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Students' Views on Parental Support for Creativity

Helena Vomáčková - Barbora Lanková - Alena Černíková*

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Abstract:

Introduction: The influence of the family on a student's development can be observed both at the start of compulsory schooling and throughout the course of it (Helus, 2015). In the hierarchy of cognitive processes, the highest educational goal is the ability to create, i.e. to reorganize elements into new structures and models (Byčkovský & Kotásek, 2004). The paper documents how 6th and 7th grade elementary school students reflect on parental support for their creativity.

Methods: The quantitative survey used basic indicators of both descriptive and inductive statistics. The sample of 330 respondents was an available selection of pupils from 13 primary schools in the Czech Republic in 2024. The data was collected physically at schools using a non-standardized questionnaire. The basis of the statistical data analysis was the identification of connections and differences in students' statements according to the monitored criteria by verifying hypotheses focused on the frequency and importance of phenomena.

Results: The analysis of the data from the monitored sample revealed that the frequency of students' perception of parental support for creativity varies statistically significantly by achievement, grade level, and school location. This fact was also demonstrated for students' perceived importance of phenomena, including BMI values. A significant positive relationship was demonstrated between importance and frequency.

Discussion: The subject of discussion is the relationship of pupils at the borderline of middle and older school age (Matějček, 2008) to their parents and its reflection in the successful support of the development of creativity in schoolchildren.

Limitations: The survey was not conducted on a representative sample of students according to the criteria monitored: gender, school year, grade, BMI value, school

* Vomáčková Helena, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic; helela.vomackova@ujep.cz; ORCID: 0000-0002-4754-8976
Lanková Barbara, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic; barbora.lankova@ujep.cz; ORCID: 0009-0006-9193-212X
Černíková Alena, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic; alena.cernikova@ujep.cz

location. The conclusions of the survey can therefore only be applied to the sample given of respondents.
Conclusions: Students confirmed the diversified influence of parental support on the development of their creative abilities. Statistically significant connections were demonstrated for seven out of ten formulated hypotheses.

Key words: 6th and 7th grade pupil creativity, parental support, monitoring criteria, statistically significant differences.

Introduction

According to the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (MŠMT, 2001), creativity represents the highest goal in the development of cognitive thinking. In this context, we view creativity as the ability to create new and valuable ideas, products or interpretations that are meaningful either to the individual or to the wider society, and that arise through an individual, often socially and culturally conditioned creative process. (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Sawyer et al., 2003). The first ones who can influence the achievement of this goal are the parents of the students. They are the ones who, within the framework of primary socialization (Šlechtová, 1991), create a more or less stimulating environment (Matějček, 2013; Domino, 1979) and thus influence the development within the framework of the genetic disposition of each individual, the future student. Parents are the ones who decide on the differences in children's entry into compulsory basic education, even if they are born with completely identical genetic makeup (Doležalová, 2024; Maříková, 2018). The imaginary "starting line" in education is not identical for all students, but thanks to parental care it can differ dramatically, just as the theoretical approach to the development of thinking differs, for example according to Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 2014) prioritizes biologically given internal factors and the resulting stages of development, which he sees as a prerequisite for learning. Vygotsky (Průcha, 2004) places primary emphasis on the influence of the social and cultural environment, which influence the development of an individual and his learning. The zone of proximal development (Šmelová, 2013) can thus be reached, for example, with the help of parents earlier and more easily than would be the case with spontaneous development in the given phases. Both theories undoubtedly have a rational basis. However, it is impossible not to notice differences in children's readiness when starting compulsory schooling, which are not determined genetically or biologically, but rather socially, by the level of parental care as a result of different family backgrounds: stimulating or unstimulating. This fact corresponds to the reality that in the Czech Republic almost 25% of children receive a deferral of entry into compulsory school

attendance (ČŠI, 2024), while, for example, in neighboring Germany it is only 5-7%. Moreover, unlike other countries, the cognitive differences between pupils from stimulating and unstimulating family environments are not reduced during the process (Matějů, 2011), and thus inequalities are reproduced instead of being reduced. It is true that the diversified education system that the Czech Republic switched to after 1990 also contributes to this. (Woessmann, 2009).

1 Research methods and sampling

The aim of the research was to verify the significant role of parents in supporting the development of pupils' creativity and to identify selected factors that influence this development, based on the statements of pupils in the second stage of elementary school. The research focused on analyzing how pupils perceive their parents' support for the development of their creativity. The research sample consisted of 330 students from thirteen selected elementary schools in the Ústí nad Labem, Central Bohemia and Hradec Králové regions. It was verified whether there were differences in the students' statements in relation to the selected criteria:

- gender (boys made up 49%, girls 51% of the sample),
- school year (52% of students were from the sixth grade and 48% from the seventh grade),
- school performance in the previous school year (62% of respondents had an average grade of ≤ 2.0, and 38% had an average grade of ≥ 2.1),
- BMI value (51% of respondents were in the “desirable”1 range and 49% in the undesirable range),
- school and locality in which the pupils are educated (districts were represented as follows): Děčín 21 %, Litoměřice 4 %, Hradec Králové 4 %, Litvínov 6 %, Mělník 30 %, Nymburk 4 %, Praha 11 %, Příbram 11 %, Sokolov 3 %, Teplice 6 %).

The study used a non-standardized 15-item questionnaire. One section measured the frequency of the phenomenon (how often the reported occurrences take place), and the other assessed how personally important the phenomenon is to the student. The frequency of each item was expressed by the pupils on a six-point scale (1-Never, 2-Almost never, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, 5-Almost always, 6-Always), the importance of the phenomenon on a three-point scale (1-Not important, 2-Important and 3-Very important). The higher the scores in the first part, the more the students confirmed the influence of their parents on the development of their creativity. The higher the scores in the second part, the more important the facts surveyed were for the students themselves. The questionnaires were distributed physically, the students were familiar with their purpose and content, and the completion was done at the pace of the slowest student. The study was conducted at the end of 2024. The collected data were then prepared for statistical analysis, and associations between independent and dependent variables were examined.

The data collected in the survey were organized and analyzed using basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation) and inferential statistics. The main conclusions are drawn from the combined variable, which synthesizes all sub-items. For testing purposes, this combined variable was calculated as the average value of all 15 items for each individual. The figures then display the total number of responses for all items and all respondents. In addition to analyzing the combined variable, individual items were also examined. The combined variable was compared between groups using the nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test, because it did not meet the assumption of normality. To compare groups for individual items, a chi-square test was used, along with a trend test designed for categorical data. All tests were evaluated at the 5% significance level. When working with a combined variable, substantive significance was also determined using Cohen's "d" (comparison of two groups) or "eta-squared" (comparison of several groups). The relationship between frequency and importance was assessed using Kendall's tau correlation coefficient for ordinal data. The following research hypotheses were tested using these methods. The frequency of phenomena, based on the above criteria, was evaluated using five differential hypotheses:

H_1: Boys perceive that their parents encourage them to be active more than girls do.

H_2: Students with better grades perceive that their parents encourage them to be more creative than students with worse grades.

H_3: Students with a desired BMI perceive that their parents encourage them to be active more than students with an undesirable BMI.

H_4: Sixth graders perceive that their parents encourage them to be active more than seventh graders.

H_5: Students from schools in different locations perceive differently that their parents encourage them to be creative.

Another five different hypotheses were tested in terms of the importance of the phenomena for the students themselves:

H_6: Boys consider parental support for creativity to be more important than girls do.

H_7: Students with better grades consider parental support for creativity to be more important than students with worse grades.

H_8: Students with a desired BMI consider parental support for creativity to be more important than students with an undesirable BMI.

H_9: Sixth graders consider parental support for creativity to be more important than seventh graders.

H_{10}: Pupils from schools in different locations perceive the importance of parental support for creativity differently.

2 Parents and the conditions for the development of creativity

Creativity is a trait that varies for each individual in its focus and level. It is important to identify, nurture, and create an environment conducive to its development (Taylor, 2017). Promoting creativity (Creely & Henriksen, 2025) as the ability to view situations from different perspectives, think outside the box, and seek new and innovative solutions to problems requires parents to create a safe, diverse, inspiring, and stimulating environment where children feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. Parents' task is to provide sufficient opportunities and materials for sustained and systematic active engagement (Belz & Siegrist, 2001), as the creative process involves phases (Wallas, 1926) that cannot be anchored through one-time support. Instead of joy, for example, from experimenting and trying new things or familiar things in a different way, children are overcome by uncertainty and fears that dampen creativity or make it completely impossible. The development of children's imagination (Klinger, 1969) also fosters the ability to generate novel ideas that might otherwise be overlooked. For example, parental reading to children is important here, as it trains the child's mind and develops vocabulary. Encouraging children to think about the things they read from different perspectives supports the development of divergent thinking (Müller & Pietzner, 2020; Henriksen, Richardson, & Mehta, 2017), which, in conjunction with convergent thinking, is a prerequisite for creativity.

Overall, a creative family environment is characterized by parents' ability to foster a positive emotional attitude toward active activities, which children engage in spontaneously and freely. However, this should not lack an appropriate level of supervision and parental consistency. Models and incentives for hobby activities should be sufficient, with the child independently choosing and deciding what and how to do it. Parental encouragement should not be confused with dominant decisions about what is more appropriate, proven, faster, etc.

The key role of parents in the development of children's innate dispositions, not only in the development of creativity, is discussed by many authors, e.g. Matějček (2013, 2015, 2017), Pekařová (2006, 2014), Fichnová and Szobiová (2012). It is generally stated that the autocratic attitude of parents and the emphasis on obedience blocks not only the development of creativity but also the cognitive manifestations of children in general. The parent is angry and may not even notice the child's creative expression. Instead of support and appreciation, parents can punish them.

It is generally agreed that the more educated the parents are, the more likely they are to provide sophisticated childcare (e.g., Habart, 2019; Majerčíková & Rebendová, 2017). On the other hand, parents' education is usually related to aspirations for a working career (Aperio, 2025), which usually requires more time commitment outside the family and thus limits the possibility of systematic work

with children. Time is clearly a key factor in creating conditions for the development of children's dispositions and for the development of creativity in particular. Parents' haste, impatience, and pressure to perform are counterproductive here (Mrkva, Travers, & Boven, 2018), every child has their own pace. Moreover, there is no direct correlation: the more intelligent the child, the more creative the child (Dacey & Lennon, 2000).

3 Findings

The students' responses to the questionnaire items were analyzed collectively for the entire group of respondents as a combined variable according to selected research criteria. The overall distribution of statement frequencies by students participating in the research, organized by questionnaire items, is shown in Figure 1 below. Figure 1 shows that the majority of students rated parental support for their creativity as relatively high. When condensing the six-point scale into a dichotomous sum of 'a little' (∑never–almost never–sometimes) and 'a lot' (∑often–almost always–always), it is evident that in only three items the percentage of responses in the 'a lot' category does not exceed 50%. These were items 1, 3 and 9. The negatively worded item 3 was a methodological issue, where it was necessary to work with the inverse value of the data to maintain comparability. The situation was different for items 1 and 9. Here, the students expressed a certain absence of parental commitment to invent and provide them with stimuli to think and reward them for perseverance in overcoming obstacles when they have difficulties, do not give up, but may not achieve the desired goal. The first is mainly related to the education of parents, but also to their time availability and willingness to "deal with children". Additionally, in items 12 and 13, students indicate certain reservations on the part of parents regarding the creation of conditions for considering different solution options (e.g., the concept: 'it doesn't matter how you do it, the main thing is that it's done') and for encouraging critical self-reflection (e.g., admitting that it was possible to proceed differently or better). Conversely, summary data indicate that parents of the monitored pupil sample do not withhold praise (see item no. 7), nor do they hesitate to provide help in the form of explanations or support for discovery (see items no. 4 and 6). However, pupils' specific perceptions of their parents' support for their discovery were not explicitly investigated.

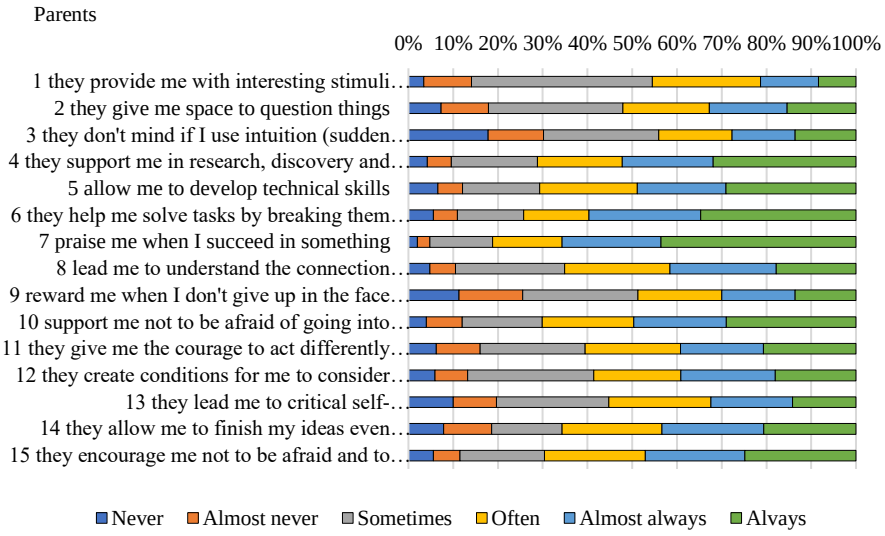

Figure 1. Overall frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire items.

When verifying the above hypotheses, the following facts were found in terms of the frequency of the given phenomena:

H_1: Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test (p=0.196), no statistically significant difference was found between boys and girls in the frequency of their parents' support for creativity in our sample of respondents. As shown in Figure 2, the structure of their expressions was almost identical, with parental support perceived slightly higher among girls: the average response for boys was 3.992, while among girls it was 4.109.

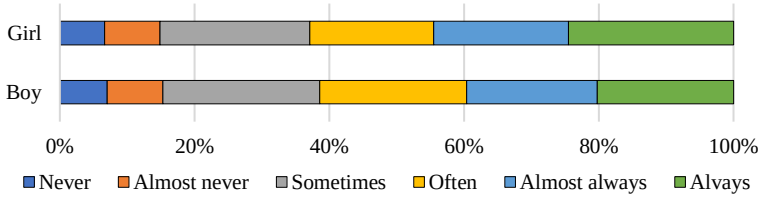

Figure 2. Frequency distribution of perceived support by girls and boys for all 15 questions combined.

However, a sub-investigation showed a statistically significant difference between boys and girls for items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8. Parents thus provided boys with statistically significantly more opportunity to question things (item 2: trend test, p=0.007) and to develop technical skills (item 5: chi-square test, p=0.029). Conversely, girls received statistically significantly more support from their parents in research, discovery, and exploration (item 4: trend test, p=0.018), discussed and explained things with their parents more frequently (item 6: chi-square test, p=0.004), and were guided more often to understand the connections between facts (item 8: chi-square test, p=0.019).

H_2: A statistically significant difference in perceived support for their creativity by parents was demonstrated between better and worse-performing pupils using the Kruskal-Wallis test (where p=0.014). The higher median (4.133) and arithmetic mean (4.119) values for successful pupils show that they rated parental support as "frequent", "almost always" and "always" more frequently than their classmates with poorer grades (median 3.933; mean 3.867), see Figure 3. The difference between the lower and upper limits of the confidence interval for the mean was higher for the less well-off, indicating greater variability within that group.

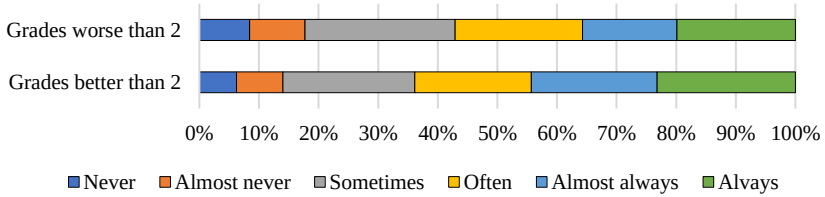

Figure 3. Frequency distribution of perceived support by better and worse performing pupils for all 15 questions combined.

In the sub-items, a statistically significant difference between pupils with grades up to 2.0 and 2.1 (inclusive) was demonstrated for items 1, 4, 5, 10, 12, 14. Higher-achieving pupils received from their parents more stimuli to think about (item 1: trend test, where p=0.0012), more support for research, discovery and exploration (item 4: trend test, where p=0.016), more support for technical skills (item 5: trend test, where p=0.026), more support for taking risks (item 10: trend test, where p=0.040), more support for divergent thinking (item 12: trend test, where p=0.045), more consistency in completing things (item 14: trend test, where p=0.001) than their lower-achieving classmates.

H_3: Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test (where p=0.227), no statistically significant difference was found in the sample of respondents we monitored between pupils with a desirable and undesirable BMI value in the frequency of their parents'

support for creativity (combined variable). As can be seen from figure No. 4, the structure of their expressions was almost identical, only in the case of pupils with an undesirable BMI was the perceived support of parents insignificantly higher: in total, the responses of pupils with a desirable BMI value reached an average value of 4.013 and of pupils with an undesirable BMI value 4.118.

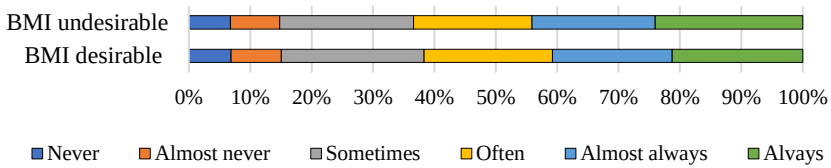

Figure 4. Frequency distribution of perceived support by pupils with desirable and undesirable BMI for all 15 questions combined.

The partial investigation revealed a statistically significant difference between pupils with desirable and undesirable BMI values in only one instance (item 10: chi-square test, p=0.002). Here, pupils with an undesirable BMI value stated that they were more supported by their parents so that they were not afraid to go into uncertainty.

H_4: The sum of statements tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test, p=0.0013, showed that 7th grade pupils perceived statistically significantly lower support for creativity from their parents than their classmates who were a year younger, see figure 5. The median and arithmetic mean of the values from the Likert scale of responses 1-6 were lower in the case of 7th graders (3.933/3.914) than in the case of 6th graders (4.267/4.185).

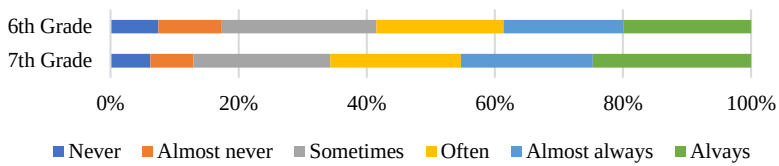

Figure 5. Frequency distribution of perceived support by 7th and 6th grade elementary school pupils for all 15 questions together.

In the sub-items, a statistically significant difference between 6th and 7th grade pupils was demonstrated for items 1, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13. In all these cases, 6th grade statistics pupils received more support from their parents than their older classmates (item 1: trend test, where p=0.002; item 6: trend test, where p=0.001;

item 7: trend test, where p=0.008; item 9: trend test, where p=0.005; item 12: trend test, where p=0.009 item 13: chi-square test, where p=0.033).

H_5: Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test (p=0.0313), we can state a statistically significant difference in the frequency of perceived parental support by pupils from different primary school locations in the sample of respondents we monitored. The lower the values achieved in aggregate terms, the lower the frequency of parental support among the surveyed pupils. Expressed as a median, the frequency of support was lowest at the elementary school in Duchcov: median 3.400 and also at the elementary school in Prague 6: median 3.733 (pupils perceived the lowest support from their parents). On the contrary, the highest parental support was expressed by pupils of the Budyně n. O. school: median 4.533, followed by pupils of the Litvínov school: median 4.333 - see Figure 6.

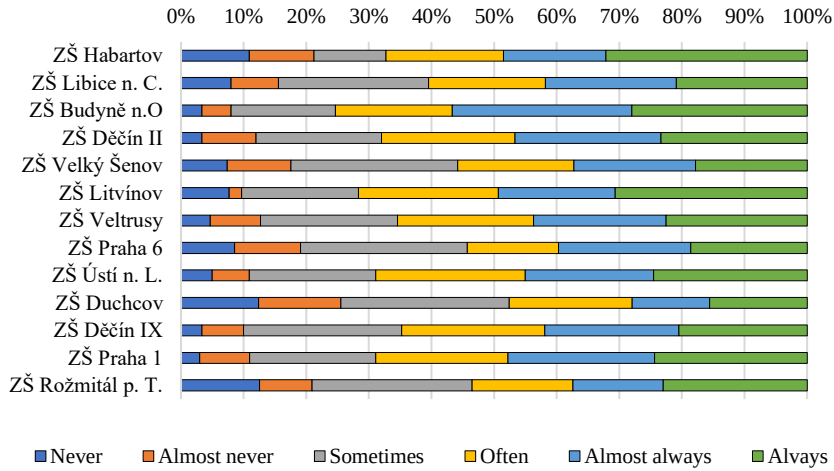

Figure 6. Frequency distribution of perceived support by pupils across schools and their locality for all 15 questions together.

In the partial analysis, a statistically significant difference between locations (schools) was demonstrated for the items:

- 1 (chi-square test, where p=0.025), where the two best-rated locations were ZŠ Děčín IX and Habartov and the two worst-rated ZŠ Duchcov and Prague 6,
- 2 (chi-square test, where p=0.016), where the two best-rated locations were ZŠ Habartov and Budyně n. O. and the two worst-rated ZŠ Duchcov and Rožmitál p. T.,
- 3 (chi-square test, where p=1.564E-08), where the two best-rated locations were ZŠ Děčín II and Děčín IX and the two worst-rated ZŠ Litvínov and Habartov,

- 5 (chi-square test, where p=0.002), where the two best-rated locations were ZŠ Habartov and ZŠ Děčín II and the two worst-rated ZŠ Rožmitál pod Třemšínem and ZŠ Duchcov,
- 12 (chi-square test, where p=0.011), where the two best-rated locations were ZŠ Litvínov and Budyně nad Ohří and the two worst-rated ZŠ Libice nad Cidlinou and ZŠ Duchcov,
- 14 (chi-square test, where p=0.022), where the two best-rated locations were ZŠ Litvínov and Praha1 and the two worst-rated ZŠ Praha 6 and Duchcov.

From the perspective of the significance of the phenomena, the following facts were identified during the hypothesis verification process:

- H_6: based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, where p=0.375, it cannot be proven that boys consider parental support for creativity to be more important than girls.
- H_7: based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, where p=3.298E-5, it was demonstrated in the given sample that for better-performing pupils the importance of parental support is higher than for their less-performing classmates. At the same time, the positive Cohen's "d" of 0.556 confirms the material significance of this fact.
- H_8: based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, where p=0.0017, it was demonstrated in the given sample that for pupils with a desirable BMI, parental support for creativity is less important than for pupils with an undesirable BMI.
- H_9: Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, where p=0.020, it was shown in the given sample that for 6th grade pupils parental support for creativity was more important than for 7th grade pupils.
- H_{10}: Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, where p=0.005, it was demonstrated in the given sample that the importance of perceived parental support for pupils varies according to the school's locality. Expressed by median and arithmetic means, the perceived importance was lowest at the elementary school in Duchcov (pupils care little about whether their parents support them or not). On the contrary, it was in Budyně n. Ohří (for the pupils of the monitored sample, parental support was the most important).

Positive relationships were demonstrated between frequency and importance for all questionnaire items, i.e. the more important the item was for the pupils, the greater the frequency of the given phenomenon they reported.

4 Discussion

The results of the survey presented correspond to the conclusions of other research (e.g. Li & Li, 2025; Liu et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2021), which repeatedly confirm the importance of parental support for the development of children's creativity. The survey confirmed that pupils who achieve better results at school also more often perceive that their parents support them in creative thinking and activities. These findings are consistent with the self-determination theory (Liu et al., 2013),

according to which parental support contributes to children's higher autonomy and motivation, and thus to greater openness to creative problem solving.

Following the findings of Lin et al. (2023), who identified the influence of parental involvement on strengthening children's self-confidence and creative potential, the survey also identified differences across age groups and locations. 6th grade pupils more often reported positive experience with parental support for creativity than 7th grade pupils, which may be related to both the developmental dynamics of adolescence and changes in the character of parental upbringing. This tendency is consistent with the findings of Wu et al. (2021), which describe the indirect effect of parental support through socio-emotional characteristics such as empathy or optimism.

The differences found in the partial areas of support depending on the gender of the pupils point to a certain gender selectivity. Boys were more often supported in the areas of technical skills and doubting, while girls were more often supported in the areas of exploring, explaining, and finding connections. These differences can be interpreted not only as a reflection of gender stereotypes in upbringing, but also as evidence that creativity takes different forms, the support for which varies depending on the form of parental interaction (compare Miller & Gerard, 1979).

In accordance with the review by Smare and Elfatihi (2024), which synthesizes the results of 55 empirical studies, it can be confirmed that children's creativity is shaped by a complex interplay of personality characteristics and contextual factors, with the family environment playing a key role. Findings on the influence of parenting style, quality of home environment, parent-child interaction, and support for creative activities confirm that children do not grow up in conditions of equal quality. For this reason, the authors emphasize the importance of an educational environment that can help compensate for unequal starting conditions and support creativity in all children, regardless of family background.

Pupils from the elementary school in Budyně n. O. more often reported positive experiences with support for creativity from their parents than their peers from the elementary school in Duchcov. This difference may be related to both the developmental dynamics of adolescence and contextual differences and changes in the nature of parental upbringing. The observed tendency corresponds to the findings of Wu et al. (2021), which describe that the parent-child relationship can influence a child's creativity not only directly, but also through the development of emotional intelligence, with the intensity of this influence being further modulated by personality resilience. Similarly, Li and Li (2025) confirm that the influence of the family environment, especially the quality of the parent-child relationship and the level of parental involvement, is not only reflected directly on pupils' creativity, but also indirectly through the development of emotions. These socio-emotional characteristics enable more effectively to cope with challenges and develop the ability to see from different perspectives, thereby fundamentally

supporting creative thinking. The results thus suggest that differences between locations may not be due solely to external conditions (e.g., segregation of certain populations) but may also reflect varying levels of socio-emotional support provided within the family environment.

Conclusions

Our survey reflected both internal factors of creativity of pupils at the turn of junior and senior school age (e.g. the level of their intellectual and emotional maturation, motivation, interest, personality traits), and external factors (especially family but also local environment). The research raised the question of how external environmental influences condition the development of pupils' internal creative factors, as well as the respondents' ability to reflect on the connections related to this process. Although the research probe was of a momentary nature and pupils´ statements cannot distinguish their varying abilities to reflect, it confirmed the importance of parental support in developing their creativity within the context of the selected variables (gender, grades, BMI, age, location). It indicated that different qualities of family care led to varying development of pupils' creativity, even when their innate dispositions are similar. The survey results are particularly significant within the context of family statistical data. The number of complete families in the Czech Republic—those with the potential for quality family care—has been declining for a long time; in 2024, their share was 57.5%. At the same time, the number of single-parent families is increasing, with pure single-parent households making up approximately one-tenth of all households (Brabcová & Korychová, 2025). The development of the family environment as a key factor is affecting not only the development of children's creativity, but it also suggests a relatively unfavorable outlook.

If it is true that the development of each pupil's innate dispositions, not just creativity, is one-third dependent on parental support, one-third on the pupil's effort, and one-third on the level of school instruction (Oates, 2010), then the question arises whether the weakening of one factor can be compensated by an increase in the remaining factors, and under what conditions.

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