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SCHOOLING, EDUCATION AND POVERTY IN RESEARCH IN SLOVAK REPUBLIC

ALENA NOVOTNÁ

Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia)
e-mail: alena.novotna@ku.sk

ANNA ŽILOVÁ

Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia)
e-mail: anna.zilova@ku.sk

ABSTRACT: *The author of the article is devoted to research findings on the attitudes of poor parents to the education of their children in the northern region of Slovakia. Parents who are in a state of material need and receive a benefit in material need according to the applicable laws in the Slovak Republic are considered to be parents for the needs of research.*

KEY WORDS: *poverty, education, poverty of children material need, children's legal rights, attitudes*

The aim of the article is to present research findings concerning the attitudes of poor parents to the education of their children in Slovak Republic.

FAMILY, FAMILY POVERTY, DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

Sociologists Guran and Filadelfiova (In: Butora, M. and Ivantysyn, M.: Slovakia 1997) have determined these views/types of family definition:

- Family can be defined by the existence of two basic relationships, it is genders, i.e. heterosexual relationship between man and woman that is most often in the form of marriage, and generations, i.e. relationship between children and parents, while such definitions are based on the cross basis.
- Family definitions, the basis of which is premised on existence of only one basic family-forming relationship, it means, the parent-child relationship.
- The family can be further defined as "the space of child's upbringing", and such definitions are listed through the liberal opinions of family understanding.

Levicka (2014) accepts family signs by Bauman and, in relation to family, she speaks about these following signs that are characteristic for the family:

- form that is approved by given society, and at the same time, is historically steady,
- among its members, there are internal ties that are on marriage, affinity relatives, or substitute relationships that are legally regulated (e.g. adoption and others),
- family functions that are determined by the society.

In psychology, the depth of family relationships, their formation, survival, overlaying and recognition of dynamic relationships are highlighted (LEVICKA, J. 2004).

For example Sobotkova (2001) states that „the family is the primary context of human experience from cradle to grave.“

Marriage and family also take special position in the Church, while it is necessary to rely mainly on documents of II. Vatican Council *Gaudium et spes* and Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II. *Familiaris consortio* (LEVICKA, J. 2004). According to Catholic marriage law under the can. 776, §1 CCEO, the marriage is characterized by these signs:

- „ it is a contract between man and woman,
- God established it and secured it with His laws,
- by this treaty, the man and the woman establish "consortium totius vitae" between themselves, thus linking their fates for life,
- the moment when this contract arises, is an irrevocable consent (of man and woman),
- this partnership of man and woman is a natural partnership, so it is built on the nature of human,
- the goal of this marital partnership is the good of the spouses and birth and upbringing of children.“
- educational process within the family is affected by a number of internal and external conditions (POTOCAROVA, M. 2008). In particular, Frydkova (FRYDKOVA, E. 2010) ranks the following as internal factors:
 - friendly atmosphere in family,
 - balance in family,
 - the nature of the mutual relationships between the spouses (partners),
 - the nature of the sibling relationships,
 - the nature of relationships between parents and children.

Among *the external factors*, the author Frydkova (FRYDKOVA, E. 2010) includes in particular the material, cultural and demographic conditions of the family, adding that individual categories mentioned are still changing and are subject to social conditions.

Family dysfunction or family environment disorders occur when a family fails to perform or doesn't perform the tasks in relation to its members and to society.

„In the field of family, the term dysfunction is used to refer to families that have impaired ability to saturate the material, psychological, and social needs of their members. If family ceases to perform or fails to perform some of its important functions, if there is no balance and regulation of family functions, if the family unilaterally prefers one of the functions to the detriment of the others, when sacrifices some of the functions important to its continuity, experts talk about a dysfunctional family“ (GABURA, J. 2012).

In the professional literature, the term family disorder is used as a synonym of dysfunctional family. Kasanova (KASANOVA, A. 2008) mentions specific

disorders that are among the most common symptoms of family dysfunction.

This is particularly the case of:

- *„lack of finances to cover basic physiological needs,*
- *housing problems in terms of meeting quality of life standards,*
- *inability to work with the financial budget,*
- *inability to prioritize spendings,*
- *non-engagement in finding a job,*
- *low extent of creativity in finding ways to make money,*
- *addiction of one or more family members to alcohol or drugs,*
- *problems in childcare and in performing parental roles,*
- *asocial behavior to environment,*
- *partners' problems,*
- *absence of positive emotions for children,*
- *divorce and post-divorce problems,*
- *gambling,*
- *untreated psychiatric disorders and diseases,*
- *ignorance of legal and social laws“.*

In families that appear to be dysfunctional or afunctional, there is a growing risk that the child will not develop properly here, so serious disorders and internal breakdown of the family occurs, while socialization of the individual is at risk. Furthermore, the child or the juvenile may be neglected by the parents, resulting in emotional deprivation.

In the context of family dysfunction we talk about certain factors that are triggers or influence the family dysfunction. We mention the ones that touch the essence of this text. Kasanova (ibid.) divides family dysfunctional factors in relation to the family's economic status into two groups:

Poverty in the family – „The living wage is the official poverty line in Slovakia. Except for to the unemployed and large families, the poverty threatens low-educated people's households, lone people and incomplete families the most. Poor relationships with other family members or close relatives may also affect formation of poverty“ (ibid.)

Favorable financial situation in the family – Increasingly occurring phenomena include individuals with a criminal orientation who come from well-situated strata of society, which can also be justified as a consequence of smaller

and smaller family influence on the behavior of adolescents and consecutive disinterest or hostility in relation to the child.

An important group of family dysfunction factors is unemployment and low educational level.

Among the risks associated with the affect of a dysfunctional family to children, Gabura (2012) includes:

- mistrust of society and adults,
- in the future imitating problematic behavior of parents,
- minimized contact with the family, escape from the family to the street life,
- disordered and problematic norms and behavioral values,
- no motivation to work on themselves,
- problematic behavior in the circle of children,
- blaming themselves for the family malfunctioning,
- substituting needs that are not satisfied in the family by various problematic resources and ways.

According to several studies and research (e.g. Klassen 1999, Evans-Deluca 2001, Zilova 2012, Novotna 2012, Solcova, 2012, Antolova et al. 2013...) poverty and material deprivation have a direct and indirect impact on children's development and welfare. Factors related to the emergence of poverty and social exclusion affecting life such as living standards, income, opportunity for decent work and education, housing, social protection, access to health care and others point to high risk of threat of poverty among children and youth across entire European Union as well as in Slovakia (ZILOVA, A. NOVOTNA, A., JOSEPH. 2012).

Zilova, Novotná (2005) states that „children and youth are a separate group at risk of poverty. It may seem that separating this group of people as stand-alone is unnecessary or inappropriate, as it is traditionally assumed that children and youth should be cared for by their parents. However, their poverty is derived from the poverty of their parents. It is closely related to family status, as children don't bring any income to the family...“.

Children from poor families are particularly affected by their family's poverty through: a lack of financial resources for family livelihood; family lifestyle (e.g. threat of poverty reproduction); the influence of life quality of their own poor family; caring (not caring) for health, housing, education etc.

In relation to helping poor people and to the question of solving this problem, we cannot circumvent the Christian teaching of the church, where it is particularly appealed to a relationship with human and disinterested love for neighbor, emphasizing solidarity, mutual help or aspect of the common good.

RESEARCH FINDINGS IN THE FIELD OF RELATION OF EDUCATION, SCHOOLING AND POVERTY

At the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of *social exclusion* became the main topic of considerations and conceptions of the European Union's social policy, where it replaced the concept and understanding of poverty, which was dominating until that (Levitas 1998; Bargel, Mühlapachr 2010; Hirt, Jakoubek 2006; Mares 2006; Young 2003).

According to definition of the Commission of the European Communities, the social exclusion is defined as the exclusion of individuals and social groups from economic and social life and thus from possibility to participate on rights, means of subsistence and welfare sources shared by the remaining population.

This concept is closely linked to the concepts of social inclusion and social cohesion. Together they have established themselves in the Union's political debate and are influencing the idea and conceptual direction and practice of social policies in the individual Member States.

Social exclusion is considered a consequence of the failure of one of these social systems: labor market, legal system, social state, family and community. (BERGHAM 1998 In: MARES, P, 1999)

Social exclusion contributes to the exclusion of individuals outside the main community. In this process, they are denied their rights and responsibilities associated with group membership. In some cases, even deprivation of fundamental human rights occurs.

„Income poverty isn't a necessary or sufficient condition for exclusion, because those who are not poor can be excluded from participation and, on the contrary, some poor people may not feel excluded.“ (BODNAROVA, B., DZAMBAZOVIC, R., GERBERY, D. and col. 2005).

OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF POOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON POVERTY AND ON THE CONTEXTS OF EDUCATION AND POVERTY

Research findings related to the topic of this text according to research of Griesova L. (Adapted and modified according to: GRIESOVA, L., 2013), whose aim was to identify and then compare the contexts of poverty reproduction and unemployment in Roma separated communities and in Romas living outside these communities in the district of Liptovsky Mikulas in Slovak Republic.

Objects of the research were Roma people aged 27 - 43 years from **the separated settlement Hlboke** in Liptovsky Mikulas and Roma people, who are integrated into the society, living in **Podbreziny housing estate of Liptovsky Mikulas**. The research had a qualitative design with a biographical approach that allowed to tap into the depth of the subject. The aim of the biography was to understand a partial section from the individual's point of view of given situation.

In identifying respondents' opinions on why they cannot find a job, respondents from settlement Hlboke responded that those are their personality characteristics such as age: *„yeah, I'm already old, so that's why“*, another respondent mentioned his medical condition: *„mistress, I'm very sick, I can't work*, another one mentioned low education he has and which prevents him from being employed: *„Well, I have a problem, problem, I only have primary school, they won't hire me“*, another *„but so, they told me that I have to have some letter or what, if I want to work for that company“*, another respondent: *„well yeah, the guy there told me that first the course and then the work“* but even non-existent work habits prevent participants from finding a job: *„last time they told me that I didn't have the work morale and that I was incapable.“* Considering the thematic focus of this text, we don't attend to other subjective and objective reasons, according to the research respondents,.

Research participants who live integrated, in context of question why they don't work (if they were unemployed), respectively what do they think, why other Roma don't work, they answered like this (we only select answers related to education and schooling): the reason is low education of Roma people *„I think it is important for employers that job seekers have at least a secondary school finished“*, another one states, another states that the assessed population group

doesn't have sufficient abilities and skills important for work: „well, I'm sure they won't accept me if I have no idea what to do“, another mentioned the absence of work habits and work discipline: „I know that in our company they certainly wouldn't accept someone who comes to work an hour later or who will mess around“. From other observations, we mention that, according to participants of the interview, the only relevant reason why not to work is low wage, all other reasons seem to them only like excuses. „Some claim that they are old, others that they are young, others that they are nerveless, they are sick,....., these are not objective reasons for me, these are just excuses“, they also mention laziness as a reason „they don't want to work“, other mention indolence: „I think it is enough for them to get the unemployment benefits, they're so indolent“, but also a low wages: „nobody wants to work for 200 euros a month and the truth is, I wouldn't work for it either“. Although in these contexts there is a clear need for education in different forms and at different levels.

Research findings with regional character (adapted, modified and amended) according to Ovsenna (Adapted, amended and modified according to: OVSENNA, M.,2016): the aim of the research was to find out, using a quantitative method of collecting information in the form of a questionnaire, how students of Social Work at Catholic University in Ruzomberok and students of Special Engineering Technology at Alexander Dubcek University of Trencin in Slovakia perceive the poverty.

Among other findings that aren't less interesting, respondents were asked what they thought about what is the main cause/ context of poverty. In this context, respondents were offered scaling questions with possibility of evaluating five causes of poverty and those were: „unwillingness of poor people to work“, „consequence of disaster“, „unemployment or low incomes“, „personal failure (alcoholism, drugs, etc.)“, „low educational level“.

It was found when statistically evaluating the answers, that 28% of social work students give low education and poverty into a **frequent** context and students of special engineering technology see this context as less frequent with 41% of responses of this field of study.

When evaluating the scale values of each context of poverty on a scale of 1 – 5, (where 1 = most frequent rating, 5 = less rare), the connection between poverty and low education has received an average weighted value: 2,45 from

social work students, i.e. between rating „frequent“ a „less frequent“ with tendency to concentrate responses on rating „most frequent“. A similar situation in this rating was also with students of special engineering technology, it received an average weighted value of 2,75, but with a slight tendency of responds towards rating „less frequent“ and „rare“. These ratings indicate that students are more aware of the connection between individual's education and his possible poverty.

In this research, also other opinions and statements from respondents related to education and self-awareness on the level of own abilities, competence, physical, mental, social circumstances, etc. were also found. When asked how the respondents would prevent their own poverty in an unfavorable life situation, the respondents answered:

- 30% of social work students and 32% of special engineering technology students would deal with this situation by going abroad,
- 12% of social work and 26% of special engineering technology students would deal with this hard life situation of poverty by quitting their studies and finding a permanent job,
- the third most represented strategy for dealing with own poverty was „finding a rich partner or a long-legged partner“. This answer was chosen by 22% of social work students and less than 9% of special engineering technology students (we assume that this disproportion of interest in a wealthy partner is due to the larger number of boys in the special engineering technology). Other responses were from the group: I would find more jobs, brigade, own initiative, but also the answer: „being mentally strong and capable person and doing everything I can to avoid being poor, that is important for me in preventing my own poverty if I find myself in unfavorable life situation.“

The results of the research in relation to the subject of this text are chosen from research into the attitudes of young people under the age of 25 years to poverty by Machajova (Research findings adapted, modified and amended according to: MACHAJOVA, Z., 2010) considering that man's attitudes can be shaped by upbringing and education to the full extent of understanding these processes.

The target group of the research were young people aged 15-24 years from Dolny Kubin district and the main task of research was to describe the opinions of young people on poverty and wealth, to map young people's attitudes to poverty through a cognitive, conative and emotional section of attitude and the value orientation of respondents. In this text we present partial findings related to upbringing and education of young people.

Young people in the Dolny Kubin district aged 15 to 24 years are looking at *wealth* mainly through the ownership of property and a certain amount of money, as up to 37% of respondents describe wealth in this way. Another nearly 20% of young people consider wealth as something that is amazing and beautiful and attach various positive attributes to the wealth. Based on the data collected among the young people of mentioned region, there are also those who also understand wealth as values such as health, happiness and love, or a combination of materiality and spirituality.

Young people in district of Dolny Kubin understand *the poverty* as condition characterized by a lack of financial means, 60% of respondents describe the poverty in this manner. This concept of poverty is the domain of younger young people in particular, with older ones, it is more likely to meet the definitions of poverty as a state of social need or a situation where only basic needs can be satisfied.

In relation to the place of residence, according to research results, rural respondents prefer to understand poverty as a condition when people don't have enough financial means, respondents living in the cities don't imagine poverty only through the financial aspect, but consider poverty more as a state of social need and rate it as a negative phenomenon in larger measures.

Concepts on what it means to *be rich* don't significantly differ depending on gender, but interesting is that the idea of being rich is for men associated also with power and certain influence through social status, women prefer spiritual and other values to a greater extent, which reflects certain gender and cultural habits, as men are associated with the exercise of power to a greater extent and women are more characterized through maintaining traditions and values within families.

For young people aged 15 - 24 years in mentioned region, *being poor* clearly means not to dispose of financial means, as more than half of respondents share

this opinion, this state is also associated with the absence of luxury. However, among the answers, some define this state as an absence of relationships, or place in society, or even the meaning of life and own existence.

According to respondents, the most important role in *how to get to know a wealthy person* is in particular the appearance, behavior and lifestyle. Respondents living in a city identify a wealthy person, especially according to his behavior and lifestyle. Rural respondents prefer to identify wealthy person according to his appearance, especially clothes and expensive, branded items.

The poor person is recognized by respondents the same way as it was with wealthy person, especially according to his appearance, which in this case is characterized by neglected appearance or dirty clothes. According to the research results, it is clear that most respondents place particular emphasis on external identifiers. When identifying a poor person, women preferred the look and lifestyle, men rather behavior and the lack of property, which inherently correlates with gender differences, since women tend to focus on their appearance in larger measures than men, and the ownership of properties and financial security plays more important role for men.

In *cognitive section of the attitude* of young people aged 15 to 24 years from district of Dolny Kubin, prevails the opinion that it is desirable to help in a situation of *poverty*. Older age categories of young people mainly prefer more specific forms of assistance, urban respondents believe that it is also necessary to use institutions intended to help people in need, what can also be influenced by the fact that in Dolny Kubin operates the network of social facilities aimed at helping social groups and individuals who need it.

Affective section of attitude in relation to a foreign person it brings more variability in the reactions of young people aged 15 to 24 years in Dolny Kubin district. The majority, i.e. 67%, of young people decide to help in given situation, whether by financial means or by other forms of support, another group of young people will use providing help through someone else, institution or person. However, in an affective section of attitude towards a foreign person, 22% of young people in given region decide not to help or not to do anything.

For young people aged 15 to 19 years, financial help rather dominates, and for older children, other forms of help such as providing food or clothing, the recommendation of institution where they could help a person in need. Here

we see some difference in the forms of help, because for older ones, clearly more targeted and effective forms of help dominate.

Gender differences in responses to given situation point to a greater tendency for boys to fail to help, while girls are more willing to help, what Koubeková (2001) describes too, since girls are characterized by higher interpersonal sensitivity than boys. From the perspective of place of residence, the responses to given situation don't differ significantly.

Between motives of young people from given region, who fall into the age category 15 to 19 years, mainly dominate belief in the correctness of own actions, but also pity. At the older ones, we have noticed a specificity that didn't occur at the younger ones, they decided to help because they simply want to, which points to some higher level of their motivation already internalized. Thus, their acting isn't motivated only by the fact that others do so too, is the inner belief of a young person and the desire to help is a manifestation of altruistic behavior, which, as stated by Vagnerova (2008b), occurs more frequently with rising age, similarly to what our findings suggest.

THE ATTITUDES OF POOR PARENTS TO THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN – RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to reduce the risk of social exclusion, the OECD reports perceive the role of **education policy** as particularly important. It is a system of education to which most of the activities of international community aimed at eliminating the social exclusion of children are directed.

Authors Evans and Deluca (In: BODNAROVA, B., DZAMBAZOVIC, R., GERBERY, D. and col. 2005) are also dealing with social exclusion of children in their study Social exclusion and children – creating identity capital. They have developed a scheme for the process of social exclusion and integration of children.

They divided individual risks for social exclusion of children in maturity **into four groups** and then organized them into statistical models to identify the individual consequences of individual characteristics, and at the same time, consequences that result from their combined occurrence.

Table 1: Scheme of social exclusion and/or integration process and protective factors

Risk factors of social exclusion of children			
Child factors	Economic factors	Parental factors	School factors
Low weight at birth Physical and mental handicap	Low standard of living of the family	Low aspirations in relation to children and lack of interest	Poor pre-school support or its absence
Weak visual-motor skills	Social housing in an economically depressed area	Problematic relationships within the family, especially between parents and children, family breakdown	Inadequate transition from pre-school care into the education system
Insufficient early age cognitive development	High people density in the apartment	Absent adult role model for a child	Weak relationships between child's family and school
Insufficient command of basic skills (reading, counting)	Low family income	Frequent nanny changes and absence of parent	Weak relationship between teacher and child
Difficulties with temperament (hyperactivity, impulsiveness, attention deficit)		Long-term unemployment of parent/parent	Insufficient tracking of progress and success of child
Behavior problems		Lonely parent	
		Problems of parents with alcohol, drugs	

Source: P. Evans – M. Deluca, 2001 In: Bodnarova and col., 2005, p. 43

The role of insufficient education of children from poor families has been shown to be crucial in research.

Low education of parents, lack of parents' interest in child and their poor support are among the parental factors of the low education of children from poor families.. These factors are often accompanied by **low aspirations of parents and their children**. Other risk factors are:

- lack of social control,
- bad relationships within the family,
- absence of parent and family break-up.

Among other things, the study emphasizes the **importance of early childhood education**, which means that it is particularly important to attend pre-school facilities. (ibid)

Some research (Peters - Mullis 1997, Mc Lanahan 1997, In:GERBERY, D., LESAY, I., SKOBLA, D. 2007) especially during the 90s, has focused on the consequences of poverty for the psychosocial development of children and school success, while their results show **impact of mainly long-term or persistent poverty in early childhood on cognitive development of children.**

Another area in examining child poverty is relationship between poverty experienced at the time of childhood and school results, respectively question of how the changes in family economic resources (in income) can affect the child's success in school. The results of these research (Duncan – Brooks – Gunn - Klebanov 1994, Smith – Brooks – Gunn - Klebanov 1997, In: ibid.) was knowledge that **better values that children achieved in tests are associated with an increase in average family income.**

Similar results of a study conducted at the Harvard Graduate School of Education entitled Change in Family Income – to – Needs Matters More for children with Less, the authors concluded that most likely as in the previous research mentioned above, **social and cognitive functioning of poor young children is likely to increase by increasing income.**

With the connection between family income and school success of children, also **access to teaching aids and conditions** have been shown as one of the explanatory factors, e.g. quiet place to learn, computer, textbooks and scholastic materials (Sobolewski - Amato, 2005, In: ibid.).

Although research results point to these factors, **it cannot be clearly stated that poverty is the main cause of the results of knowledge tests,** but it is necessary to think about the presence of certain factors that cause, that pupils from low-income families repeatedly achieve lower test scores than those from high-income families. Three possible hypotheses explaining these differences are offered by Orfield a Lee (ibid.):

- **Parents of pupils from high-income families have higher education** - in case of better education of parents, there is a possibility of transferring some of the knowledge to their children. Help of these parents with earlier start of reading, writing, or counting before they go to school, thus they can be better prepared for the requirements and responsibilities of schooling. Considering education as a higher value and thus the effort and support of parents to give children higher education.

- **Pupils from high-income families have better resources** –likelihood of better access to larger and better sources of pupils **from higher-income families** than pupils from low-income families. For example, there is a better access to good educational tools such as computers or educational toys. Visiting a pre-school facility.
- **Pupils from low-income families have lower aspirations and expectations, they have much lower motivation** – low expectations from side of teachers, parents or coevals to pupils from lower-income families. Pupils may have certain educational problems that need to be overcome in order for the child to meet educational standards. These problems may also occur in children from high-income families, but at the same time some teachers, and it may happen that also parents from low-income families are not convinced, that such a child can escape poverty and overcome the educational barriers.

The connection between income level and aspirations and motivation of parents to secure their children with conditions for education was followed by Katrnak (2004) in his work. He pointed to **a greater activity to help children with their homework, as well as to emphasize the importance of knowledge and education to children if parents are from higher social classes**. More attention is paid to the development of children's verbal abilities, greater contact with the school environment, as well as more frequent signing in after-school classes and libraries compared to lower-income families. The consequences of child poverty continue to manifest with its negative consequences also in later childhood and period of adolescence.

EUROPEAN COMISSION¹ states in its report that single-parent families are most at risk of poverty, followed by families with three or more children, and also at the connection between the birth of at least one parent outside EU and families at risk of poverty.

¹ EUROPEAN COMMISSION: *Childpoverty and well-being in the EU. Belgium*, 2008, 254p. available on: http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDUQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fsocial%2FblobServlet%3FdocId%3D2049%26langId%3Den&ei=ZQpYUYI1hI1aI4gTuoYCICA&usg=AFQjCNI1F3ZTk2cuo787QP_2OZRO5q194rw&bvm=bv.44442042,d.bGE

„As in other countries, also in Slovakia ,the relationship between the risk of poverty and the level of education is manifested indirectly proportional. Rule proceeds that the higher the level of education, the lower the risk of poverty“. Also rule proceeds that getting a well-paid job doesn't guarantee higher education attained, but at the same time it is clear from the practice that „the achievement of education is one of the most important preconditions for an individual to do something to not fall into poverty“ (GERBERY, D., LESAY, I., SKOBLA, D. 2007).

European Youth Forum – Police paper on young people and poverty (2012) states that education is one of the key instruments in fighting the intergenerational reproduction of poverty.

Research (Research findings on the attitudes of poor parents to education of their children: adapted, amended and modified according to: PEKNA, L., 2017) was focused on identifying the attitudes of poor parents and parents who aren't considered poor to their children's education. The indicator of the poverty line in Slovakia is the minimum subsistence limit and related benefit in material need. The research sample consisted of poor families falling below the minimum subsistence limit. The control sample consisted of families that were above the minimum subsistence limit and were not considered poor.

The subject of research was:

- The attitudes of parents receiving a benefit in material need to their children's education.
- The attitudes of parents not receiving a benefit in material need to their children's education.
- The attitudes of parents receiving and not receiving a benefit in material need to their own education.

Attitudes for the needs of executed research were understood in terms of definition by Hartl a Hartlova (2019), who define attitude as „ *an evaluation relationship, expressed by a inclination to a consistent way of responding to objects, persons, situations, and oneself; attitudes are part of the personality, they predetermine knowledge, understanding, thinking and feeling; attitudes, together with knowledge and skills, are acquired throughout life, especially through education and wider social influences such as public opinion and social contacts*“. Attitudes are also defined as key concepts that explain the social behavior

of people and are therefore associated with concept of social attitudes in this context.

The research was executed in 2017 in the region of Slovak cities, and that in Zilina, Trencin and Dubnica nad Vahom.

The research sample consisted of nearly 65% respondents living in a city and 35% of respondents living in a village, in terms of religion it consisted of 87,3% respondents with Catholic religion, 4,5% with Evangelical religion and 8,2% were atheists.

The average income of respondent families was 1576 € for families above the minimum subsistence limit, and 744,5 € for families below the minimum subsistence limit.

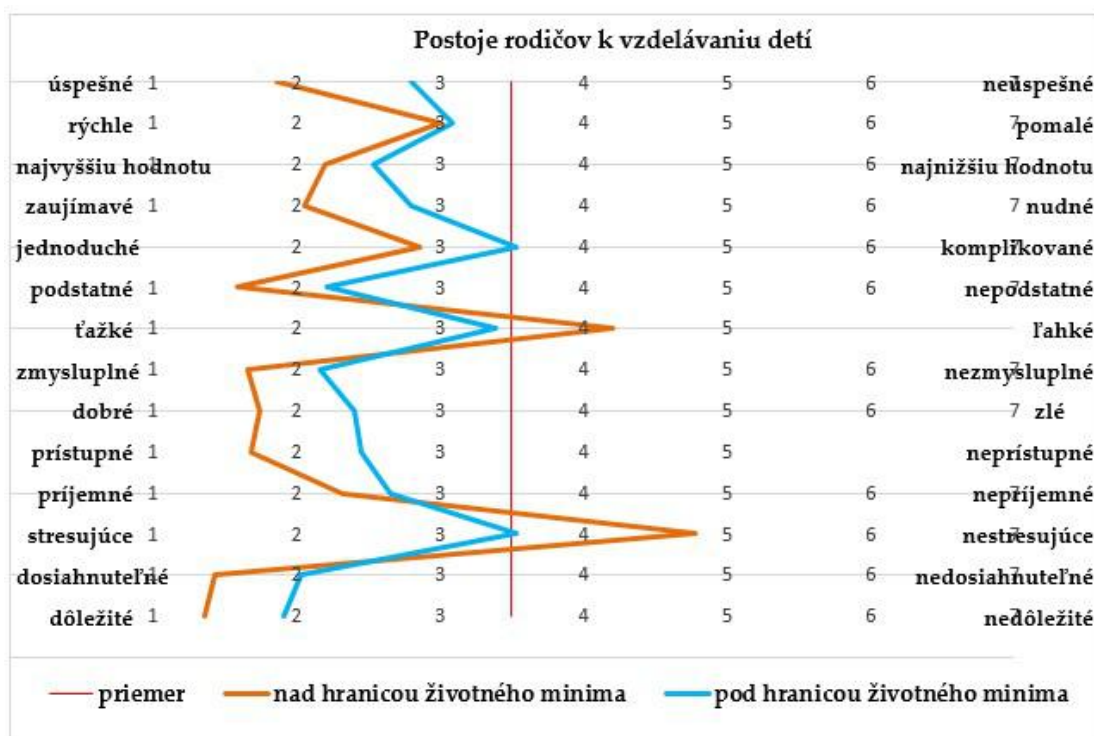
In this text, the results of examining the parents' attitudes to education of their children in families below the minimum subsistence limit (understood as poor families) and above the minimum subsistence limit are presented.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN CONSIDERING WHETHER THEY RECEIVE BENEFITS IN MATERIAL NEED OR NOT AND CONSIDERING DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

a.1) Considering children's education

Parents above the minimum subsistence limit consider the education of their children significantly as important, accessible, good, stress-free, meaningful, easy, substantial and successful.

Parents below the minimum subsistence limit don't show such extreme attitudes, they rather approach neutral attitudes (closer to average). Since these differences are statistically significant, they were tested using the Mann-Whitney U-test for two independent selections.



Graph no. 1 Parents' attitudes towards education of children in relation to the minimum subsistence limit

In parents' attitudes to education of their children, statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were found, which were recorded in all adjectives, except „pleasant- unpleasant“, „highest value-lowest value“ and „fast-slow“ – in these adjectives parents don't differ in attitudes towards the education of their children.

In other adjectives, there are significant differences, while parents **above the minimum subsistence limit** consider their children's education to be important, achievable, stress-free, enjoyable, accessible, good, meaningful, easy, substantial, simple, interesting and successful **in larger measures** compared to parents below the minimum subsistence limit.

a.2) Parents' attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to the age of respondents.

The research results obtained were statistically verified using the Spearman's correlation coefficient.

Research has found that for parents **below the minimum subsistence limit** (average age 37.8, standard deviation 6.6 years), **there is:**

statistically significant, positive, weak relation between age and adjectives pleasant/unpleasant – what means, that with increasing age, these respondents consider education of their children to be more unpleasant.

For parents **above the minimum subsistence limit** (average age 37.5, standard deviation 7.2 years) **there is:**

statistically significant, positive, moderately strong relation between age and adjectives simple/complicated, fast/slow, successful/unsuccessful – what means, that with increasing age, these respondents consider education of their children to be more complicated, slow and unsuccessful.

a.3) Parents' attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to social status of parents

Results of these empirical findings were verified using the Mann-Whitney U-test for two independent selections.² Test verification shows that **there are no statistically significant differences between employed and unemployed respondents ($p > 0,05$) in attitudes towards the education of their children.**

a.4) Parents' attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to religion of parents

Research results were verified using Kruskal Wallis Test – for three or more independent selections. The test results show that **there are no statistically significant differences ($p > 0,05$) in attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to religion (Catholic, Evangelical and atheists) – neither in the group of respondents above the minimum subsistence limit nor in the group below the minimum subsistence limit.**

a.5) Parents' attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to gender of parents.

Research results were verified using Mann-Whitney U – for two independent selections. The test results show that statistically significant differences ($p < 0,05$) in attitudes towards the education of their children **in relation to gender** only exist in group of parents below the minimum subsistence limit. Men below the minimum subsistence limit consider their children's education more unattainable, unpleasant, unimportant, and boring compared to women below the minimum subsistence limit.

For respondents above the minimum subsistence limit, there are no gender differences in the education of their children.

² The research file was divided into employed – N 63 and unemployed – N 27 respondents, other categories, e.g. seriously disabled, self-employed were excluded from the analysis due to the low number of respondents in each category.

a.6) Parents' attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to respondents' residency.

Results verified using Mann-Whitney U – test for two independent selections. The test results show that there are statistically significant differences ($p < 0,05$) in attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to residency. Respondents from city consider education of their children to be more interesting, substantial, meaningful and important compared to respondents from village.

a.7) Parents' attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to respondents' education.

Research results were verified using Kruskal Wallis Test – for three or more independent selections and they show that there are statistically significant differences ($p > 0,05$) in attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to education, but only in the group of respondents below the minimum subsistence limit.

Respondents **with secondary education without school leaving examination** consider education of their children to be **unreachable and unimportant** in larger measures, compared to those with secondary education with school leaving examination and higher education. Respondents with secondary education without school leaving examination, but also with school leaving examination consider education of their children to be more **unimportant** compared to respondents with higher education.

For parents **above the minimum subsistence limit**, there are no differences in attitudes towards the education of their children in relation to their own education.

Significant findings from the presented research:

- Family poverty and social exclusion of the family with their consequences for the family and its lifestyle, causes social and emotional deprivation in children living in a poor family, which is further reflected in their future lives..
- In reducing risk of social exclusion of the individual and family and poverty of the individual and family, education policy plays a very important role at national level and his education at individual level.

- Low education of parents correlates with their low life aspirations and their weak support of their children in education and reaching higher level of education.
- Increasing family income is expected to increase the social and cognitive behavior of children of poor parents.
- Parents above the minimum subsistence limit consider education of their children to be significantly more positive than parents below the minimum subsistence limit.
- There are no statistically significant differences in attitudes of parents towards the education of their children from in relation to their social status on the labor market (employed/unemployed) and in relation to religion of parents.
- Parents living in city consider education of their children to be more interesting, substantial, meaningful compared to parents living in village.
- For parents living above the minimum subsistence limit, due to their education, there are no differences in attitudes towards education of their children and attitudes are positive.
- For parents living below the minimum subsistence limit, positive attitudes towards the education of their children are growing with their higher education,.

One way how to overcome poverty is education. First and foremost, it is the value acquired by individual in process of education system in the schooling system, in both formal and non-formal education. The next one is education of poor parents and parents with low education to create positive attitudes towards the education of their children, but, as other research results have shown, also to their own education, which also affects the relation of parents to the education of their children (Pekná, L., 2017)

From the other presented findings it follows From other presented findings it follows that it would be appropriate to use school social workers and social pedagogues systematically and targeted in the adaptation of school educational programs to the process of education in the conditions of primary and secondary schools, e.g. in areas of so called cross-cutting themes where education can be expanded e.g. with media education, or personal and social development of the pupil (see State Education Program) and focus on promoting and

developing young people's appropriate self-confidence, optimal coeval and interpersonal relations, responsible behavior and value orientation. There is a need to develop targeted cooperation with schooling non-governmental facilities focused on work with children and youth. In the conditions of non-governmental organizations, it is necessary to include, in addition to a broad volunteer base, a team of professionals who could, through supervision, provide erudite application of individual programs and activities with regard to regional, age, social and personal specificities of young people. Because media and contacts in virtual world are an essential part of a young person's life, it is necessary to appeal to program makers to respect young person's specificity and to participate in its development, and at the same time, to use media education within schools in the process of shaping and changing attitudes among young people with the aim of development of the value orientation and promoting young people's citizen involvement in solving societal problems (MACHAJOVA, Z., 2010).

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