

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## *Perceived parental attitudes of the father and the school achievements of adolescents*

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### BACKGROUND

This article focuses on the relationship between parental attitudes of the father perceived by adolescents and their school achievements. Nowadays, interest in the role of the father in raising a child is growing. The influence of the students' family environment in shaping their school achievement is very important.

### PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

The study group consisted of 687 pupils, including 418 (60.8%) girls and 267 (39.2%) boys. Fathers' attitudes were examined with the Parental Attitudes Scale version of "My Father". In order to establish the relationship between the father's parental attitudes perceived by teenagers and grade point average (GPA), Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient values were calculated. In the next step the role of gender as a moderator of these relationships was evaluated.

### RESULTS

The results of the conducted research show that the acceptance and autonomy attitudes positively correlate with

the average grade from last year, while the requirements and inconsistency attitudes showed negative correlations with school achievements. The results indicated that gender moderated the relationship between perceived acceptance, autonomy, protectiveness and GPA.

### CONCLUSIONS

It was found that an increase in the level of the father's perceived acceptance and autonomy leads to a higher average grade than the previous year, although only among girls. The level of protectiveness was found to be a negative predictor of school achievements, although only among boys.

### KEY WORDS

adolescence; father's parental attitudes; school achievements; abilities

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## BACKGROUND

Nowadays, the belief that the involvement of the family, predominantly that of parents, is an important factor in both the successes and educational problems of children is a widely shared view. This is reflected in contemporary models of abilities and trends in research on the development of young talents (Jakubiak-Zapalska, 2013; Sękowski & Płudowska, 2020). Variables that take into account the involvement of parents in children's education include parental styles and attitudes, parents' expectations and aspirations, home principles, parental supervision, communication between parents and children, and parents' attitude towards school (Porumb & Necúoi, 2013).

The influence of the students' family environment in shaping their school achievement is important at every stage of education, but according to many researchers this factor is particularly significant in their adolescence. This is a period of transition from being dependent and controlled by their parents, characteristic of the previous stages of development, to self-exploration and autonomy (Wentzel & Battle, 2001). Additionally, achievements in the field of education gained at this stage of life seem to be important for success or failure in solving their identity crisis (Boon, 2007). It can also be assumed that the impact of educational influences of mothers and fathers is different for girls and boys, due to different educational roles of both parents as well as different identification patterns for both genders (Marszał-Wiśniewska, 2001).

Parental educational influence and the child's early experiences have an impact on the formation of the child's behavioural patterns and self-perception (Young et al., 2014). The parent's active participation in the child's school life allows the child to develop positive habits connected to learning, a positive approach to classes, and the ability to determine personal goals, as well as stimulating aspirations. This also leads to improvement of the child's school achievements (Smith et al., 2019). Nonetheless, too little space is still dedicated to the role of the father in shaping children's achievements and development (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Gordon, 2017; McBride et al., 2005). What is more, it is reported in the literature that the significance of the father for the development of girls and boys may vary (Xiong et al., 2021). Therefore it seems to be justified to include variables connected with the father's educational practices, at the same time moderating it with the gender variable, in research models concerning the conditioning for adolescents' school achievements.

### ABILITY DEVELOPMENT AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS

Numerous factors impact school achievements of pupils, including external ones. Bronfenbrenner's theory

assumes that the interaction of such systems as school and family shapes the development of the adolescent (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Most researchers share the view that the family's educational influence plays an important role in the development of a child's abilities (Gordon, 2017). The analyses conducted internationally confirm the thesis that the issue of general intelligence does not in any way exhaust the subject of giftedness, and achievements – as one of the criteria of giftedness – are the result of many factors, including emotional and motivational, personality and social (Sękowski & Płudowska, 2018). In addition, the observation of trends in research on the determinants of talent development shows that the importance of external factors is emphasized, as well as the transition from the search for features important for talent development in a static perspective to explaining the process of their formation (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008). When assuming that abilities are an important, but not sufficient, condition for school achievement, it is worth considering the influence of environmental factors, including the influence of upbringing in the process of developing a child's talents (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008).

As Baum (2011) points out, positive educational attitudes foster children's involvement in the implementation of the undertaken activities, their active attitude, as well as perseverance in achieving the goal and mental resilience, which also contribute to building their self-esteem. These features, in turn, constitute an important element in the structure of abilities proposed in many models. They are reflected, among others, in the form of effort, commitment to work, perseverance, motivational factors, or those related to the formation of mature emotionality and mental resilience, as stressed by Renzulli (2005), Gagné (2005) and Tannenbaum (1986, after Siekańska, 2004). The role of upbringing in the process of developing abilities is thus revealed in two ways: first of all, directly – as the accompaniment of parents and guardians in the intellectual development of the child, shaping interests and passions; secondly, indirectly – in the process of personality formation, through influencing the development of the emotional, motivational, value system, social competences, creative attitudes and behaviours.

### THE FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHILD'S LIFE

In recent years, authors have begun to draw attention to the fact that in addition to the influence of the mother, the father plays an important role in raising the child (Adler & Lenz, 2017; Pancsofar et al., 2019; Sarkadi et al., 2008). In earlier studies, the figure of the father was often overlooked, and in the theories of upbringing it was limited to the role of the family host. Today, the role of the father's involvement and presence from

the prenatal period is emphasized. Attention is drawn to his irreplaceable role in the upbringing process, both in the cognitive and the emotional development of the child (Basil & Ndiujye, 2019; Cooke et al., 2019).

As research has shown, the father's influence on the child's education is related to the child's level of education – the higher the education, the greater the engagement (Jeong et al., 2018). There are also cultural differences in the level of perceived involvement of fathers in the process of upbringing and education. It is assumed that in more patriarchal societies, the father will be less involved in the child's upbringing and education (Rentzou et al., 2019). Compared to the child's relationship with the mother, the relationship with the father is still perceived as less satisfactory: fathers are considered to be more distanced and authoritative than mothers. The lack of satisfaction in the relationship with the father is often caused by dissatisfaction with communication with him and less emotional involvement. Researchers note that the child's satisfaction with the relationship with his or her father changes especially during adolescence and may be related to the child's gender. It is believed that sons will be more sensitive to the quality of communication and emotional relationship with their father than girls (Celik, 2019).

Research on the involvement of fathers in the education of their children with disabilities pays particular attention to the uniqueness of the emotional relationship between father and child. In addition, it has been shown that the level of involvement of the father in the education of the child depends on the relationship between parents. The mother seems to be the person who is more involved in school-related matters. Interestingly, fathers note that this is because the school environment is more favourable to mothers. This may be due to the stereotype that the mother is primarily responsible for educational issues. Fathers, meanwhile, want to participate in the child's school life and consider themselves as committed as mothers (Pancsofar et al., 2019).

The father's support is of great importance for the child's cognitive development, learning and understanding of the world (Chawla-Duggan et al., 2020). Today, there is a growing public awareness of the role of the father as well as increasing demands on fathers. Social expectations towards men regarding their educational role and involvement in the education and health of their children are increasing (Wells, 2016). Research has shown that the positive influence of the father on the child begins in the early years of the educational process and remains relevant into early adulthood (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; McBride et al., 2005).

#### PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

Parental attitudes are forms of behaviour towards a child. They concern issues related to upbringing.

Attitudes are shaped by a variety of factors, including experience, the influence of the environment, as well as age and gender. This means that they may differ between mothers and fathers and also depending on the age of the child (Plopa, 2011). In the research conducted by Xiong et al. (2021) differences were found in the influence of parents on children's school achievements depending on gender. A long lasting effect was observed only in the case of girls (cross-lagged effect), whereas a relationship between the behavioural engagement in learning and the influence of the parents was observed only in the case of boys (Xiong et al., 2021).

Adolescence is a special developmental period for young people and a huge challenge for parents. Especially at this time, the relationship between father and daughter can be of great importance to the daughter's perception of herself and her achievements (Xiong et al., 2021). Adolescent girls seek acceptance, and acceptance is one of the most important parental attitudes. It is expressed in closeness, openness and trust: the parent gives the child a sense of security, unconditional help and support. The opposite pole of this attitude is rejection. The person expressing this attitude is cool and distant – the child cannot rely on the parent, is left alone with his or her problems and dilemmas, and he or she may even perceive this treatment as a lack of love (Gwiazdowska-Stańczak & Sękowski, 2018). Excessive demands and inconsistent attitude of parents lead to the child's unmet needs and disturbances in personality development, also posing a risk of emotional disorders, personality disorders (Maćik, 2018; Young et al., 2014), depression (Harris & Curtin, 2002), addictions (Ulman, 2011), or neurotic disorders (Sobański et al., 2013). Accepting a child as he or she is relates to a constant tendency in the behaviour of the parents. They do not have to tolerate every behaviour of their child; if it is reprehensible they condemn the misconduct, but their general attitude towards the child does not change (Gwiazdowska-Stańczak & Sękowski, 2018).

An important role of a parent in upbringing is to make appropriate demands, i.e. adjusted to the age and intellectual level of the child. Excessive requirements are associated with authoritarianism and absolute obedience – the parent does not tolerate the child's independent decisions and choices, imposes his or her own bans and orders. Such an attitude is described as negative and may have an impact on lowering the student's achievements and creativity and result in a halt in the development of their interests (Jankowska, 2012). It is reported that fathers are more often characterized by a demanding attitude than mothers (Sikorski, 2011). In addition to the level of requirements – also in accordance with age and developmental period – a parent should adjust the appropriate scope of autonomy given to the child. It is connected with shaping the child's sense

of responsibility, ability to make independent decisions and respect for the child's choices and views. Above all, however, freedom in creative activities fosters greater school achievement (Gwiazdowska-Stańczak & Sękowski, 2018). This attitude is contradicted by excessive protection. A parent who is guided by such an attitude will limit the child's independence by relieving the child from all his or her duties. An adolescent treated this way may feel overwhelmed and have problems with reaching social maturity; he or she will become withdrawn and uncertain (Plopa, 2012). However, the most destructive of all attitudes is inconsistency. The parent's behaviour then depends on his or her mood. Due to lack of predictability, the child grows up in chaos, does not know what to expect – for the same behaviour he or she will be praised and at other times chastised. A student brought up in such a family will have problems in social relations, and thus also difficulties at school (Kaleta, 2011).

The mechanism of influence of particular parental attitudes on the school achievements of young people, as research shows, may be connected with voluntary control. This term refers to processes that mediate between intention and realization. Kuhl (1992) proposes that individuals differ in their ability to control their actions and classifies them as state or action-oriented. As shown in Polish studies, the more demanding the attitude of the father, the greater the tendency for intentions to be incompatible with their realization (characteristic of state orientation) in the daughter. The effectiveness of volitional control in adolescents is also reduced by the inconsistent educational attitude of parents (Marszał-Wiśniewska, 2001). Voluntary aspects of action control, as shown in other studies (Schlüter et al., 2018), are in turn an important predictor of achievements in the form of school grades.

These observations with regard to the five differentiated parental attitudes lead to the conclusion that positive attitudes (more adaptive when considering school achievements) are acceptance and autonomy, whereas negative ones (undesirable) are excessive demandingness, overprotectiveness and inconsistency (Plopa, 2011). This claim is also supported by the results of research concerning the significance of specific parental attitudes with regard to various realms of their children's functioning. The perceived attitude of acceptance from the parents is positively correlated with the adolescents' hope to succeed (Sabaj-Siudur, 2018), and children who experience acceptance from their parents achieve better grades at school (Thakre & Shet, 2020). Autonomy provided to adolescents by their parents is linked with their higher level of self-esteem (Sabaj-Siudur, 2018); it was also asserted that the greater the autonomy from the parents is, the greater are the self-esteem and the perseverance in the children's learning process (Ojewola & Faremi, 2018). Research shows that authoritarianism, which is

specific for excessive demandingness, is linked with a lower level of motivation for achievements (Thakre & Shet, 2020) and is also negatively correlated with school achievements measured with the aid of grade point average (GPA) (Zahedani et al., 2016). Interesting conclusions on the topic of the link between parental attitudes and the achievements of pupils at secondary schools were presented by Shin et al. (2013). In their study they demonstrated negative effects of parental overprotection on academic achievement among male high school students. What is interesting, "this study implies that, rather than mother's overprotection, father's overprotection may lead to worse educational outcome among male adolescents" (Shin et al., 2013, p. 253). There is also empirical evidence of the negative influence of parental inconsistency on the functioning of adolescents. Research results indicate that parental inconsistency is closely linked with the mental health of adolescents. Probably the negative impact of parental inconsistency on the mental health of adolescents is a result of experienced ambivalence with regard to the parents, the unpredictability of the father's and/or mother's behaviour, but also a feeling of injustice (Dwairy, 2010).

School achievements are a very important element of young people's life. A positive attitude towards school is very important for the well-being of young people, as also noted by fathers. When asked about the welfare determinants of their adolescent children, they indicated many factors. Apart from mental, physical and emotional factors, they also mentioned satisfaction with the school their children attended (Mansoori et al., 2019).

When summarizing the significance of parental attitudes for the process of shaping school achievements of adolescents, one can assume that positive attitudes, which encompass acceptance and autonomy (Plopa, 2011), will foster school achievements among adolescents, whereas attitudes considered negative (undesirable), i.e. excessive demandingness, overprotection and inconsistent attitude (Plopa, 2011), will be a negative predictor of achievements in the form of GPA.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Taking into account the theoretical assumptions concerning the influence of family factors in shaping the school achievements of young people, as well as the growing interest in the role of the father in the upbringing process in recent years, the following research question was formulated:

Are the perceived parental attitudes of the father an important predictor of school achievements of young people?

On the basis of the literature and previous research, the following hypotheses were generated:

H1: The perceived acceptance attitude of the father is a positive predictor of grade point average (GPA).

H2: The perceived attitude of autonomy on the part of the father is a positive predictor of GPA.

H3: Perceived attitude of excessive demandingness is a negative predictor of GPA.

H4: The perceived attitude of overprotection is a negative predictor of GPA.

H5: The perceived inconsistent attitude is a negative predictor of GPA.

In addition, some researchers (Celik, 2019) point to differences in the importance of the father's role for boys and girls. Therefore, the following question is posed:

Does the child's gender act as a moderator of the relationship between perceived parental attitudes of the father and of grade point averages?

## PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

### PARTICIPANTS

The study group consisted of 687 pupils, including 418 (60.8%) girls and 269 (39.2%) boys. This disproportion is a result of the gender ratio in Polish high schools and technical schools – the majority of pupils in high schools are girls (62.7%), whereas in technical schools the majority are boys (60.7%) (GUS, 2019). The vast majority of the respondents were general secondary school students (81.1%) and technical school students (16.3%). The vocational school was attended by 14 people (2%), while the profiled secondary school was attended by 4 people (0.6%). The age of the respondents ranged from 15 to 18 years ( $M = 16.29$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ). More than half of the teenagers (62%) were urban residents, while the remaining students (38%) live in the countryside. Achievement was measured by grade point average (GPA) from the last school year. The survey participants also answered a number of questions about their family situation. The most numerous category (91.8%) comprised students whose parents were in a relationship and raised their children together; 6.6% of the respondents stated that their parents had been divorced and 1.6% were raised by one parent from the beginning. More than half of the surveyed students had one brother or sister (51.4%), 21.1% had two siblings, and 12.9% were brought up in families with four or more children. In the surveyed group, only children constituted 14.4% of all participants. The survey also included a question about the parents' level of education – among both the mothers and the fathers, the most numerous group consisted of persons with a university degree (mothers – 55.5%, fathers – 43.5%), whereas the fewest number of people had completed only primary education (mothers – 1.4%, fathers – 2.8%); 25.7% of the fathers and 26.7% of the mothers had secondary education and 27.8% of

fathers and 16.3% of mothers of the examined pupils had vocational education. The parents of the surveyed young people were professionally active; this applies both to fathers, 91.3% of whom worked professionally, and mothers (81.8% working).

### METHODS OF TESTING AND MEASURES USED

The research was of a questionnaire character, and the respondents were informed about anonymity and voluntariness of participation in the research. The procedure was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of Psychology at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. The research with the prior consent of teachers and parents took place in schools, in groups. Information about the average school grade in the last semester was used as a criterion of school achievements. In order to ensure anonymity of the research, the average grades were reported by the pupils (the question concerning the average grade was included in the questionnaire in the part "particulars"). In order to minimize the risk of exaggerated grade averages being provided by the pupils, specific instructions were provided which emphasized the anonymity of the survey, with a request to honestly fill out the questionnaire and with the information that one could decline to participate in the survey at any moment. In the Polish educational system, beginning with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school, yearly grades are expressed by numbers from 1.0 to 6.0, where: 1 is unsatisfactory; 2 is poor; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is good; 5 is very good and 6 is excellent. In our study the range of values of GPA was 2.0-6.0.

*The Parental Attitudes Scale version of "My Father".* Fathers' attitudes were examined with the Parental Attitudes Scale version of "My Father" by Plopa (2012). The basis for the creation of a Scale of Parental Attitudes in a 45-item versions was an earlier version of the questionnaire from 1987 which included 75 assertions. The results of the analysis of the reliability of the new version of the Scale of Parental Attitudes indicates that it is a highly internally consistent construct. For all coefficients Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value exceeds .80. In the general population acceptance-rejection  $\alpha = .91$ , demandingness  $\alpha = .86$ , autonomy  $\alpha = .88$ , inconsistency  $\alpha = .84$ , protectiveness  $\alpha = .84$ . The questionnaire is satisfactorily cogent and reliable. RMSEA < .05, GFI > .90 and AGFI > .90. It allows one to precisely measure parental attitudes as a five-factor construct. The "My Father" Parental Attitudes Scale is a tool for examining the father's attitude from his child's perspective. The examined persons respond to 45 assertions on a 5-level scale (1 - agree, 2 - mostly agree, 3 - hard to say, 4 - mostly disagree, 5 - disagree). The method may be used both in surveying individuals and groups of adolescents from 13 to 20 years of age. The questionnaire "My Father" consists of five scales,

each including 9 assertions: acceptance-rejection (e.g. "My father is warm and kind in his contacts with me"; "When I need help, he dedicates a lot of time to me"), autonomy (e.g. "He agrees with me having my own secrets"; "He is convinced that he can count on me"), protectiveness (e.g. "He wants to know everything about what happened to me"; "He cares too much for me"), demandingness (e.g. "He thinks that I have no right to oppose him"; "He implies that he is always right") and inconsistency (e.g. "When I do something inappropriate I do not know whether he will forgive me or he will strictly punish me"; "When he is angry, it is difficult to tell how he will behave"). The method can be used in group research; it is intended for young people between 13 and 20 years of age (Plopa, 2012).

Statistical calculations were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 26.0; the moderation analysis was conducted using PROCESS v3.1 by Hayes for IBM SPSS Statistics.

## RESULTS

In order to establish the relationship between the father's parental attitudes perceived by teenagers and GPA, Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient values were calculated. In the next step the role of gender as a moderator of these relationships was evaluated. A moderation analysis using the macro Process was carried out for this purpose. Model 1 was utilized in the present study (Hayes, 2018).

### CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE FATHER'S PARENTAL ATTITUDES IN TEENAGERS AND GRADE POINT AVERAGES (GPA)

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients between the variables included in the study.

The perceived attitudes of acceptance and autonomy on the part of the father positively correlated with the average of last year's grades, while the attitudes of demandingness and inconsistency showed negative correlations with school performance in the form of average grades. The study showed no statistically significant relationships between the perceived attitude of protectiveness and GPA.

### MODERATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED PARENTAL ATTITUDES OF THE FATHER AND GPA BY GENDER

In the next stage, the role of gender as a moderator of relations between the father's parental attitudes perceived by youth was tested: acceptance-rejection, autonomy, protectiveness, demandingness and inconsistency and grade point averages.

In order to assess whether and how the interaction of perceived acceptance-rejection and the adolescent's gender determines school achievement, an analysis of moderation with the interaction component was conducted. The model with the interactive component was well fitted to the data and explained 16% of the variance in the last year's grade average. The acceptance-rejection scale and the interactive component made a significant contribution to the regression equation (see Table 2).

The visual representation of the model is shown in Figure 1.

The results of the analysis indicate that the higher the perceived acceptance of the father is, the higher is the grade point average of last year's marks among girls ( $B = .01, p = .001$ ). No such relationship was observed in the group of boys – the regression coefficient for the predictor was statistically insignificant ( $B = -.003, p = .520$ ). Another predictor of the GPA included in the study was the perceived attitude of

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics and the matrix of correlations between GPA and the perceived father's parental attitudes*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Acceptance-rejection	–					
2. Autonomy	.74***	–				
3. Protectiveness	.42***	.18***	–			
4. Demandingness	-.42***	-.59***	.23***	–		
5. Inconsistency	-.55***	-.60***	.05	.80***	–	
6. GPA	.08*	.12**	-.06	-.23***	-.22***	–
<i>M</i>	33.75	35.83	26.81	23.20	21.74	4.62
<i>SD</i>	8.98	7.25	8.18	9.61	8.48	0.83

Note. GPA – grade point average; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 2**

Results of the regression analysis for the perceived father's acceptance-rejection, gender and their interactions as predictors of the GPA

	Coeff.	SE	t	p
Constant	4.44	.14	32.03	< .001
Acceptance-rejection	.01	.00	3.29	.001
Gender (W)	-.09	.24	-0.39	.696
Acceptance-rejection × Gender (XW)	-.02	.01	-2.44	.015

$R^2 = .16$ ,  $MSE = .58$   
 $F(3, 683) = 43.90$ ,  $p < .001$

Note. GPA – grade point average.

autonomy on the part of the father. The model with the interactive component was well fitted to the data and explained about 17% of the variation within the explained variable (see Table 3).

The analysis also showed that gender significantly moderates the relationship between the parental attitude in question and the GPA (see Figure 2).

The perceived attitude of autonomy on the part of the father is a positive predictor of school achievement (GPA) only among girls ( $B = .02$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In the group of boys this attitude does not allow one to significantly predict the explained variable ( $B = -.003$ ,  $p = .656$ ).

In the next step, the role of the protectiveness attitude, gender, and the interaction of these variables

**Table 3**

Results of regression analysis for perceived father's autonomy, gender and their interactions as predictors of the GPA

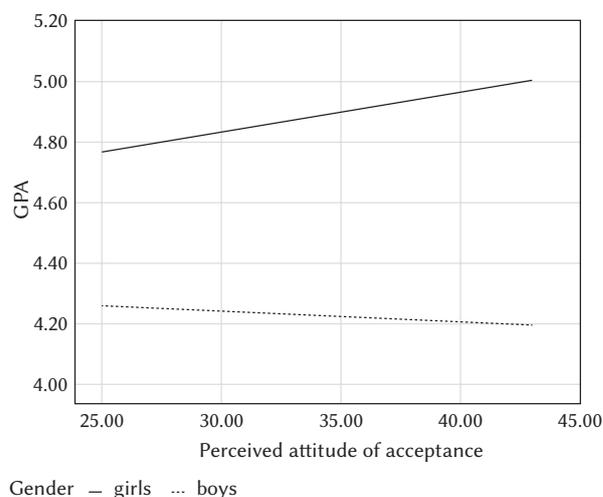
	Coeff.	SE	t	p
Constant	4.18	.18	22.77	< .001
Autonomy	.02	.01	3.93	< .001
Gender (W)	.16	.30	0.52	.601
Autonomy × Gender (XW)	-.02	.01	-2.70	.007

$R^2 = .17$ ,  $MSE = .57$   
 $F(3, 683) = 45.62$ ,  $p < .001$

Note. GPA – grade point average.

**Figure 1**

The impact of perceived attitude of acceptance on GPA with the moderating effect of gender



in explaining the GPA was evaluated. In the model in question (Table 4), only the created interaction component proved significant.

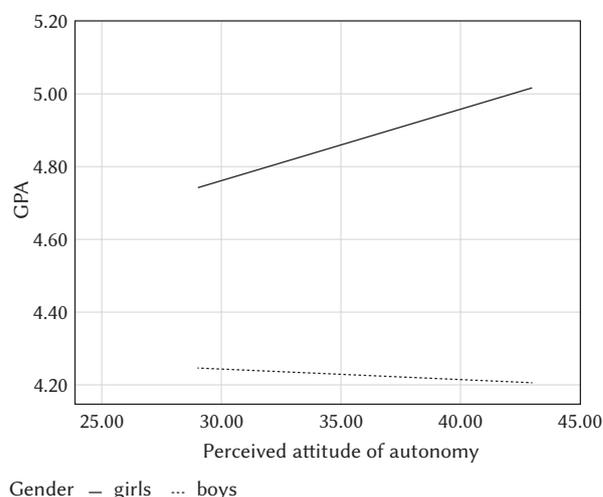
The analysis carried out in subgroups distinguished by gender and the graphical presentation of the discussed relationships (Figure 3) allow us to conclude that the perception of the protectiveness attitude on the part of the father is a significant, negative predictor of GPA only among boys ( $B = -.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In the group of girls, this attitude has no significant relationship with the explanatory variable ( $B = .00$ ,  $p = .758$ ).

Another of the parental attitudes taken into account – the father's requirement towards the ado-

**Figure 2**

The impact of perceived attitude of autonomy on GPA with the moderating effect of gender



**Table 4**

*Results of the regression analysis for the perceived father's protectiveness, gender and their interactions as predictors of the GPA*

	Coeff.	SE	t	p
Constant	4.84	.12	39.08	< .001
Protectiveness	.00	.00	0.31	.757
Gender (W)	-.04	.21	-0.19	.850
Protectiveness × Gender (XW)	-.02	.01	-3.13	.002

$R^2 = .17, MSE = .58$   
 $F(3, 683) = 44.81, p < .001$

Note. GPA – grade point average.

lescent – proved to be an important predictor of the achievement criterion included in the study.

The results of the analysis indicate that the more adolescents perceive their fathers as excessively demanding, the lower is their school performance in terms of grade average. This pattern is similar among girls and boys – gender did not prove to be a significant moderator of the relationships discussed (Table 5).

The last of the predictors included in the analysis was the perceived attitude of inconsistency on the part of the father. This variable, as well as gender, turned out to be an essential contribution to the regression equation (Table 6).

The results allow us to conclude that the more adolescents perceive the attitudes of their fathers as inconsistent, the lower is their school performance (Figure 4). In addition, an interactive component was

**Table 5**

*Results of the regression analysis for the perceived father's demandingness, gender and their interactions as predictors of the GPA*

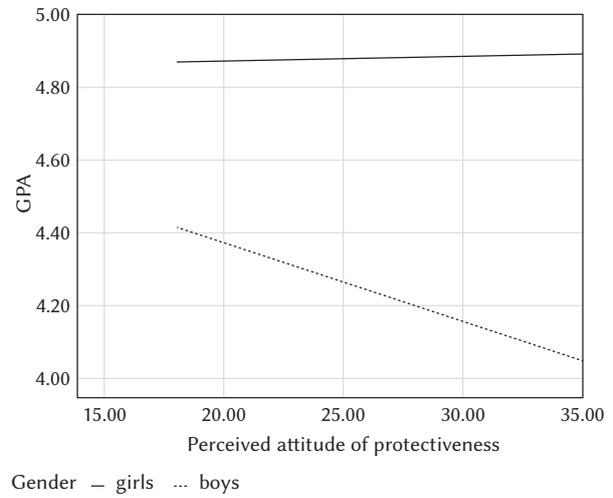
	Coeff.	SE	t	p
Constant	5.23	.09	57.46	< .001
Demandingness	-.02	.00	-4.20	< .001
Gender (W)	-.59	.16	-3.71	< .001
Requirement × Gender (XW)	-.001	.01	-0.16	.872

$R^2 = .18, MSE = .56$   
 $F(3, 683) = 50.70, p < .001$

Note. GPA – grade point average.

**Figure 3**

*The impact of the perceived attitude of protectiveness on GPA with the moderating effect of gender*



noted, although its contribution to the regression equation explaining the GPA was not significant.

The regression analysis by girls and boys demonstrated that the perceived father's inconsistency allows prediction of the grade point average in the girls' group ( $B = -.02, p < .001$ ), while in the boys' group this variable shows no significant relationship with the considered achievement criterion ( $B = -.01, p = .103$ ).

DISCUSSION

This study has positively verified the hypotheses that perceived parental attitudes of the father, such as acceptance and autonomy, are positive predictors of school achievement (H1, H2), while attitudes of excessive demandingness, protectiveness and incon-

**Table 6**

*Results of the regression analysis for the perceived father's inconsistency, gender and their interactions as predictors of the GPA*

	Coeff.	SE	t	p
Constant	5.33	.10	55.67	< .001
Inconsistency	-.02	.00	-5.06	< .001
Gender (W)	-.89	.17	-5.23	< .001
Inconsistency × Gender (XW)	.01	.01	1.69	.092

$R^2 = .18, MSE = .56$   
 $F(3, 683) = 50.57, p < .001$

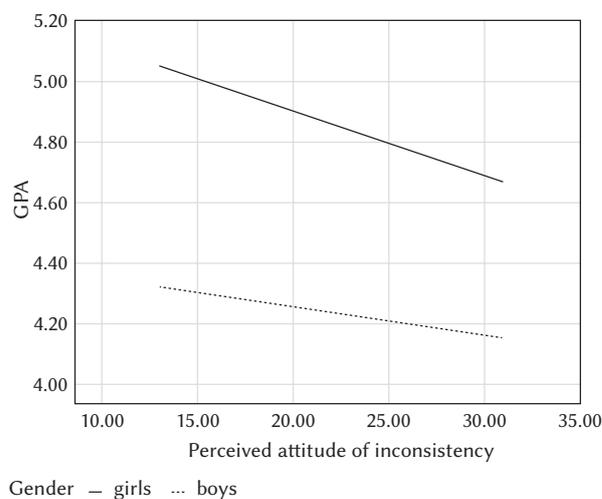
Note. GPA – grade point average.

sistency (H3, H4 and H5) contribute to lowering adolescents' school achievement. However, the analysis showed that these patterns are gender-specific. According to the results, perceiving one's own father as providing open-minded, accepting, unconditional support and assistance, and respecting the views and choices of the child, are only conducive to the educational success of girls. Such students feel valued and supported, but at the same time they have the freedom to choose their interests and develop their competences. Similarly, the perceived attitude of inconsistency – the dependence of the father's behaviour on his momentary mood, and the vacillation of opinions, feelings and actions – leads to lower school achievement only among girls. Excessive protection, manifesting itself as a father's tendency to over-interfere in the child's life, combined with the conviction that without it the child cannot cope with the challenges that stand in his or her way, contributes to lower grade point averages (GPA) only among boys. In the case of the parental attitude described as excessively demanding, it has been shown to be an unfavourable factor for educational success among both girls and boys (cf. Plopa, 2011, 2012). Research by Gordon (2017) on the influence of parental engagement and school achievements demonstrated that girls achieve a higher grade average than boys. It emphasized that one must focus on the significance of the father in children's education, also utilizing moderating variables such as gender and socio-economic background.

In interpreting the results, we can refer to Young's theory of early non-adaptive patterns (Young et al., 2014). According to its assumptions, the experience of a child in the course of development translates into permanent patterns of functioning and self-confidence. An inappropriate way of attachment, related to negative parental attitudes, leads to the deprivation of the child's basic needs. In the case of low acceptance (rejection of the child), the need for safe attachment to others is not satisfied. The attitude of overprotectiveness blocks the fulfilment of the need for causative agency and a sense of competence, while a low attitude of autonomy limits the freedom of expression of emotions and needs. Excessive demands of parents lead to the child's unmet needs for spontaneity and playing, while an inconsistent attitude leads to the deprivation of the need for realistic boundaries. The long-term deprivation of these needs causes the child to create adequate cognitive-emotional representations, called early non-adaptive patterns, based on the parent(s)' messages. The content of these patterns, as well as actions undertaken by the child to deal with them, lead to disturbances in personality development, also posing a risk of emotional disorders, personality disorders (Maćik, 2018; Young et al., 2014), depression (Harris & Curtin, 2002), addictions (Ulman, 2011), or neurotic disorders (Sobański

**Figure 4**

*The impact of the perceived attitude of inconsistency on GPA with the moderating effect of gender*



et al., 2013). Thus, parental attitudes, influencing the emotional functioning and development of the child's personality (important for the development of abilities and talents), consequently contribute to shaping his or her achievements. Additionally, as shown in the study, parental attitudes described as positive – acceptance and autonomy – are conducive to the internalisation of school activity standards, while negative attitudes, such as inconsistency or excessive requirements, are associated with a low level of their internalisation (Kadzikowska-Wrzošek, 2011). Differences between girls' and boys' perceptions of the father may be related to the way they identify. Girls identify themselves more easily with their mother than boys with their father. Hence, the more frequent and positive the boys' contact with their father, the more correct the interiorisation of norms. Boys who have worse relations with fathers are less self-sufficient and more conflicted (Plopa, 2011).

Not only the gender, but also the personality type of young people may be related to the perception of father attitudes. Boys who positively evaluate their fathers show more sociability, emotional balance, ease of contact, perseverance and self-confidence (Plopa, 2011). It has been found that their better academic performance is associated with their father's perceived low overprotectiveness. This is because the father's overprotectiveness would block their confidence in themselves and their achievements. As for girls who feel more loved by fathers, they display personality traits such as responsibility, emotional balance, independence and internal discipline (Plopa, 2011). A sense of responsibility is associated with the need for autonomy and acceptance of one's choices, and therefore these fatherly attitudes are associated with higher school achievement for girls.

It turns out that the father's parental attitudes can have an impact on pupils' school performance. Inconsistency and excessive demandingness are negatively correlated with student achievement. As predicted, attitudes of inconsistency and excessive demands proved to be negative predictors of grade point average. A parent who treats a child in an authoritarian manner by enforcing specific behaviour with the use of punishments blocks the child's achievements, causing the student to withdraw and feel insecure. Inconsistency in the father's parenting influence can have a destructive effect on the child's school success. The child in such a situation feels anxious and insecure, which definitely blocks the development of passions, interests and creativity, thus generating parenting challenges.

Adolescents' abilities can be influenced by many factors, both internal and external. The latter group includes, among other factors, the parental influence. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory assumes that the part that has the greatest influence on humans is the microsystem. This is where the school and the family belong. These two basic environments are linked by a system of relations between them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Contemporary researchers refer to this relationship when explaining how much influence parents can have on a pupil's functioning in a school environment (Vera et al., 2018). Parents' educational styles have an impact on adolescents' school performance and learning strategies, which was also confirmed in the research presented in this article. It appears that high achievement and adaptive learning strategies are fostered by a parental attitude based on trust and commitment, but also on parental control. Opposing attitudes – lack of trust, low parental involvement – lead to maladaptive learning strategies (Aunola et al., 2000).

Fathers play a strong role in the lives of their growing daughters. Although some researchers point out that the father's role in the lives of boys is more important than that of girls (Celik, 2019), it turns out the opposite may be true. It is within the group of girls that perceived higher acceptance and autonomy on the part of the father was associated with their higher grade average. The feeling of being accepted, loved and supported provides a favourable environment to develop their educational passions. The ability to make independent decisions, especially about their own interests, makes it possible for young people to achieve more. A parent who trusts his or her child, does not control him or her excessively, according to the results obtained, has a positive impact on their child's school performance. The result obtained in the boys' group is consistent with the prediction that an over-protective attitude is negatively correlated with the average grade in adolescents. Excessively demanding fathers have a negative impact on the school performance of young people regardless

of their gender. This attitude is associated with authoritarianism, absolute respect for orders and prohibitions. Such treatment of an adolescent child will cause anxiety and contempt. An excessively demanding parent paradoxically acts against what he or she wants to achieve. If he or she forces good grades on the child, causing him or her to feel threatened, he or she will make the pupil have achievements below his or her potential.

## CONCLUSIONS

The role of the father in the life of the child is very important. As shown by the present research, the father's attitudes may be related to the child's school achievements and the child's gender may be a moderator of these dependencies. Based on the acquired results we can assume that for shaping the school achievements of girls an important role is played, on the one hand, by acceptance, and on the other hand the autonomy provided by the father. In this group the factor that is negatively correlated with achievements in the form of GPA turned out to be an inconsistent attitude. Among boys, excessive protectiveness from the father seems to negatively impact school achievements, whereas excessive demandingness seems to be undesirable from the point of view of achievements, regardless of the adolescents' gender.

## LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The research was conducted only from the perspective of the youth. In the perspective of further considerations, it would be interesting to investigate the attitudes of the father from his point of view. Among the limitations of this research one must also mention its cross-sectional design, which does not allow for cause-and-effect inference. It would then seem reasonable to conduct longitudinal and qualitative studies on the relationship between parental attitudes and school performance. Another limitation of the research is the gender disproportion in the examined group of adolescents – when conducting subsequent analyses on the moderating function of gender in the relationship between perceived parental attitudes and GPA one should strive to equalize the proportion of examined girls and boys. One must be aware that the number of responses acquired in this research is relatively low, and the possibility of generalizing them is rather limited. Nonetheless, the results may become an inspiration for further, in-depth research connected with the functioning of adolescents, including personality and engagement in learning, and taking into consideration sociodemographic factors.

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