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PARENTAL INTRAFAMILIAL ENGAGEMENT IN SUPPORTING CHILD'S LEARNING DURING PRIMARY EDUCATION

Abstract: *Parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting children's learning is an integral part of parental support for children's education and is particularly important for children's academic development during the first years of schooling. The aim of this work was to examine the relationship between, on the one hand, parents' perceptions of their own role in the child's education and their self-assessments of their effectiveness in supporting the child's learning and, on the other hand, parents' self-assessments of intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning during primary education. The results, obtained by surveying parents of primary education students (N=204) in the city of Rijeka using an online questionnaire, suggest that respondents believe that active engagement in their child's education is an important part of their parental role, that they express a high level of self-efficacy for supporting the child's learning and that they often apply various activities to support the child's learning during primary education. The results further indicate that parents who consider their role in their child's education important, as well as parents with a higher level of self-efficacy in supporting their child's learning, are more likely to engage in various activities to support their child's learning during primary education.*

Keywords**:** *parental beliefs about their own role in the child's education; parental beliefs about their own self-efficacy in supporting their child's learning.*

INTRODUCTION

As a result of a series of social changes (which led to fundamental changes in the perception of the child, parenting and parent–child relationship) and growing expectations toward parents in the contemporary culture of parenting (see Lee et al., 2014; Ramaekers & Suissa, 2011; Rosen & Faircloth, 2020), the last few decades have been marked by intensive parental engagement in all aspects of the child's life (Faircloth, 2014), which implies increasingly intensive engagement in the child's education (Goodall, 2017). There is no generally accepted definition for describing parental engagement in a child's education in the theoretical and empirical literature, and there is also a terminological controversy between *parental involvement and parental involvement in the child's education* (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Goodall & Montgomery, 2013). As a starting point for understanding the latter terms, this work relies on Goodall and Montgomery's (2013) interpretation that describes a movement or continuum from parental involvement (with school and schooling) to parental engagement with the child's learning. The first point of the continuum – *involvement with the school*, implies parental involvement in school activities initiated and regulated by teachers/schools. In the middle of the continuum, there is parental *involvement with schooling*, which implies dialog and the exchange of information and knowledge between parents and teachers, but the content and direction of parental activities (e.g., meetings with the teacher, helping the child with homework, helping the child learn the teaching content) are still mainly initiated and directed by the teacher. In the third point of the continuum – *parental engagement with the child's learning*, a stronger parental commitment and action in supporting the child's learning is evident, where the parents, although they may be guided by the information provided by the teacher, independently decide on their actions, and the teacher supports

them. By understanding the third point of the continuum as the parental action that most strongly (compared to the parental action in the previous points of the continuum) contributes to the child's learning and academic success, the authors emphasize the need to change the focus: 1. from the relationship between parents and teachers to the relationship between parents and the child's learning; 2. from achieving school goals and improving the school toward their child's learning and improving the same; and 3. from school as the main location where learning takes place to all other environments where interaction between parents and children takes place (Goodall & Montgomery, 2013). By understanding learning as a verbose process that has no definite beginning, no end, no given places, no time of learning, begins much earlier before the beginning of formal education, and lasts throughout life, Goodall (2017) describes parental engagement with the child's learning as an engagement with a wide sphere of the child's learning, which is not focused only on the acquisition of academic content or on school achievement. As such, parental engagement with a child's learning entails all parent–child interactions focused on learning (Goodall, 2017; Goodall & Montgomery, 2013). Despite the particular importance of the teacher's role in the child's learning at the beginning of schooling (Heatly & Vortruba-Drzal, 2017), the parent remains the primary adult in the child's life, and as Kušević (2020, p. 70) asserts, as *"the agent of the child-rearing intention and activity*", parent is the responsible person who *"guides, supports and creates the preconditions for the self-constituting and self-leading*" of the child in the process of his self-determination. The latter implies that parental guidance and support of the child's learning is an indispensable part of the parent's role and an integral part of the child's education (Goodall, 2016). Relying on the described understanding of the child's learning and the importance of the parent's role in supporting the child's learning, for the purposes of this work, *parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning* is conceptualized as a series of parental activities with the child, inside the family home but also outside it, aimed at creating an environment conducive to learning and the child's acquisition of both academic and life competencies.

The importance of parental engagement in supporting children's learning has been shown by many existing studies showing that various parenting activities with children during the early and preschool years focused on learning (e.g., joint reading activities, talking about science, visiting places with educational content) contribute to the early development of children's mathematical, natural science and language/reading competences and literacy and to better preparedness of children for school (Daucort et al., 2021; Dong et al, 2020; Junge et al., 2021; Lehr et al., 2020; Niklas et al., 2021; Senechal & Young, 2008). Moreover, the results of a series of longitudinal studies point to the long-term (positive) effect of parental support for a child's learning in the early and preschool years, as well as during primary education, on the development of the child's competencies and school achievement up to the high school level (e.g., Lehr et al, 2019; Niklas & Schneider, 2017; Sammons et al., 2015; Šilinskas et al., 2020; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2019). Parental engagement in supporting a child's learning has also been shown to be significant for the development of general cognitive abilities (Lehr et al., 2019; Niklas & Schneider, 2017) and motivation, as well as for the child's socioemotional development (Li et al., 2023; Rose et al., 2018). Despite some longitudinal studies (e.g., Sy et al., 2013; Tóth et al., 2019), the results of which point to continuity (with the adjustment of activities to the child's age) in parental support of the child's learning from the earliest age to secondary school education, the literature is dominated by research focused on parental engagement in supporting the child's learning in early and preschool age (in the domestic context, see examples of Boneta & Ivković Hodžić, 2020 and Boneta et al., 2017). However, because parental support for children's learning has special significance in the process of primary education [1]

[1] The term used to denote the period of primary education in the domestic context is *one teacher education*.

(Boonk et al., 2018; Heatly & Vortruba-Drzal, 2017), as a specific period of intensive development of basic competences important for personal and professional development, this work focuses precisely on this period.

Existing knowledge, furthermore, suggests that parental engagement in a child's education can be stimulated and shaped by the expectations and (in)direct invitations of the teacher/school and the child, as well as by the life context (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005; Walker et al., 2005; Yulianti et al., 2022); however, parents make decisions about self-engagement based on their own sense of commitment and responsibility (Goodall & Montgomery, 2013). According to the settings of the first two levels of the theoretical model by the author Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Walker et al., 2005), one of the key factors that also influences parental engagement in the child's education are parental motivational beliefs. As Hoover-Dempsey et al. noted, parental motivational beliefs are psychological constructs related to parental beliefs about their own role in the child's education (beliefs about what their responsibility is and what they should do in supporting the child during his education) and parental beliefs about their own self-efficacy in supporting the child's academic progress/achievement (beliefs about their own ability to contribute to the child's academic progress and achievement through their involvement). The purpose of this paper is to verify the relevance of the assumption that parental engagement in a child's learning is determined by motivational beliefs in a small sample of parents from the domestic (micro)context. In accordance with the above, the aim of this work is to *examine the relationship between, on the one hand, parental perceptions of their own role in the child's education and their self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning and, on the other hand, parental self-assessment of intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning during primary education.* According to this objective, two null hypotheses were determined: (1) *There is no statistically significant relationship between parents' perception of their own role in supporting their child's education and their self-assessment of intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning during primary education* and (2) *There is no statistically significant relationship between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning and their self-assessment of intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning during primary education.*

METHOD

This research is based on a quantitative approach. The data were collected via an *online* questionnaire (using the LimeSurvey *online* tool) and subjected to quantitative analysis (with the help of the statistical data processing program SPSS[2]). The respondents (N=204) were parents of primary education students in elementary schools in Rijeka district (the central and immediate surroundings of Rijeka city). In three randomly selected schools in Rijeka, the principals were asked (via e-mail communication) to forward the link to the *online* questionnaire for parents to the teachers, who disseminated it to the parents through established communication channels with the parents. During the implementation of the research, care was taken to respect the current standards of research ethics in social research, and in the notice part of the questionnaire, respondents were informed in detail about the purpose and goals, benefits, and risks of participating in the research, and the voluntary nature of participation and guaranteed anonymity were emphasized.

The *online* questionnaire contained a total of 66 questions, grouped within four separate units: *socio-demographic characteristics; parental perception of their own role in supporting the child's education (J1 – J14); parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (K1 – K14)* and *parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning (L1 – L29).* Parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning in the context of this work referred to supporting the development of the child's academic, i.e. language/reading (L1 – L8), mathematical (L9 – L15) and natural science (L16 – L22) and life (L23 – L29) competencies. The items in the instruments

[2] The study used the program Statistics 25.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Il, SAD).

– parental perception of their own role in supporting the child's education and parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning were adapted and adjusted (with the author's prior approval) according to existing instruments widely applied by relevant authors on the subject (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Sheldon & Epstein, 2007). The items in the instrument parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning were constructed by the author of the paper, relying on theoretical and empirical literature that indicates the importance of acquiring the aforementioned competencies, while some items were also taken over and adapted according to the instrument by the authors Sheldon and Epstein (2007).

The following statistical analyses were used for data processing: 1. descriptive methods (tabular and graphical representations, percentages, mean values, measures of dispersion and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient); 2. inferential methods (Kolmogorov-Smirnov distribution normality test, chi-square test, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test) and 3. multivariate methods (reliability analysis). Conclusions about differences and associations between variables were made at the usual significance level of 0.05, i. e. with a confidence of 95%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of the interview covered the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. The questionnaire was mostly completed by mothers (94%). The small number of fathers in the research, which is also considered one of the main limitations of this research, may be an important indicator of the greater tendency of women to participate in the research, i. e. their greater tendency towards self-discovery (Dindia & Allen, 1992) or it can be considered a reflection of the still present traditional ideologies about the mother as the more engaged gender of parenting (in this case, in the context of the child's education). The age of the respondents varied between 24 and 53 years, the average was 38.1 years, the median and mode are 38 years. The standard deviation is 4.93 years, so the coefficient of variation is lower (13%). According to the level of education, 56% of respondents completed high school, 39% of respondents completed high school or college, 4% had a master's degree or doctorate (4%), and 1% of respondents completed elementary school. The small number of respondents who completed primary education could be attributed to a general decrease in the share of the population with primary education. Regarding employment status, 75% of respondents are employed full-time, 18% of respondents are unemployed, 3% of respondents are employed part-time, while 3% of respondents belong to the "other" group (upbringing mothers, mothers on maternity leave, owners craft). Regarding family structure, 75% of respondents live in a two-parent family, 9% of participants in a single-parent family (single or divorced parents), and 16% of participants in an extended family (one or more adult members of the extended family live in the household). The sample includes respondents with two children in the family (55%), with one child (28%), with three children (16%) and more than three children in the family (1%). The economic status of the family is estimated by 83% of respondents to be equal to that of most families, and the remaining 17% of respondents estimate the economic status of the family to be better than most families, i. e. above average (the sample does not include parents who estimate the economic status of the family to be worse than most families, i. e. below average). Regarding the gender of the child and the class the child attends, there are 48% of parents of boys and 52% of parents of girls, i. e. 23% of parents of first-grade students, 33% of parents of second-grade students, 27% of parents of third-grade students, and 7% of parents of fourth-grade primary school students.

Within the remaining three parts of the questionnaire (a total of 57 questions), a series of statements were presented to which parents responded with a greater or lesser degree of agreement on a Likert scale. At the same time, for the first two sets of questions (parental perception of their own role in supporting the child's education and parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning), respondents expressed their agreement with the statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = I do not agree at all, 2 = I do not agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = mostly agree, 5 = completely agree). In the third part of the questionnaire (parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's

learning), parents estimated the frequency of application of individual activities with the child on a scale with five degrees of frequency quantifier (1 = never, 2. very rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often). Thus, the answers to all questions in these three units are expressed on the ordinal measurement scale to which the specified rank of values from 1 to 5 are associated. As it is assumed that the differences between these values are very similar, this measurement scale can conditionally be considered an interval. Thus, based on the above values, it was possible to calculate the mean values (as a rule, it is an arithmetic mean) and dispersion measures (standard deviation and coefficient of variation). The following three tables (1, 2 and 3) present the acceptability of the parents' claims based on the mentioned descriptive indicators.

Parents most often rated their own parental role in their child's education as very important, since they have chosen the rating "completely agree" for 12 out of a total of 14 statements. The exception was only two statements (J6 and J7), where the highest frequency is around the answer "I agree". A more precise picture of parents' agreement with certain statements related to the understanding of their own role in the child's education is provided by the descriptive indicators presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of descriptive statistical analysis for statements about parental perception of their own role in the child's education

I believe it is my parenting role and responsibility to...	Number of respondents	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
J1) ensure that the child studies for school.	204	4.32	0.790	18
J2) follow the child's work at school with interest.	204	4.50	0.600	13
J3) teach my child to appreciate work and learning in school.	204	4.56	0.554	12
J4) contact the teacher as soon as a problem arises in the child's learning.	204	4.61	0.518	
J5) contact the teacher as soon as a problem arises in the child's learning.	204	4.00	0.978	24
J6) check to see if the child has adopted the content processed at school.	204	4.33	0.678	16
J7) teach my child how to use dictionaries, encyclopedias and other educational materials	204	4.25	0.708	17
J8) follow and inform myself about the child's progress in school.	204	4.58	0.523	11
J9) contact the teacher when I notice that the child has some problems at school.	204	4.39	0.711	16
J10) help the child to understand his homework.	204	4.44	0.689	16
J11) notice if the child has problems with learning at school.	204	4.47	0.631	14
J12) talk to the child about the day spent at school.	204	4.57	0.516	11
J13) explain to the child school assignments that are difficult for him.	204	4.46	0.711	16
J14) make sure every day that the child does his homework.	204	4.42	0.768	17

As Table 1 shows, the differences between the average values for the mentioned statements were relatively small since the arithmetic means were between 4.00 and 4.58. The lowest average value is for statement J5, and the highest is for statement J8. Parents were quite homogeneous in their unique attitudes since the coefficients of variation ranged between 11% and 24%. At the same time, it should be noted that the perceptions of the roles of parents of different genders did not differ significantly[3] (p

[3] To determine whether there are statistically significant differences in: 1. parental perception of one's own role, 2. parental self-assessment of self-efficacy and 3. parental engagement in supporting the child's learning, regarding independent variables

= 0.216). Male respondents perceived their own role as less important than did female respondents (82.96 < 103.83), but this difference was not statistically significant. The same conclusion about the absence of statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) could be made based on the remaining eight tests related to other independent variables: parents' age, level of education, employment, family structure, number of children in the family, economic circumstances in the family, the class the child attends and the gender of the child. The results showed that respondents, regardless of background, assessed their role in the child's education as very significant, which indicates an active construct (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005) of parental role in the child's education; that is, it suggests that supporting the child's education is integrated into their parental ideologies (Hill, 2022). The obtained results coincide with the results of a recent qualitative study with parents in the domestic context (Ristić Dedić & Jokić, 2024), which also points to the active construction of parental roles among the participants who "generally experienced high levels of responsibility for their children's achievements, development and wellbeing" (p. 578). Since parental beliefs are shaped by social expectations and beliefs (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005), this perception of one's own role in the child's education is a potential reflection of growing social expectations and the growing importance of the parent's role in the child's education, as a normal part of understanding parenting in the domestic context. The latter is confirmed by the abovementioned research (Ristić Dedić & Jokić, 2024), whose results point to parental recognition of the influence of a number of social factors of the domestic context on their construction of their own role in the child's education.

Regarding the self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning, the most common self-assessments were "mostly agree" (with 11 out of a total of 14 statements), "neither agree nor disagree" (two statements: K12 and K14) and "I completely agree" (statement K4). In Table 2, a clearer picture of the acceptance of parents' self-assessments was obtained from the descriptive indicators.

Table 2

Results of a descriptive statistical analysis for the statements for parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning

Parental self-efficacy claims:	Number of respondents	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
K1) I know how to help a child to be successful in school.	204	3.87	0.725	19
K2) I know how to help a child get good grades.	204	3.85	0.741	19
K3) I can motivate a child to do well in school.	204	3.96	0.738	19
K4) I feel good when I help a child learn.	204	4.21	0.842	20
K5) I know how to help a child to learn and learn school material.	204	4.00	0.827	21
K6) My efforts in helping the child learn are successful.	204	4.04	0.777	19
K7) I'm influencing on a child's school achievements.	204	3.74	0.893	24
K8) I know how to communicate effectively with a child about a school day.	204	4.03	0.736	18
K9) I know how to help a child with his homework.	204	4.15	0.741	18
K10) I know enough about the content of the subjects to be able to help the child to do their homework.	204	4.12	0.918	22

(parental gender, age of parents, etc.), nonparametric tests of Mann–Whitney's U test or Kruskal–Wallis H test were performed. The difference is not considered statistically significant if p is > 0.05 while it can be considered statistically significant if p is < 0.05. If an independent variable has two categories, the Mann–Whitney U test is used, and if it has three or more categories, the Kruskal–Wallis Test is used. Both tests use medial values rather than arithmetic mean because they are not representative of mean values in distributions that do not resemble normal distributions.

K11) I know how to oversee a child's homework.	204	4.17	0.726	17
K12) The child's motivation to be successful in school depends on me - the parent.	204	3.37	1.054	31
K13) If I really try, I can reach out to the child, even when he has difficulty understanding something.	204	4.04	0.796	20
K14) Most of a child's success depends on the teacher so my influence is limited.	204	3.05	0.914	30

Table 2 shows that parents rated their effectiveness in supporting their child's learning with relatively high scores, which means that they mostly felt capable of helping their child learn and achieve academic success. Namely, out of a total of 14 statements, only two statements had averages between 3.05 and 3.49, namely, statement K14, with an average of 3.05, and statement K12, with an average of 3.37. The four statements had averages between 3.50 and 3.99, and the eight statements had averages of 4.00 and above. K4 had the highest average, with an average of 4.21. Variability in the endorsement of these 14 parenting efficacy statements is either low or moderate, as the coefficients of variation range between 17% and 30%, meaning that parents are fairly uniform in their self-ratings of efficacy. Based on the results of the U and H tests, we could conclude that the self-assessment of the effectiveness of parents of different sexes differed significantly ($p = 0.045$), i.e., fathers rated this efficacy lower than mothers ($70.85 < 104.65$). Based on the remaining eight tests, which referred to the other independent variables, it was possible to conclude that there were no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$). The relatively high level of self-efficacy in supporting the child's learning among the respondents can potentially be attributed to the fact that this is the first phase of schooling, for which there is a specific focus on the development of the child's basic competencies, and it is more likely that the parents have the competencies and abilities to help the child develop them. The established high level of self-efficacy to support the child's learning could perhaps be attributed to the higher economic status of the respondents, as suggested by the results of individual studies (e.g., Chawkin & Williams, 1989; Drummond & Stipek, 2004), which point to a lower level of self-efficacy in parents with lower economic status. However, due to the lack of respondents with below-average economic status, it is not possible to check whether the existing knowledge of a lower level of self-efficacy for parents of lower economic status is valid or to draw conclusions about differences in the level of self-efficacy between these two groups of parents. The results indicating a lower level of self-efficacy in fathers compared to mothers (although due to the smaller number of fathers, it is not possible to draw relevant conclusions on this issue) can potentially point to what, in the context of promoting the intensive parenting model, some scientists are talking about (e.g., Faircloth, 2014) that fathers, as less competent than mothers, need support and guidance more than mothers. The results of this research, therefore, can serve as an incentive for conducting future research on a more representative sample of fathers in a domestic context, which, in the case of similar insights, could serve as a starting point for thinking and planning effective strategies for empowering fathers on this issue.

Furthermore, regarding the frequency of application of certain activities when supporting the child's learning, the respondents stated that out of a total of 29 activities with the child, they *sometimes* carry out 13 activities, 9 activities *often*, and 7 activities *very often*. A more precise picture of the frequency of carrying out certain activities could be obtained from descriptive indicators, primarily arithmetic averages, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Results of descriptive statistical analysis for parental responses on the frequency of application of individual activities in supporting the child's learning

Type of activity	Number of respondents	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
L1) I read with the child and/or listen to him read.	204	3.96	0.878	22
L2) I encourage the child to read independently.	204	4.37	0.707	16
L3) I encourage the child to visit the school library.	204	3.61	1.038	30
L4) I help the child to improve writing skills (shaping of letters, neatness, transparency, nurturing beautiful handwriting, etc.).	204	4.08	0.982	24
L5) I encourage the child to express himself in writing (to write stories, compositions, songs, plays, jokes, riddles, etc.).	204	3.59	1.021	28
L6) I encourage the child to express himself orally (retelling events and stories, narrating, describing, reciting, etc.).	204	3.97	0.884	22
L7) I explain to the child the meaning of unknown words and/or teach him new words.	204	4.25	0.782	18
L8) I play educational games with the child for the development of language skills (word for word, word or sentence composition games, etc.).	204	3.74	0.962	26
L9) I help the child acquire basic mathematical skills (geometry, calculation, working with numbers, learning numbers).	204	3.86	1.055	27
L10) I conduct activities with the child for the development of money handling skills (familiarity with banknotes and their value, savings, participation in shopping, etc.).	204	3.63	0.941	26
L11) I spend cooking activities with the child (weighing food, reading recipes, measuring the amount of liquid according to the recipe, etc.)	204	3.59	1.086	30
L12) I carry out measurement activities in space with the child (measurement of distance, measurement of height, width, length of objects, space, etc.).	204	2.97	0.992	33

Type of activity	Number of respondents	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
L13) I carry out activities with the child for the development of assessment skills (I encourage the child to assess what is harder, higher, further away; which path is closer; how much will fit in the box, which city is bigger, the playground is bigger, etc.).	204	3.27	0.952	29
L14) I introduce the child to educational mathematical games on a computer / tablet / mobile phone. L15) I play logical, mathematical, strategic board games with the child (chess, dominoes, sinking ships, cards, logical puzzles, etc.). L16) I observe and talk to the child about events and changes in nature.	204	3.12	1.083	35
L15) I play with my child logical, mathematical, strategic board games (chess, dominoes, sinking ships, playing cards, logic puzzles, etc.).	204	3.61	1.023	28

L16) I observe and talk to the child about developments and changes in nature.	204	3.93	0.816	21
L17) I teach my child to connect the content learned in school with real life.	204	4.11	0.774	19
L18) I supply the child with toys for scientific activities (telescope, compass, experiment set, microscope, human skeleton toys, etc.).	204	2.83	1.115	41
L19) I supply my child with educational books (encyclopedias, animal books, atlases, experimental books, etc.).	204	3.47	0.999	29
L20) I conduct experiments with the child (ice formation, water vapor, creation of "volcanoes", etc.).	204	2.64	1.168	44
L21) I encourage the child to research topics in natural sciences.	204	3.00	1.116	37
L22) I try to interest and encourage the child to watch documentaries and other films or shows about science.	204	3.43	1.012	30
L23) I encourage the child in artistic expression, drawing, painting, shaping.	204	4.15	0.911	22
L24) I encourage the child to engage in musical activities, singing, dancing, playing.	204	3.95	1.088	28
L25) I encourage the child to engage in sports activities and/or exercise.	204	4.46	0.638	14
L26) I encourage the child to use technology for learning (projects and papers for school, research for school and/or for their own needs, etc.).	204	3.49	0.990	28
L27) I involve the child in household chores (table preparation, tidying up, shopping, taking care of clothes, taking care of pets, etc.).	204	4.29	0.776	18
L28) I involve the child in family work activities (making a birdhouse, repairs, painting the fence, gardenwork, knitting, etc.)	204	3.80	1.019	27
L29) I involve the child in humanitarian actions (volunteering, collecting donations, helping abandoned animals, helping the needy, etc.).	204	3.26	1.096	34

Table 3 shows that parents rated joint activities with their children relatively frequently since 2/3 of the statements had averages between 3.00 and 3.99 and ¼ of the statements had averages above 4.00. Specifically, out of 29 statements, only three statements had averages below 3.00 (L12, L18 and L20), 19 statements had averages between 3.00 and 3.99, and seven statements had averages of 4.00 and above, of which statements L27, L2 and L25 had the highest averages. The variability in acceptance of these 29 statements about the activities that parents spend with their child is either less (coefficients of variation below 20%) or moderate (coefficients of variation 20% to 44%), which means that parents were moderately homogeneous in their estimates of the frequency of joint activities with the child. Although the results indicating the parents' (relatively frequent) application of the given activities with the child contribute to insight into the way/intensity in which the parent's intrafamilial support for the child's learning is manifested, it should also be considered that the activities covered by this instrument do not necessarily reflect the complexity and the entire range of parental intrafamilial activities supporting the child's learning. Furthermore, based on the results of the U and H tests, we concluded that the engagement of parents of different genders in supporting the child's learning was significantly different ($p = 0.036$), i.e., fathers estimated this engagement to be significantly lower than mothers (69,27 < 104,76). These results coincide with those of previous research (see Kim & Hill, 2015) reporting a greater frequency of mothers' engagement with their children's learning than fathers' engagement. The latter can potentially be attributed to the presence of a traditional gender norm in which the care of the child remained the key task of the mother (Čudina Obradović & Obradović, 2006), as evidenced by the results of individual research in the domestic context (Boneta et al., 2017; Boneta et al., 2020), whose authors conclude that mothers in early and preschool age are more engaged in reading and music activities that, therefore, take place "within the gender pattern of feminization of early childhood" (Boneta et al., 2020, p. 42). However, the often more demanding and less flexible working hours of fathers and the child's potential greater attachment to mothers at a younger age could also be taken into account as potential explanations for the lower intensity of fathers' engagement in various activities supporting the child's learning compared to mothers, which would, however, be reconsidered with more research. Considering the empirical knowledge that points to many benefits resulting from fathers' engagement in children's education (see, e.g., Kim & Hill, 2015), insights about fathers' lower levels of engagement should be examined in a larger sample of fathers in the domestic context and, in the case of their confirmation, to determine strategies to make fathers and mothers aware of the equal importance of their engagement in children's learning and academic progress. Based on the remaining eight tests, which refer to the remaining independent variables, it could be concluded that there were no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

Before presenting the results of the inferential statistical analysis of the data, it was necessary to state the results of the reliability analysis (Reliability Analysis) of three scales (and four subscales) with a total of 57 items. This analysis was performed using the alpha model for individual groups and subgroups of claims, and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of reliability analysis by groups and sub-groups of variables (n = 204)

Nr.	A group of variables (scale or sub-scale)	Associated variables	Number of items	Reliability coefficient α [a)]	Reliability improvement by dropping variables [b)]	Reliability
1	Parental role	J1 - J14	14	0.905	J5 (α = 0,909)	high

2	Parental effectiveness	K1 - K14	14	0.899	K14 (α = 0,920)	good
3	Frequency of activities with the child	L1 - L29	29	0.929	-	high
3a	... in supporting the development of language competences	L1 - L8	8	0.838	-	good
3b	... in supporting the development of mathematical competences	L9 - L15	7	0.815	-	good
3c	... in supporting the development of science competences	L16 - L22	7	0.861	-	good
3d	... in supporting the development of life skills	L23 - L29	7	0.774	-	satisfying

a) A Cronbach's alpha less than 0.6 indicated unsatisfactory reliability, a value greater than 0.7 indicated satisfactory reliability, a value greater than 0.8 indicated good reliability, and a value greater than 0.9 indicated high reliability (according to Turjačanin et al., 2006).
b) If deleting one of the variables increases reliability, then the variable that could be deleted and the reliability coefficient that would be achieved by such deletion are listed here.

The answers to individual statements were well aligned with each other by individual groups of statements since all seven reliability coefficients were above 0.70, despite the smaller number of items on each scale (a total of seven variables for individual subscales)[4] [5]. In addition, it should be noted that the exclusion of the two variables listed in Table 4 would increase the reliability very little, so this exclusion was not performed.

To test and verify the hypotheses set forth in this research, a summary of the answers from each of the three groups and four subgroups of questions (assertions) was made. Thus, a total of seven derived (composite) variables were formed, and a more concise expression suitable for individual statistical tests was obtained. According to the results of testing the normality of the distributions, for two distributions, the use of parametric statistical tests was allowed, while for the remaining five distributions, nonparametric tests were used. This was considered in the subsequent statistical analyses. The following describes the results of the inferential statistical analysis carried out for the purpose of testing the set hypotheses[6]. To test and verify the twofold null hypotheses, several types of tests were conducted, which were divided into two groups. The first group of analyses consists of bivariate correlation coefficients: Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (r_s)[7]. In this research, seven ratio variables, S1, S2, S3, S3a, S3b, S3c and S3d, were identified, and the coefficients listed in Table 5 were obtained.

Table 5

Results of correlation analysis (n = 204) – Spearman's correlation coefficients

Variables	S1	S2	S3	S3a	S3b	S3c	S3d

[4] ". . . Kronbach coefficient alpha values are highly sensitive to the number of items on the scale. . ." (Pallant, 2011., p. 99).
[5] " The general rule is that the more items the test has, the higher the reliability coefficient tends to be." (Turjačanin, 2006, p. 137).
[6] For the purposes of inferential statistical analysis, the respondents were classified (for each of the seven derived variables shown in tables 5 and 6) into three categories according to the quartile value. In the first category there are approximately a quarter of respondents out of 204 and those who least accepted the claims, in the second category there are approximately half of the respondents who accepted the claims in the middle, while in the third category there are approximately a quarter of the respondents who accepted the claims the most (distribution like a normal curve).
[7] The listed nonparametric correlation coefficients can be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) or not ($p > 0.05$). If they are statistically significant, then the determined connection is not only valid in the observed sample but also valid for the entire population (basic set).

S1 Parental perception of their own role in the child's education (J1 - J14)	1	**0.64***	**0.52***	**0.55***	**0.43***	**0.38***	**0.36***
S2 Parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (K1 - K14)		1	**0.45***	**0.47***	**0.45***	**0.29***	**0.28***
S3 Parental self-assessment of engagement in supporting the child's learning (L1 - L29)							
S3a Supporting the development of language competences (L1 - L8)							
S3b Supporting the development of mathematical competences (L9 - L15)							
S3c Supporting the development of science competences (L16-L22)							
S3d Supporting the development of life skills (L23 - L29)							

Note: n = number of pairs of values; * statistically significant up to 5%;

Among the 11 correlation coefficients, 4 showed a weak correlation (those below 0.40), while 7 showed a moderately strong correlation (those above 0.40). All 11 coefficients showed a statistically significant relationship, and all 11 coefficients were positive. The highest coefficient is 0.64, from which respondents who perceived their own role as more "active" (S1), on average, estimated their own effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) to be greater; that is, respondents who perceived their own role as a less active parent (S1), on average, also rated their own effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) to be lower.

The second group of analyses consisted of chi-square tests, the purpose of which was to check whether there was a statistically significant relationship between some nominal variables ($p < 0.05$) or whether there was no such relationship ($p > 0.05$). The data for this analysis were placed in combined tables (contingency tables) with different numbers of columns or rows. In this paper, 10 chi-square tests were performed, the results of which are listed in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Results of chi-square tests for testing the first part of null hypothesis

Variables in contingency table	Format of contingency table	n	χ^2	df	p	Φ or V[a]
S1 Perception of parental role (in 3 groups) S3 Engagement in intrafamily support of the child's learning (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	38.188	4	**<0.001*** **	Φ = 0.43 V = 0.31

S1 Perception of parental role (in 3 groups) S3a Supporting language competence development (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	59.204	4	**<0.001*** **	Φ = 0.54 V = 0.38
S1 Perception of parental role (in 3 groups) S3b Supporting the development of mathematical competences (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	37.900	4	**<0.001*** **	Φ = 0.43 V = 0.31
S1 Perception of parental role (in 3 groups) S3c Supporting the development of natural science competences (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	18.059	4	**0.001*** **	Φ = 0.30 V = 0.21
S1 Perception of parental role (in 3 groups) S3d Supporting the development of life competencies (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	17.544	4	**0.002** **	Φ = 0.29 V = 0.21

Note: n = sample size in the test; χ^2 = chi-square value obtained in the test; df = df = number of degrees of freedom; p = the probability of rejecting the true null hypothesis of no association between variables; * statistical significance up to5%; ** statistical significance up to 1%; *** statistical significance up to 0,1%.

[a]Coefficients Φ and Cramer's V are interpreted as follows: from 0.00 to 0.15 very weak connection; from 0.15 to 0.20 weak connection; from 0.20 to 0.25 medium connection; from 0.25 to 0.30 medium strong bond; from 0.30 to 0.35 strong bond and from 0.35 to 0.40 very strong bond.

Based on the results listed in Table 6, we can draw several conclusions. The first conclusion is that there was a *statistically significant relationship* ($p < 0.001$) between parents' beliefs about their own role in the child's education (S1) and parental engagement in supporting the child's learning (S3). The vertical percentages calculated on the basis of the contingency table with which this test was performed showed that of all the parents who engaged in various activities to support their child's learning, most of them perceived less importance of their own parental role in their child's education, i.e., of all parents who engaged more intensively in various activities to support their child's learning, and the majority perceived their own role in their child's education to be more important. Considering the strength of this positive association, we could speak of *a strong or very strong association* ($\Phi = 0.43$, $V = 0.31$). A statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.001$) was found between parental perception of their own parental role in the child's education (S1) and parental support for the development of the child's language/reading competences (S3a), a very strong correlation ($\Phi = 0.54$ $V = 0.38$). A statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.001$) was found between parental perception of their own role in the child's education (S1) and parental support for the development of the child's mathematical competences (S3b), a very strong correlation ($\Phi = 0.43$ $V = 0.31$). Furthermore, a statistically significant correlation ($p = 0.001$) was found between parental perception of their own role in the child's education (S1) and parental support for the development of the child's science competences (S3c), a medium strong correlation ($\Phi = 0.30$, $V = 0.21$). Finally, a statistically significant ($p = 0.002$) connection was found between parental perception of their own role in the child's education (S1) and parental support

for the development of the child's life skills (S3d), a medium strong connection (Φ = 0.29, V = 0,21). For the first part of the null hypothesis set in this paper (*there is no statistically significant correlation between parental perception of their own role in supporting the child's education and their self-assessment of intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning during primary education*), conclusions could be drawn regarding their acceptance or rejection. Namely, in connection with this part of the null hypothesis, two statistical tests were performed: 1. according to the rank correlation coefficient of $r_s = 0.52$ (Table 5), which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), this assumption could not be accepted as correct, and 2. according to chi-square tests (Table 6), it follows that there was a statistically significant correlation in all five conducted tests ($p < 0.05$); therefore, even according to this method of analysis, the stated assumption could not be accepted as correct. The final conclusion is that *the first part of the null hypothesis is rejected.* In other words, the results of this research confirmed what previous research has suggested (e.g., Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2005) that many parental behaviors (and intensity) that support a child's education are largely determined by the way parents see their role in the child's education; that is, parents who believe that they should be engaged in the child's education and that this is an integral part of their role are more intensively engaged in supporting the child's learning. Below are the results of chi-square tests conducted to test the second part of the null hypothesis (Table 7).

Table 7

Results of chi-square tests for testing the second part of the null hypothesis

Variables in contingency table	Format of contingency table	n	χ^2	df	p	Φ or V
S2 Self-assessment of parental performance (in 3 groups) S3 Parental involvement in intrafamily support of the child's learning (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	33.428	4	**<0.001*** **	Φ = 0.41 V = 0.29
S2 Self-assessment of parental performance (in 3 groups) S3a Supporting language competence development (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	64.330	4	**<0.001*** **	Φ = 0.56 V = 0.40
S2 Self-assessment of parental performance (in 3 groups) S3b Supporting the development of mathematical competences (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	41.232	4	**<0.001*** **	Φ = 0.45 V = 0.32
S2 Self-assessment of parental performance (in 3 groups) S3c Supporting the development of natural science competences (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	15.257	4	**0.004** **	Φ = 0.37 V = 0.19
S2 Self-assessment of parental performance (in 3 groups) S3d Supporting the development of life competencies (in 3 groups)	3 x 3	204	12.028	4	**0.017***	Φ = 0.24 V = 0.17

Note: n = sample size in the test; χ^2 = chi-square value obtained in the test; df = number of degrees of freedom; p = the probability of rejecting the true null hypothesis of no association between variables; * statistical significance up to 5%; ** statistical significance up to 1%; *** statistical significance up to 0.1%.

[a] The coefficients Φ and Cramer's V are interpreted as follows: from 0.00 to 0.15 for very weak connections; from 0.15 to 0.20 for weak connections; from 0.20 to 0.25 for medium connections; from 0.25 to 0.30 for medium strong bonds; from 0.30 to 0.35 for strong bonds; and from 0.35 to 0.40 for very strong bonds.

Based on the results from the tests listed in Table 7, we can draw several conclusions. The first conclusion was that between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) and parental engagement in supporting the child's learning (S3), there was a *statistically significant relationship* ($p < 0.001$). Considering the strength of this connection, we could speak of a *strong or very strong connection* ($\Phi = 0.41$, $V = 0.29$). A statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.001$) was found between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) and parental support for the development of the child's language/reading competences (S3a), a very strong correlation ($\Phi = 0.56$ $V = 0.40$). A statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.001$) was found between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) and parental support for the development of the child's mathematical competences (S3b), a strong correlation ($\Phi = 0.45$ $V = 0.32$). Furthermore, a statistically significant correlation ($p = 0.004$) was found between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) and parental support for the development of the child's science competences (S3c), a strong correlation ($\Phi = 0.37$ $V = 0.19$). Finally, a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.017$) was found between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning (S2) and parental support for the development of the child's life competencies (S3d), with a moderately strong relationship ($\Phi = 0.24$ $V = 0.17$). For the second part of the null hypothesis (*There is no statistically significant relationship between parental self-assessment of effectiveness in supporting the child's learning and their self-assessment of intrafamilial engagement in supporting the child's learning during primary education*), conclusions could be drawn regarding its acceptance or rejection. Namely, in connection with the second part of the null hypothesis, two statistical tests were performed: 1. according to the rank correlation coefficient of $r_s = 0.45$ (Table 5), which was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), this assumption could not be accepted as correct, and 2 according to the chi-square tests (Table 7), it followed that there was a statistically significant connection in all five conducted tests ($p < 0.05$); therefore, even according to these results of the analysis, the stated assumption could not be accepted as correct. The final conclusion was that the second part of the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, the results confirmed the findings of previous research (e.g., Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Shumow & Lomax, 2002; Liu & Leighton, 2021; Walker et al., 2005), which indicates that parents' sense of self-efficacy is a predictor of their engagement in supporting the child's education; that is, the greater the level of parental sense of self-efficacy is, the greater the intensity of parental engagement in supporting the child's learning.

CONCLUSION

The research results confirm the applicability of the assumptions of the first two levels of the Hoover-Dempsey et al. model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Walker, 2005) to the respondents. In other words, the results supported the idea that to understand the process of parental intrafamilial engagement in supporting children's learning, it is of particular importance to take into account the abovementioned parental beliefs, which, as confirmed by this research, guide them. The results that pointed to the active construction of the parental role and the relatively high intensity of the intrafamilial application of activities that support the child's learning, present among respondents of different backgrounds, potentially contribute to the deconstruction of the often present deficit (teacher) views of parents who are not engaged in the expected intensity in the expected way (e.g., participation in school activities, parent meetings, individual information). Furthermore, given the results of previous research (see, e.g., Antony-Newman, 2019), which suggest that parents' beliefs about their own role in their child's education, as well as their engagement in supporting their child's education based on these

beliefs, vary depending on the cultural context in which the parents live, the results of this research potentially reflect the beliefs and cultural ideology of the domestic cultural context about the role of parents in the child's education, the importance of education/learning and the focus on competences. The above assumption, however, should be tested on a larger sample of parents from the domestic context. However, due to the small number of fathers (6%) in the research, it is not possible to draw relevant conclusions about statistically significant differences between mothers and fathers, and knowledge about a lower sense of self-efficacy in supporting children's learning in fathers calls for more research on the topic focused on fathers. Furthermore, the limitations of this research should be mentioned. The first limitation is related to the size (representativeness) and composition (e.g., a small number of fathers, lack of respondents of below-average economic status) of the sample. The second restriction concerns the use of a questionnaire to collect parental self-assessment data, which may result in biased responses. Related to the latter, the third restriction relates to the application of an instrument with predefined activities to support the child's learning, which risks neglecting other potential practices used by parents in the domestic context to support the child's learning. Furthermore, by focusing only on parental motivational factors, other factors that can also be significant for parental engagement in the child's education (e.g., parental interests, needs, obstacles they face, life context, child characteristics, social factors) are neglected. In addition, from the perspective of the modern view of the child as an autonomous and competent individual who is actively involved in the social context (Bašić, 2011), this research does not capture the child's activity in the process of parental support for his education. Finally, by measuring the (self)assessment of the frequency of parental application of given activities with the child, the dialectical/interactional, relational component of parental support that takes place in the dynamic relationship between parents and children is neglected, which could be captured by establishing consideration of parental engagement in the child's education in the pedagogical discourse. The large number of variables that should be captured to gain a deeper understanding of parental engagement in the child's education calls for the application of a qualitative approach in the study of the topic in future research.

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