictions."*

In their interaction with children the subjects of the research also use the following educational methods: leading to independence, motivation, ignorance, distraction, physical punishments, involvement in activities, and empathy.

Links between educational methods applied and discussed by the subjects, and between the sources of information on education (Table 6) were identified within the elaboration of the research material.

Table 6.
Identified links between methods and sources of information

Origin of identified educational methods	Educational methods	Saturation
Education based on decision/past experience (seminars, internet, literature, parents' example, observation of other parents)	Motivation	3
	Regulation	3
	Exemplification	2
Education without influencing models and without a clear specification of educational principles	Empathy	2
	Education without restrictions	1
Own educational road created in the present moment on the basis of intuition, advice from family, friends or a partner, reading articles	-	-

Examination of the opinions and beliefs of the subjects of the research uncovered that many of them actually experiment with themselves in the position of parents, and thus they also experiment with the approach to education that they provide to children. The subjects of the research lacking a support of knowledge on education from previous experience create their own educational path directly in the present educational moment, most frequently using their own intuition, advice from their family members, partner or friends, and reading articles. The subjects of the research stumble in the issue of education, hoping that their educational efforts will lead to desired results. On the other hand, the educational methods of motivation, regulation and exemplification root directly from the identified sources of educational methods. The subjects of the research educate children on the basis of their decision/past experience, while considering attended seminars, internet sources, literature on education, examples of their parents from their own childhood, and observation of other parents as their guiding force.

The subjects of the research who cannot base their education on knowledge relating to education from the past or who did not have a parenting model in their family use empathy and education without restrictions as educational methods in the education of their own children.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of the research was to investigate and interpret the opinions of parents and grandparents regarding education, which prevail in the education of their children and grandchildren, and to identify the essential moments affecting their conscious decision-making and behaviour relating to their beliefs as parents and grandparents. As researchers, we asked the following questions in our study: What do parents and grandparents refer to in their considerations relating to educational practices? Which beliefs affect the educational practices of subjects? Which educational strategies do parents apply in education? On the basis of interpretations of the subjects of the research we identified the main categories and their sub-categories and resulting concepts and relations, and constructed interpretive links between them.

On the basis of our analytical and interpretive processes the following links between individual identified categories were uncovered. The most important interpretations of links are presented. The subjects of the research consider parental example in behaviour, action, treatment and communication as the crucial part of educational influence on children. Their selection of educational methods is based on an example of their own parents as a source of information on education in two ways. They are a positive example, which they can rely on in their education, as well as they are a negative example, when parents are not perceived as a model. A link was identified between insufficient parental example and a selection of educational methods. The subjects of the research experiment in their own education without sufficient support and knowledge of education from previous experience. They primarily use intuition, advice from family members, a partner or friends, relying on reading articles from internet sources. They consider intuition and education without restrictions as the most effective educational methods. The subjects of the research educating children on the basis of a decision and past experience consider motivation, regulation and exemplification as the most effective educational methods. In their view, these create the basis of effective educational methods, leading children to correct/desired behaviour.

Literature and internet sources are considered as the most relevant source of information on education by the subjects of the research, and digital media are considered as a part of their educational methods. They use it as so called “picture babysitters”, as they substitute the attention of parents and other educational methods necessitating an active participation of a parent. Also, they consider and use them as a prevention from applying more drastic educational methods to the child. This needs to be understood as a diversion from an active participation of a parent in educational interaction between the parent and the child. During the research, processing and categorisation of collected data, category “When does education start?” was created. On the basis of our findings we established the fact that the subjects of the research consider the beginning of education with regard to their own interpretation of term education. They consider the period before conception or the time of birth as the beginning of education, as they see it as the initial personal parental input in the child’s education.

These links are emphasised, as they reflect actual educational practices of parents and grandparents, and draw our attention on considering which tools are capable of influencing the selection and the quality of sources of education for parents. At the same time, we perceive the necessity to focus on educational methods applied by parents, and on the means and methods how we may guide their path from experimenting in education to a suitable and purposeful, conscious and more responsible selection of educational methods. Further research will also focus on how we may influence the selection of suitable educational strategies and methods of parents and grandparents in escalated educational situations.

References

- Attride Stirling, J. (2001). *Thematic networks an analytic tool for qualitative research*. SAGE Publications, London: Thousand Oaks. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410100100307>
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2006). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (5th ed.). Pearson.
- Bongaarts, J., Mensch, B. S., & Blanc, A. K. (2017). Trends in the age at reproductive transitions in the developing world: The role of education. *Population studies*, 71(2), 139–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2017.1291986>
- Bowlby J. (1978). Attachment theory and its therapeutic implications. *Adolescent psychiatry*, 6, 5–33.
- Breiner, H., Ford, M., & Gadsden, V. L. (2016). *Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8*. National Academies Press. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK402020/>
- Ceka, A., & Murati, R. (2016). The Role of Parents in the Education of Children. *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 7 (No. 5). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1092391.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Diener, M. L. (2022). *The Developing Parent*. Nobaproject. <https://nobaproject.com/modules/the-developing-parent>
- Faircloth, C. (2013). *Militant Lactivism?: Attachment Parenting and Intensive Motherhood in the UK and France*. Berghahn Books, Oxford, UK.
- Forstl, S. B. (2016). *Erziehung – nicht genügend? Österreichische Eltern auf dem Erziehungsprüfstand [Education - not enough? Austrian parents on the educational test]*. Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung an der Universität Wien.
- Goodnow, J. J. (2002). Adding culture to studies of development: Toward changes in procedure and theory. *Human Development*, 45, 237–245. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000064984>
- Hastings, P. D., & Grusec, J. E. (1998). Parenting goals as organizers of responses to parent–child disagreement. *Developmental Psychology*, 34, 465–479. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.34.3.465>
- Hayford, S. R., Guzzo, K., & Smock, P. (2014). The Decoupling of Marriage and Parenthood? Trends in the Timing of Marital First Births, 1945–2002. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12114>
- Holmes, J. (2006). *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Holstein, A. J., & Gubrium, F. J. (2008). *Handbook of Constructionist Research*. New York/London: The Guilford Press.
- Holden, G. W. (2015). *Parenting- A dynamic perspective*. Sage.
- Chen, F.M., Lin, H.S. & Li, C.H. (2012). The Role of Emotion in Parent-Child Relationships: Children's Emotionality, Maternal Meta-Emotion, and Children's Attachment Security. 403–410. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-011-9491-y>
- Chráska, M. (2016). *Metody pedagogického výzkumu: Základy kvantitativního výzkumu [Pedagogical research methods: Fundamentals of quantitative research]*. Grada.
- Joussemet, M., & Grolnick, W. (2022, January 1). Parental consideration of children's

- experiences: A critical review of parenting constructs. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12467>
- Kalil, A., & DeLeire, T. (2004). *Family Investments in Children: Resources and Parenting Behaviors That Promote Success*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410610874>
- Kimble, A. B. (2014). *The parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire: a reconceptualization and validation*. Oklahoma State University.
- Klasen, F., Otto, C., Kriston, L., Patalay, P., Schlack, R., Ravens-Sieberer, U., & BELLA study group (2015). Risk and protective factors for the development of depressive symptoms in children and adolescents: results of the longitudinal BELLA study. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, 24(6), 695–703. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-014-0637-5>
- Kolb, S. M. (2012). Grounded Theory and the Constant Comparative Method: Valid Research Strategies for Educators. *Scholarlink Research Institute Journals*.
- Kostrub, D. (2018). *Vychovávanie a starostlivosť o deti do troch rokov veku [Education and care of children up to three years of age]*. Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave.
- Kostrub, D. (2016). *Základy kvalitatívnej metodológie [Basics of qualitative methodology]*. Bratislava, Slovensko: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave.
- LeVine, R. A. (1980). A cross-cultural perspective on parenting. *Parenting in a Multicultural Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2011.585568>
- Maher, F., & Komaijani, M. (2006). Parenting practices and adolescent conduct disorder in adolescents compared to normal. *Journal of Khorasegan Branch*.
- Main, M., & Cassidy, J. (1988). Categories of response to reunion with the parent at age 6: Predictable from infant attachment classifications and stable over a 1-month period. *Developmental Psychology*, 24(3), 415–426. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.24.3.415>
- Matte-Gagné, C., Harvey, B., Stack, D. M., & Serbin, L. A. (2015). Contextual Specificity in the Relationship between Maternal Autonomy Support and Children's Socio-emotional Development: A Longitudinal Study from Preschool to Preadolescence. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 44(8), 1528–1541. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0247-z>
- Mireille, J., & Grolnick, W. (2022). Parental consideration of children's experiences: A critical review of parenting constructs. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*.
- Murphy, T. P., & Laible, D. J. (2013). The influence of attachment security on preschool children's empathic concern. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 37(5), 436–440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025413487502>
- Piaček, J., & Kravčík, M. (1999). *Filit - Otvorená filozofická encyklopédia [Filit - Open philosophical encyclopedia]*. Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti. In: <https://dai.fmph.uniba.sk/~filit/fil/fil.html>
- Radey, M., & Randolph, K. A. (2009). Parenting sources: How do parents differ in their efforts to learn about parenting? *Family Relations*, 58(5), 536–548. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40405712>
- Seif, A. A. (2009). *New educational psychology*. Tehran: Loran.
- Spera, C. (2006). Adolescents' perceptions of parental goals, practices, and styles in relation to their motivation and achievement. *Journal of Early Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431606291940>

- Sprod, T. (2007). ‘Nobody really knows’: The structure and analysis of social constructivist whole class discussions. *International Journal of Science Education*, 19, 911–924. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950069970190805>
- Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: a prospective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment & human development*, 7(4), 349–367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730500365928>
- Tománková, M., & Kostrub, D. (2018). *Premiéry, reprízy a omyly na križovatkách alebo stratégie výchovy v súčasnej rodine [Premieres, reruns and mistakes at crossroads or parenting strategies in the current family]*. Rokus.
- Van Damme, N., & Ramaekers, S. (2022). Toddlers as soul workers: a critical take on emotions and well-being in early childhood education. In *Journal Of Philosophy Of Education* (Vol. 56, Issue 1). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12653>
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making Information*. Council of Europe.
- Yuan, S. (2022). The Current Situation of Parents’ Educational Concept of Young Children Under the View of Legal System and the Strategy to Improve It. *Paradigm Academic Press*, Vol. 1(No. 3). <https://doi.org/10.56397/RAE.2022.09.05>
- Zelina, M. (2010). *Teórie výchovy alebo hľadanie dobra [Theories of education or the search for goodness]*. Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo.