

Vesna Bilić
University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education
Nikolina Davidović
KBC Split, Psychiatry Clinic

The role of adverse socioeconomic conditions (poverty) and material deprivation of children in predicting parental behaviour

Rola niekorzystnych warunków społeczno-ekonomicznych (bieda) i niedostatku materialnego dzieci w przewidywanym postępowaniu rodziców

Abstract

The global economic crisis has not only shaken up the economy, but also family functioning, in which the most vulnerable groups took the hardest hit – children and adolescents. The goal of this scientific paper is to examine the role of an adverse socioeconomic family environment and the perception of material deprivation of children in forming an experience of parental acceptance, rejection and control.

610 participants from primary schools of Croatia were involved in the research (51.6% girls and 44.8% boys, not all respondents provided the information about their sex), with average age being 13.88 years (SD = 0.73). Along with the Questionnaires of general data and SES questionnaire, the research included the Scale of material deprivation of students and Scale of perception of parental behaviour – SPRP (Macuka, 2008).

The results of regression analysis indicate that the bigger the material deprivation of children, the smaller the amount of acceptance, and the larger the rejection of both parents and mother's control. In the case of anticipating the control of the father, it does not have any predictive power. It was indicated that material deprivation of children is a more significant predictor of parental behaviour (acceptance, rejection and control) than the socioeconomic status.

The conclusion points out the need for creating a family empowerment program and the importance of caring parental behaviour, along with the devastating effects of inadequate parental actions.

Keywords: *poverty, parent – child relationship, parental acceptance, rejection of children, control.*

Abstrakt

Globalny kryzys ekonomiczny nie tylko zachwiał gospodarką, ale także funkcjonowaniem rodziny, w której najbardziej narażonymi grupami stały się dzieci i młodzież. Celem tej pracy jest zbadanie roli niekorzystnego społeczno-ekonomicznego środowiska rodzinnego i niedostatku materialnego dzieci w kształtowaniu doświadczenia rodzicielskiej akceptacji, odrzucenia i kontroli.

W badaniu wzięło udział 610 uczniów szkół podstawowych w Chorwacji (51,6% dziewcząt i 44,8% chłopców; nie wszyscy respondenci podali płeć) ze średnią wieku 13,88 (SD = 0,73). Wraz z kwestionariuszami Questionnaires of general data oraz SES questionnaire, w badaniach zastosowano skale Scale of material deprivation of students i Scale of perception of parental behaviour – SPRP (Macuka, 2008).

Wyniki analizy regresji oznaczają, że im wyższy niedostatek materialny dzieci, tym mniejsza doza akceptacji i większe odrzucenie obu rodziców i kontrola matki. W przypadku przewidywania kontroli ojca nie ma żadnej mocy przewidywalnej. Wskazano, że niedostatek materialny dzieci jest bardziej znaczącym czynnikiem prognostycznym zachowania rodziców (akceptacja, odrzucenie i kontrola) niż status społeczno-ekonomiczny.

Wnioski wskazują na potrzebę utworzenia programu uppełnomocnienia rodziny oraz wagę troskliwego zachowania rodzicielskiego, wraz z druzgocącymi skutkami nieadekwatnych działań rodzicielskich.

Słowa kluczowe: *bieda, stosunki rodzice – dziecko, akceptacja rodzicielska, odrzucenie dzieci, kontrola.*

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, adverse global socioeconomic trends have shaken up the global economy, but also family functioning. An increase in problems among parents and a worrying increase in inadequate acting of parents, even abuse, of children is noted (Bilić et al., 2012). The financial crisis has not only jeopardized the fulfillment of basic needs of children like food, clothes

etc., but also the fulfillment of their emotional, social and educational needs. The question if socioeconomic conditions determine parents' behaviour toward children is becoming more and more popular.

It is often pointed out in literature that parental behaviour is determined by their individual traits (sex, age, knowledge and beliefs about raising children, their own upbringing), but contextual determinants (marital relations, social circles etc.) and socioeconomic conditions should not be neglected. Even though the Bronfenbrenner ecological theory is widely used and accepts that all types of systems (mesosystem, microsystem, exosystem, macrosystem) affect the functioning and the quality of relationships among family members, specificities of social context and their influence on interactions among parents and children are often neglected (Anđelković et al., 2012: 300). Some studies (Conger et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2010; Macuka, 2010; Rohner et al., 2012) suggest that an adverse financial situation causes negative changes in parenting and aggravates the quality of parents' answers to children's needs, which is seen in the reduction of warmth, support and care, i.e. acceptance, and more frequent inadequate reactions and control, which significantly determines the results of upbringing.

The aim of this scientific paper is to examine the role of socioeconomic family situation and material deprivation of children in forming the experience of parental behaviour.

Adverse socioeconomic family conditions and material deprivation of children

Unfortunately, in today's world, even in developed countries, there are more and more families that do not have satisfactory living conditions, an adequate place to live or funds for food, heating and personal hygiene, i.e. families that live in extreme poverty. There are also more and more people who are capable of working, often well educated, but unemployed and with no option of finding a new job, which means they are no longer capable of insuring their family conditions and a standard they used to have. They cannot pay their bills, pay off loans etc. They suddenly find themselves at the edge of poverty and Šučur (2014) refers to them as the new-age poor. Poverty affects 20% of world's population (Wray, 2015) and the poverty rates of children and adolescents have increased the most.

Parents with financial issues are not, even in their best efforts, able to ensure necessary means to satisfy various material, educational and social needs

of their children. Inability to satisfy material needs refers to inadequate living conditions (damp, cold and dark spaces) and a lack of clothes and footwear. Poverty is also a frequent reason why some parents cannot fulfil basic educational needs of their children (books, school supplies or a warm meal), necessary help (tutoring) and participating in organised school activities (visits to museums, galleries, theatres or field trips) or engaging in extracurricular activities that are paid extra (learning foreign languages, sport, musical education etc.). Listed activities represent significant help in the educational process and affect engagement and success in school. Some studies (Bullock et al., 2010) state that adolescents from poor families, in relation to their wealthier schoolmates, participate less in those activities. They also find it hard to attend a school they want to go to if that particular school is far away from their main residence. Even the continuation of education is at stake which, at the end, limits their success in life.

Lack of transportation and pocket-money, limited possibilities to participate in various social activities (parties, going out, hanging out with peers, travelling), just like the lack of clothes and preferred sportswear, decrease children's chances of creating bonds with peers and it affects their social status in the group (Walker et al., 2008) which leads to social deprivation. In a way, to them, those are visible signs of poverty because of which they feel different from others. They feel inferior, marginalized, discriminated against, powerless (Ridge, 2009). Other children are likely to tease them, laugh at them, insult them and they often verbally and physically abuse them (Bilić et al., 2012). Ridge (2009) points out that poverty involves disrespect, humiliation, attack on dignity, self-respect, and also denial of rights. There is also the sheer need of children, especially adolescents, to be accepted and involved with their peers. Since they have the same needs as their peers from wealthier families, they compare themselves to them, which often results with painful experiences of inequality and stigmatization which are dangerous and harmful. Although the aforementioned things are not necessary for survival, they affect children's everyday functioning and interaction (Ridge, 2009). Some authors (McDonald, 2008) point out that more and more children describe poverty through social relations, rather than material resources. Their subjective feeling of poverty should not be neglected along with the fact that their needs vary with age. While small children care more about food, toys etc., adolescents have a stronger need for fulfilling social needs and the like (de Neubourg et al., 2014). Even though the definition of children's poverty is stated as the lack of material things that define an acceptable living standard, the focus from material and financial resources is in the new age shifted to fulfilling needs and availability indicators. The term "deprivation"

is used when speaking about unfulfilled human needs (Šučur, 2006: 132). In the end, it is important to state that children can simultaneously experience various forms of material and non-material deprivation (de Neubourg et al., 2014), which mutually complement each other and are mutually conditional, so children's poverty is explained as a multidimensional concept (Minujin et al., 2014). Multiple deprivation hits various aspects of children's lives, disables their development and makes it hard for them to meet their potential.

So, children and adolescents feel the effects of an adverse material position through relations with their peers, and often through their parents' behaviour.

The connection between adverse socioeconomic conditions and parental behaviour

As it can be concluded from reviewing literature (Conger and Donnellan, 2007; Conger et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2010; Macuka, 2010), a model of family stress is mentioned as a theoretical approach that gives relevant explanations for the connection among adverse socioeconomic family conditions, parental behaviour and the results of children's upbringing. According to that model, economic difficulties, especially if they are long-term, lead to financial pressure and stress that negatively affect parents' emotions (anxiety, anger), which reflects on their upbringing strategies and behaviour to children (they display less affection and love, they discipline more often, punish etc.) and all that can endanger healthy development and well-being of children. It has been confirmed that the connection between financial difficulties and their effect on children is indirect. The main role belongs to the economic pressure and it significantly predicts emotional and behavioural problems of children. It seems that adverse socioeconomic situation can lead to changes in the level of sensitivity and attainability of parents (Blažeka Kokorić et al., 2010).

Generally speaking, Rohner's theory of parental acceptance-rejection (PAR Theory) is used to explain parental behaviour to children and it analyses two dimensions – affection and control (Rohner et al., 2012). The dimension of warmth is described as bipolar. On one end of the continuum, there are physical, verbal and symbolic behaviours used for displaying love, affection, care, support, i.e. acceptance. On the other end, there is a lack of positive emotions, coldness, indifference, hostility, i.e. rejection. The perception of parental acceptance has positive effects on all aspects of a child's well-being, and it is connected to a feeling of safety (Blažeka Kokorić et al., 2010), physical and mental health, social

competence and better success in school (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001), generally better results (Hancock Hoskins, 2014; Klarin and Đerđa, 2014).

Rohner et al. (2012) state that the perception of parental rejection causes intensive psychological pain and out of many effects, those most emphasized are self-respect, feeling of self-value and competence, emotional instability, feelings of anger and rage and generally destructive emotions. Children who experience parental rejection during their lives feel a strong need for emotional support, they long for affection, but despite that they believe that they are not worthy of being loved, so they often reject others out of fear of experiencing the pain of rejection again. They often transfer those negative mental presentations into relationships with others, they find it hard to trust them and they have problems with those relationships. Rohner et al. (2012) conclude that parental rejection is the main predictor of problems in children's behaviour, especially externalized, and delinquency. The other dimension of parental behaviour which is important for a child's healthy development is control, mainly the control of behaviour. Psychological control has a negative effect. Behavioural control means giving guidelines for behaviour and activities, and it reflects on supervision and consistent discipline, and is connected with positive adjustment (Vasta et al., 1998; Hancock Hoskins, 2014). The lack of control and a higher level of inconsistent discipline of parents are connected with problems in children's behaviour (Hancock Hoskins, 2014; Klarin and Đerđa, 2014).

Since there are differences in the interaction between fathers and mothers with children, it is assumed that they also have different effects on a child (Macuka, 2010), so some authors are keen to evaluate the contribution of each parent separately. Although the usual opinion is that mothers display more affection and acceptance (Macuka, 2010) and they are more involved in the children's upbringing (Raboteg Šarić and Pećnik, 2006) and their role is more important, more and more awareness is being raised about the importance of the role of the father. With the perception of father's love and care, Rohner and Veneziano (2001) point out that an important role belongs to the amount of time fathers spend with their children (engagement), how available they are to them (attainability) and in what measure they take responsibility for their well-being (responsibility).

With a goal to determine if certain socioeconomic characteristics can be considered predictors of parental behaviour, i.e. rejection, Blažeka Kokorić et al. (2010) carried out a research which included 560 students of University of Zagreb. The results confirmed that significant predictors to explain experiences of parental acceptance/rejection are material situation, educational level of parents and the number of children in the family. A considerably lower level of af-

fection from the mother and father was perceived in families with worse material situation and it was also confirmed that the material situation is a significant predictor of hostility from both the mother and the father. Other research results (Raboteg Šarić and Pećnik, 2006) have shown that financial difficulties are connected with lesser parental supervision and lesser support, while economic power is connected with better quality parenting and a positive relationship between a mother and her child (Šimić Šašić et al., 2011). By summing results of all significant research carried out in the last ten years, Hancock Hoskins (2014) states that mothers who live in adverse socioeconomic conditions are less protective and display higher level of control in comparison to mothers who live in better conditions. Their husbands, i.e. fathers who are less involved in lives and activities of their children, are more restrictive and prone to punishing.

It is important to point out that there are many parents who, even in difficult financial situations, raise their children with care and love (Rohner et al., 2012), protect them from various negative impacts and even negative impacts of socioeconomic and other family issues. Martin et al. (2010) warn that the effects of poverty will vary from child to child depending on their personality and mostly their parents who can reduce or eliminate those effects. Their skills and traits (diligence, honesty, reliability) can improve the results of upbringing and children's chances in life despite the adverse material position which they grow up in.

Since the connection between socioeconomic situations of families and parental behaviour to children is often examined (Blažeka Kokorić et al., 2010; Macuka, 2010; Klarina and Đerđa, 2014), we decided to emphasize children's perception of material deprivation and its role in parental behaviour. We opted for this approach due to many reasons, one of them being the fact that newer research about children's poverty leaves the traditional, unidimensional approach based on family's income and emphasizes the difference between family poverty and children's poverty. It appears that children perceive poverty differently from grown-ups through material and non-material deprivation, so a multidimensional approach is preferred.

Methodology

Aim and problems of the research

The aim of this research is to examine the role of an adverse socioeconomic family situation and the perception of material deprivation of children in forming an experience of parental acceptance, rejection and control.

According to the aim, the following tasks were set:

1. To examine if there is a connection among the perception of parental behaviour (acceptance, rejection and control), socioeconomic situation of the family and the material deprivation of children.
2. To determine if parental behaviour (acceptance, rejection and control) can be predicted based on SES and the perception of material deprivation of children.

We expect a positive connection between the socioeconomic status and the material deprivation and parental behaviour, and that the participants who live in poor socioeconomic conditions (poverty) and are materially deprived will perceive a lower level of parental acceptance, and a higher level of rejection and control.

The respondents

The study included a total of 610 respondents, slightly more girls (51.6%) than boys (44.8%), not all respondents provided the information about gender. The average age of students was 13.88 years ($SD = 0.73$), while most of the respondents were 14 years old (49.2%). The sample consisted of slightly more eighth grade students (57.7%) in comparison to seventh grade students (42.3%), and most of them attended schools in a city (67.5%), compared to schools in the country (31.5%). The average academic achievement of students in the sample was 4.13 ($SD = 0.82$), with very good (40.2%) and excellent (37.5%) being the most common grades.

The research was conducted in twenty classes in both rural and urban areas, located in different parts of Croatia (eastern, northern, central and southern). Since different areas are at different levels of development and were hit differently by the crisis (unemployment, shutting down businesses, some were affected by war, some were not), which might have affected respondents differently, we selected schools in Bjelovar – Bilogora, Brod – Posavina, Split – Dalmatia, Vukovar – Srijem and Zadar counties and the City of Zagreb.

The procedure

Data were collected during spring 2015, through group testing in grades with prior approval of parents and principals and in compliance with all provisions of the Code of Ethics for research with children. Approximately ninety parents did not sign the consent for participation of children in this study although it was voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed. Some professional staff, who provided generous assistance in implementing the research, noted that those were mainly parents with poorer economic status. Students who participated in research were given general instructions on completing the questionnaire, noting that they can opt out at any time, however, no one chose to do so. But, there were some students who did not respond to questions about material income of their family, while it was indicative that they responded to other questions.

The instruments

1. *General data questionnaire* contained questions about: gender, age, grade, school location (urban, rural) and grade point average.
2. *Socioeconomic conditions of the family questionnaire* consisted of questions about: who the child lives with, how many children there are in the family, where the family lives (house or a flat, tenants, with relatives) and how they assess their living conditions (unsatisfactory, average, excellent), if they have their own room or share it with brothers and other family members and if they own a computer. The second group of questions related to education (unfinished or finished primary school, middle school, college, university or higher), employment status (permanently employed, employed but not being paid, occasionally employed, unemployed, pensioners) and tangible benefits (social aid, less than 2,000 HRK; 2,000–4,000 HRK; 4,000–6,000 HRK; 6,000–10,000 HRK and more than 10,000 HRK) of father and mother. One question was related to frequency of family vacations (never, once in a few years, once or twice a year).
3. *Scale of material deprivation of the student* was constructed for the purposes of this paper based on literature (McDonald, 2008; Kletečki Radović, 2011; Neubourg et al., 2014), and it has a total of 11 particles. It examines how often parents can set aside funds for activities and needs of their children at school, such as books, school supplies, tutors, and participating in activities that are paid additionally, but also clothes and shoes that are pop-

ular among students, and meet their social needs (trips, outings, birthday parties, pocket money, etc.). On a scale from one to four (1 – never; 2 – very rare, it is hard for them to find funds; 3 – sometimes they can spare some money; 4 – always, they provide me with everything I need with no problems) respondents assessed how individual statements relate to them. Possible score range is from 1 to 4, where a higher score indicated a lower level of material deprivation. It was determined that the scale has satisfactory reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = 0,726$).

4. *Scale of perception of parental behaviour – SPRP* (Macuka, 2008) is intended for children and adolescents aged between 10 and 18 years and is comprised of 25 statements (example: *He accepts my mistakes*) divided into three sub-scales: acceptance (seven particles), rejection (eight particles) and control (ten particles). Participants estimate which answer best describes how their mother or father treats them on a scale of three degrees (1 – incorrect; 2 – partly correct; 3 – completely correct). The questionnaire has two identical parts for estimating both the father's and mother's behaviour. Total result is the sum of results on sub-scales. It was determined that all scales have satisfactory reliability: scale of acceptance (Cronbach $\alpha = 0,709$), scale of rejection (Cronbach $\alpha = 0,738$) and the scale of control (Cronbach $\alpha = 0,775$).

It should be noted that this was a part of a wider research.

Results

In order to fulfil the set tasks, univariate analysis on all variables included in the research was made.

In order to analyse the role of socioeconomic status of a family, we formed a composite variable which included: the number of children, where the family lives (own house or a rented apartment or living with members of wider family); living conditions; own room; own computer; educational level of parents; employment status of parents; monthly income; main source of income; family vacations which last at least a week; child's fear because of the financial situation. Lower total result indicates stronger poverty or a lower socioeconomic status ($M = 37,4$; $SD = 5,506$).

The possible span of results on the scale of material deprivation ranges from 1 to 4, in which a higher result indicates a lower level of material deprivation ($M = 3,17$; $SD = 0,515$). Out of material deprivation variables, parents of participants spend the least on tutoring ($M = 1,631$; $SD = 1,139$) and house parties with

friends ($M = 3,010$; $SD = 1,143$) while, unsurprisingly, the priority are the necessary books and equipment.

Descriptive data for parental acceptance/rejection and control variables are shown in Table 1. The total result is formed by summing answers to statements which refer to certain subscales.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for parental acceptance/rejection and control variables

Parental behaviour	M	SD	Min.	Max.
mother's acceptance(sum)	18.398	2.505	7	21
father's acceptance (sum)	17.614	2.799	8	21
mother's rejection (sum)	10.113	2.789	8	24
father's rejection (sum)	10.490	2.894	8	24
mother's control (sum)	14.861	3.508	10	30
father's control (sum)	14.166	3.471	10	30

According to descriptive indicators shown in Table 1. mother's acceptance is somewhat more expressed ($M = 18, 398$; $SD = 2,505$) than father's acceptance ($M = 17,614$; $SD = 2,799$), as is mother's control. Father's rejection is somewhat more expressed ($M = 10,490$; $SD = 2,894$) than mother's rejection. However, those differences are very small. Other studies also indicate that mothers have a greater role in evaluating the importance of children's needs and the mother's role in a child's development is generally more emphasized, as is their direct involvement in upbringing (Raboteg-Šarić, Pećnik, 2006; Anđelković et al., 2012). Also, they indicate that mothers display greater levels of emotion than fathers and that they are more important for a child's development (Macuka, 2010).

The results of the correlation analysis

According to the first research task, we conducted correlation analysis in order to determine if there is a connection between unfavourable socioeconomic situation and material deprivation of children with parental acceptance, rejection and control, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The connection between unfavourable socioeconomic situation and material deprivation of children with parental acceptance/rejection and control

	rejection from mother	rejection from father	acceptance from mother	acceptance from father	control of mother	control of father
SES	- 0.150**	- 0.104*	0.131**	0.094	- 0.470	- 0.131**
Deprivation of children	- 0.240**	- 0.233**	0.264**	0.231**	- 0.138**	- 0.116**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$;

It is evident in the Table 2. above that there is a statistically significant relationship between the analysed variables even though the correlation is not high, but the connection between SES and acceptance from father and control from mother have not been determined.

The lower the socioeconomic situation of the family, the greater the rejection from mother ($r = - 0.150$; $p < 0.01$) and father ($r = - 0.104$; $p < 0.05$) and control from the father ($r = - 0.131$; $p < 0.01$), while the acceptance from mother is lower, ($r = 0.131$; $p < 0.01$), i.e. the greater the SES, the higher the acceptance from mother.

The lesser the children's perception of deprivation, the lower the rejection from mother ($r = - 0.240$; $p < 0.01$) and father ($r = - 0.233$; $p < 0.01$), and control from mother ($r = - 0.138$; $p < 0,01$) and father ($r = - 0.116$; $p < 0.01$). The better the perception of deprivation, the greater the acceptance from mother ($r = 0.264$; $p < 0.01$) and father ($r = 0.231$; $p < 0.01$).

Regression analysis results

In order to answer the second task of the research, we conducted multiple regression analysis, with criterion variables being parental rejection, acceptance and control, and SES (i.e. poverty) and material deprivation as predictors. Variables which were showing greater deviation from normal distribution were normalized for the purpose of regression analysis.

Parental acceptance

The table 3.1. shows the results of regression analysis for the variable of parental acceptance from mother, and the table 3.2. for the variable acceptance from father.

Table 3.1.1. Prediction of the acceptance from mother

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	14.385	0.849		16.951	0.000
Total SES	- 0.001	0.024	- 0.003	- 0.062	0.951
Total deprivation	1.290	0.254	0.287	5.079	0.000

F = 17.415; adjusted R square = 0.077 ; p < 0.00

The table 3.1. shows that respondents who report lesser material deprivation perceive greater acceptance from mother, in other words, that lesser material deprivation predicts greater acceptance from mother.

Table 3.2. Prediction of the acceptance from father

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	13.688	1.084		12.628	0.000
Total SES	0.000	0.030	- 0.001	- 0.019	0.985
Total deprivation	1.200	0.321	0.221	3.738	0.000

F = 9.391, adjusted R square = 0.044; p < 0.00

The obtained results also suggest that respondents who experience lesser material deprivation perceive greater acceptance from father, in other words, that lesser deprivation predicts greater acceptance from father.

Parental rejection

The results of the conducted regression analysis which relate to the variable of parental rejection are shown in tables 4.1. (for the mother) and 4.2. (for the father).

Table 4.1. Prediction of rejection from mother

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	14.856	1.035		14.353	0.000
Total SES	- 0.011	0.029	- 0.022	- 0.389	0.698
Total deprivation	- 1.330	0.311	- 0.247	- 4.276	0.000

F = 13.898; adjusted R square = 0.063; p < 0.00

It has been determined that greater deprivation predicts greater rejection from the mother, which is also in line with the previous analysis.

Table 4.2. Prediction of rejection from father

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	1.167	0.039		29.654	0.000
Total SES	0.000	0.001	0.026	0.454	0.650
Total deprivation	- 0.054	0.012	- 0.272	- 4.686	0.000

F = 13.476; adjusted R square = 0.062; p < 0.00

Results of this analysis also show that respondents who experience greater deprivation perceive greater rejection from father. Therefore, greater deprivation also predicts greater rejection from father.

Parental control

Table 5.1. Prediction of control of the mother

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	1.262	0.036		35.264	0.000
Total SES	0.000	0.001	0.025	0.433	0.665
Total deprivation	- 0.035	0.011	- 0.187	- 3.233	0.001

F = 6.264, adjusted R square = 0.026, $p < 0.002$

Experiencing greater material deprivation predicts more control from the mother.

Table 5.2. Prediction of control of the father

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	1.274	0.039		32.582	0.000
Total SES	- 0.002	0.001	- 0.131	- 2.224	0.027
Total deprivation	- 0.011	0.012	- 0.057	- 0.977	0.329

F = 5.421; adjusted R square = 0.023; $p < 0.005$

Unlike other conducted analyses in which the perception of deprivation dominates as the relevant predictor, the latter has found that greater poverty or lower socioeconomic status also predicts greater control from the father, while the perception of deprivation is not significant in explaining the criteria.

Thus, the greater the deprivation, the lesser the acceptance from parents and the greater the rejection from parents. The greater the deprivation, the greater the control from mother, while in predicting control of the father, deprivation does not have a predictive strength. In total, it has been proven that a more significant predictor of parental behaviour of acceptance, rejection and control is

the perception of material deprivation, rather than socioeconomic status. Lower socioeconomic status only predicts greater control from the father.

Discussion

The results obtained from correlation analysis, as well as in other studies, show that there is a low, but significant statistical correlation between SES and parental behaviour, except the acceptance from the father and control from the mother, which partially confirms the research hypothesis.

However, when it comes to predicting parental behaviour on the basis of socioeconomic status, the results were not as expected because it has been determined that lower socioeconomic status only predicts greater control from the father. In contrast to these results, there is much evidence in the literature that SES affects parents and their behaviour (Conger et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2010; Hancock Hoskins, 2014), in other words, that parental practice differs in families of different socioeconomic backgrounds (Conger et al., 2010) and points out the importance of the financial situation in shaping the experience of parental acceptance (Blažeka Kokorić et al., 2010). However, it is necessary to draw attention to different operationalization of SES variables. Some studies distinguish some potentially determining variables, such as education, work status and the like (Macuka, 2010; Blažeka Kokorić et al., 2010), while others support the thesis that SES in total is best represented with income, education and occupation of parents (Bradley and Corwyn, 2002; Conger, Donellan, 2007). Even though the socioeconomic status is a global construct used in numerous studies, there is no unified opinion which variables it includes, so the results are quite inconsistent, and it is also suggested that they are dependent on the culture, child's age and many other factors (Bradley and Corwyn, 2002; Anđelković et al., 2012).

Since our aim was to get a better insight into adverse socioeconomic status, or poverty, we started with the assumption that it is best contributed by composite measures (Bradley and Crown, 2002), so we included a large number of particles as described above, which is a possible reason for such results. In explaining such findings it also needs to be pointed out that socioeconomic status in this research is conceptualized as a static phenomenon, and it seems that it is necessary to include all aspects of the length of financial hardship, or in other words, take into account whether it is a chronic or transitional poverty, while taking into account the mediating effects of age, gender, ethnicity and so on (Ajduković and Rajhvan Bulat, 2012; 233–235). In addition, Conger and Donnellan (2007) warn about multiple nature of SES and point out that each of

the aspects predicts family processes in a different way. Since the research respondents were adolescents, it should be mentioned that Ajduković, Rajhvan Bulat (2012) observed that in recent studies which used traditional socioeconomic indicators, differences in adolescent population have not been found. With possible methodological differences, i.e. the operationalization of SES in this study, which might have affected the results, it is necessary to mention some other possible reasons.

First of all, we need to take into account children's poor understanding of financial situation of the family. In fact, it was quite unexpected that 12,1% respondents did not answer questions on material income of their parents even though they answered other questions. It is possible that they really do not have an insight into their parents' income, but also that parents want to spare them, and not burden them with the situation they live in (McDonald, 2008). It is possible that adolescents do not want to talk about financial problems, even though anonymity is guaranteed. McDonald (2008) states that children who live in poverty, although aware of financial difficulties, describe their family situation as average, as if they did not want to recognize or admit it. It is most likely they fear stigmatization or pity of others so they often hide the real conditions they live in (Ridge, 2009).

As opposed to socioeconomic status of the family, on the basis of the conducted analysis, it can be concluded that material deprivation of children is, as expected, even at a low level, in a statistically significant correlation with parental behaviour, and is also a more significant predictor of parental acceptance, rejection and control from the mother, in comparison to SES.

Therefore, it seems that it is justified to abandon the traditional, unidimensional approach which is focused only on family income and status, and start using a multi-dimensional approach. Although this study includes the mentioned SES variables as useful indicators, emphasis is put on measures of material and non-material deprivation (McDonald, 2008; de Neubourg, 2014). However, it should be noted that there is a significant correlation between these variables ($r = 0,519$; $p < 0,00$) and they share 25% of the total variance. The obtained results speak in favor of these given in recent studies that there is a difference between poverty of families and poverty of children, and that children can experience poverty differently than adults, depending on their age, but also that our understanding of how children perceive and interpret poverty is relatively limited (McDonald, 2008; de Neubourg, 2014). It seems that, as opposed to the family SES, children are more familiar with how the material situation directly affects fulfilling their material, educational and social needs, which we defined as material deprivation. It permeates all aspects of their life and is becoming a visible sign

of a lack in comparison to the community they live in (Ridge, 2009; de Neubourg, 2014). Thus, in determining a child's poverty, in addition to poor material conditions and deprivation, one should also include a possibility to access different kinds of resources and activities that most people take as needed, and which are vital to the welfare of children (McDonald, 2008; Kletečki Radović, 2011; de Neubourg, 2014). It is also necessary to take into account a subjective experience of children and adolescents, and look at the problem from their perspective. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account what poverty or unfavourable material conditions mean to those who personally experience it, who are facing it and how they are trying to deal with the consequences they leave on their daily life (Ridge, 2009; Mistry, 2009).

The main results of this study indicate that perception of lesser material deprivation predicts greater acceptance of both parents, while greater perception predicts greater rejection of mother and father, and more control from mother, but not from the father.

Thus, the results of this study, as expected, indicate the absence of positive dimensions of parenthood, such as acceptance, and appearance of negative dimensions of parental behaviour, such as rejection, of those respondents who reported a greater level of material deprivation. As we are currently not aware of any research on material deprivation of children in a way that this variable is established in this research, there is a need for a comparison with similar studies. As it is stated in the introduction, authors who have dealt with the issue of parental acceptance and rejection suggest that unfavourable material conditions, regardless of how the variables are operationalized, have a negative effect on interaction between parents and children (Conger et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2010; Macuka, 2010; Blažeka Kokorić, 2011; Rohner et al., 2012; Wray, 2015).

In support of these results, it can be said that a lack of material resources can directly limit the capability of parents to meet the basic needs of their children, but also that a situation which they live in, uncertainty, tension, the burden of problems and high level of stress they are usually exposed to, according to the model of family stress (Conger et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2010) can affect the quality of their parenting. Because of all this, they are less devoted to their children, unable to focus and respond to their needs, material, but what is even more important, emotional and social. Therefore, in interactions with their children they show less affection, love, attention, support, understanding and warmth, and what is described by Rohner et al. as acceptance.

The obtained results also show that respondents who perceive that they are more materially deprived also experience negative parental behaviour more often, i.e. rejection from mother and father. Such behaviour can be attributed

to increased level of anxiety, irritability, discontent, which is in general more often experienced by poorer parents (Raboteg Šarić and Pećnik, 2006), so in interactions with children they show emotional coldness, even hostility, misunderstanding, which results in a sense of rejection in children (Klarin and Derđa, 2014).

When it comes to control, the results of this study show that the greater the deprivation, the greater the control from mother, but not from father. Other studies have also confirmed that poverty is associated with lack of supervision (Raboteg Šarić and Pećnik, 2006; Blažeka Kokorić et al., 2010; Hancock Hoskins, 2014). Since fathers are those who generally take less care of children, it is possible that they also control their children insufficiently.

The regression analysis explains a relatively small proportion of the variance, which indicates that it is a complex phenomenon which is affected by a large number of factors, and it is suggested that process variables have a more significant role in predicting parental behaviour than contextual variables (Šimić Šašić et al., 2011).

Thus, although the initial research assumptions have only been partially confirmed, we believe that findings of this research do provide new guidelines for research of the problem of child poverty and observing contextual determinants of parental behaviour.

Limitations

Although indicative, the obtained results have certain methodological limitations that apply to the composite variable SES. Also, this evaluation is based on only one source, personal testimonies of respondents, and the results would probably be more objective if the research also included an estimation of parents and teachers.

Conclusion

In the time when many countries across the world are facing consequences of crisis and recession, it is important to draw attention to possible effects of material difficulties on the family functioning and well-being of children.

Poverty is not only reflected in meeting children's material needs, but also emotional, social and educational needs, so they are most often exposed to multiple deprivation. The obtained results suggest that in research and practice one

should take into account the subjective experience and that children and adolescents perceive unfavourable material situation and poverty differently than adults. What also needs to be taken into account is the complex relationship between material and non-material deprivation and consequences they leave on their daily functioning, and that dynamic nature of child poverty requires a multidimensional approach.

On the basis of the conducted analysis, it can be concluded that child's perception of material deprivation is a more significant predictor of parental behaviour (acceptance, rejection and control) than socioeconomic status.

Although the child – parent relationship is under the influence of a complex web of interactions and interdependent factors, these research results confirm that contribution of contextual determinants should not be ignored. The results which indicate that the perception of lesser material deprivation predicts greater acceptance of both parents, while greater deprivation predicts greater rejection of father and mother and greater control from mother, but not father, may be a useful guide in the development of various programs aimed at strengthening family resilience, and thus the welfare of children. One of possible forms of helping children and families living in poverty is understanding their situation and actively pointing out how family balance can be disrupted by external stressors and what effects it has on children, but also parents. It is important to raise awareness that caring parental behaviour, warmth, support, despite unfavourable living conditions, can result in positive outcome and ease the difficult situation in the family, as well as the adjustment of children and adolescents. In contrast, inadequate parental control, and especially behaviour which suggests rejection, causes in children a sense of pain which is very real (Rohner et al., 2012), has a negative effect on their personality development, a sense of emotional insecurity and well-being, and also further complicates the functioning of the family.

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