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Parenting Styles and Children's Wellbeing

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Abstract: *The parenting styles adopted by parents have a particularly important role in creating and maintaining a child's wellbeing. Psychological and educational research has been consistently concerned with the relationship between parenting practices and child wellbeing. Multiple factors, including cultural, economic, societal and demographic, can influence this relationship.*
This study aims to examine the association between the wellbeing of rural children and authoritarian, democratic, and permissive parenting styles. The study was conducted between February and March 2024 and those who werw involved were 115 pupils between the ages of 13 and 14 (M = 13.13, SD = 0.33) together with their respective parents.
In order to measure parenting styles, Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire in short form (PSDQ) was used, whereas The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) was used to gauge children's wellbeing.
The results of the Pearson analysis have shown that the democratic parenting style positively correlates with the manifestations of wellbeing (positive emotional state, positive outlook on the future). Conversely, the authoritarian parenting style correlates negatively with the wellbeing dimensions, while the permissive parenting style does not correlate with any of the aforementioned dimensions.

Keywords: *parenting style; wellbeing; secondary school children.*

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Introduction

The current research has assessed the association between parenting styles and secondary school level pupils' wellbeing, pinpointing the parental models that significantly correlate with wellbeing.

The parenting styles pertain to how parents manifest their attitudes and behaviours in interaction with their children, consequently having a highly important role in children's holistic development.

The parenting style describes the manner in which parents manifest their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours in both the child rearing and their corresponding educational process (Ju et al., 2020).

The parenting style is a psychological model that showcases the ways parents interact with their children, with reference to both the provided answer to their needs and behaviours as well as to the setting of limits and rules (Azizi & Besharat, 2011; Mayuri et al., 2017).

The parenting style is a complex concept that encompasses various aspects of nurturing and educating children, aspects that are connected to the progressive satisfaction of children's needs, physical and emotional care, socialisation and the overall orientation onto a certain children tailored culture (Evin & Mello Laveena, 2021).

In the opinion of Durbin et al. (1993) the parenting style is a relatively stable -in time- feature of the parent representing a multitude of views toward the child that are expressed to him/her and, when examined together, form an emotional atmosphere in which parental behaviors are mirrored in (Lee et al., 2006).

It is important to diferentiate parenting styles from short-term parenting practices as each refers to a distinct concept. The parenting style represents the parents' perspective displayed in a complex range of situations (Rankin Williams et al., 2009). Parenting practices typically focus on guiding the child's behavior, whereas parenting styles express the parents' overall approach or attitude toward their child usually expressed through voice tonality, body language, provided attention, or temperamental manifestations. Parental practices will not always have direct and predictable effects on results pertaining to children's development, as these are rather influenced by the parenting style adopted by parents. From this perspective, the parenting style can be considered the context within which parental practices are streamlined

while the relationship between them and the specific results of child development are being regulated (Elstad & Stefansen, 2014).

The parenting style is an important aspect of parenting as a whole and it takes into account the intrinsic emotional climate where the parent-child relationship is integrated. Additionally, the parenting style is closely related to the meanings attributed to parents' typical behaviours towards the child (Saltalı & İmir, 2018).

The majority of psychologists such as Bowlby (1979), Mize & Petit (1997) has defined parenting styles as being a collection of behaviours that express the interactions between the parent and the child under various and rich conditions (Zarbakhsh et al., 2012).

These styles reflect the way parents manage situations related to children's education, discipline conducive practices, showing emotional support and communication. The parenting style is a complex construct embodying parents' attitudes and behaviours that shape up the children's development background (Rahmawati et al., 2022).

The parenting styles are not pre-established, they can therefore vary in accordance with the individual profile and particular needs of each family. Thus, parents may combine certain idiosyncrasies from different parental styles or they can adapt their parenting style throughout the children's growth and development process.

Research in the field of parenting styles began between the 1960s and 1970s, while psychologists and researchers have concentrated studying the connection between parenting styles and children's behavior. They constantly highlighted the presence of two basic dimensions in the parent-child relationship: affectivity and control (Sears et al., 1957; Schaefer, 1965; Baumrind, 1967; McCoby, 1983).

One of the promoters of parenting styles research was the American psychologist Diana Baumrind, who in the 1960s conducted a series of studies on families and preschool age children. Her research defined the parenting style as a set of parental roles, attitudes, values and responsibilities that are reflected in the practices and behaviors parents manifest in their interaction with their children (Estlein, 2016).

Diana Baumrind's study has highlighted the importance of the relationship between parental control and the affection and emotional support provided to children.

Consequently, she has made significant contributions in connection to the way parenting styles influence children's socioemotional and behavioural development.

D. Baumrind's (1966) definition of parenting styles has become the most widely used model in field research.

This approach has classified parenting styles on the basis of parental control, consequently highlighting three main types: *authoritarian* (firm, but not warm)*, democratic* (firm and warm) and *permissive* (warm but not firm). Several studies have demonstrated that these three parenting styles predict child development results (Aunola et al., 2000; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2009; Rinaldi & Howe, 2012).

In addition to the initial conceptualisation of parenting styles, Baumrind and several other researchers continued to develop and refine the concept, exploring in more detail the influences of different parenting styles and adapting them to various social and cultural contexts.

Subsequently, researchers. McCoby & Martin (1983) revised Baumrind's proposed dimensions, and defined parenting styles according to two dimensions: the level of control or the demands imposed by parents and the level of affection manifested in the relationship with their own children. These two dimensions -taken together- create four parenting styles, three of which are identical to Diana Baumrind's original classification. The conceptualisation of McCoby and Martin adds one more parenting type, namely, the *neglectful* or *detached* parenting style (it lacks both warmth and firmness) (Belay Emagnaw & Hong, 2018). Neglectful parents are uninvolved or indifferent, do not meet the child's needs having at the same time relatively few requirements. This parenting style has been linked to the most negative results for kids.

Following research undertaken by Olson, five parenting styles were identified: balanced, uninvolved, permissive, strict, and overbearing, the ideal style being labeled as *balanced* (Olson, 2000; Olson, 2011; Olson & Wilde, 2016). Additionally, Pawel (2000) highlighted in his studies the existence of five parenting styles similar to those mentioned above.

In his research, Kapustin (2015) states that the triggering factor for problems between parents and children is the parents' personality, manifested through parental styles. It also emphasises the positive effect that a *balanced* parenting style has on the child's personality development.

Research studies have highlighted the importance of cultural factors in understanding parenting styles, identifying protective parenting in communities of a Latin origin. This underlines the

important role the cultural context has in determining parental styles (Rodríguez et al., 2009).

Moreover, the influence of parenting styles extends beyond childhood, as there is also evidence of intergenerational transmission of specific parenting styles (Bornstein & Bornstein, 2007; Lawall et al., 2021).

To meet the purpose of this paper, we have taken into account the following parenting styles: the *authoritarian*, the *democratic* and the *permissive*.

The authoritarian parenting style is characterised by thigh control exerted over children, low levels of support and emotional engagement, attitude of rejection, dominance and increased demandingness. Authoritarian parents are frequently punishing and demanding in order to enforce obedience to an absolute standard of behavior, leaving little room for the child's decision-making or thinking (Delvecchio et al., 2020). This parenting style has been correlated with poor child outcomes, dependence, maladjustment and a limited range of skills, while verbal aggression and psychological control are the most harmful of authoritarian parenting practices (Baumrind et al., 2010). The authoritarian parenting style, devoid of warmth and characterised by arbitrary domination, was predominantly related to children's behavioural problems (Jing, 2022).

Democratic parenting is characterized by significant degree of acceptance and behavioural control, high responsiveness and affection directed at children, and less dominant psychological control. Democratic parents guide the child in a rational way, clearly establish the rules, encourage open communication, and support children's autonomy displaying love and affection (Delvecchio et al., 2020). The democratic parenting style has been correlated with such positive outcomes on the part of children as self-confidence, high self-esteem (Kim & Kim, 2021) social responsibility and adaptation (Luyckx et al., 2011).

Several studies have found that children with democratic parents tend to be cooperative, sociable, emotionally stable and achieve high academic performance (Steinberg et al., 1989; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Firouzkouhi Moghaddam et al., 2017; Obiunu, 2018).

Permissive parenting is defined by a strong display of affection and emotional support, with minimal control and inconsistent enforcement of limits and rules (Marcone et al., 2018), and encouragement of children to express their personal opinions (Lazaros

Kostanasios, 2024). Permissive parents have a varying responsiveness regarding the children's needs, some parents being very attentive to this aspect, while others being downright indifferent. These parents are often excessively tolerant of children's inappropriate behaviours, showing a lack of interest and neglect related to the child's socialisation process (Spera, 2005).

The permissive parenting style is associated with an increased frustration level, negative emotions, and the risk of depression occurrence among children. Children with permissive parents have a lot of characteristics specific to children with authoritarian parents (lack of assertiveness, dependence and low self-control). Although they are diametrically opposed, authoritative and permissive parenting styles can hinder children's opportunities to buid coping skills to deal with stressful situations (Marcone et al., 2018).

Both authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were associated with negative effects, including lower academic achievements, emotional regulation and behavioural problems (Shorer et al., 2011).

Because the parents serve as the primary socializing agents in children's lives (Davidov & Grusec, 2006), the dynamics behind parental styles is fundamental in the process of socialising children. Consequently, when studying the relationship between parenting styles and child outcomes, researchers often prioritize social development factors (Scaramella & Leve, 2004; Scaramella et al., 2008).

The field of social development is closely related to the emotional development domain, as both dimensions complement each other and are interdependent. Children's socioemotional development is one of the fundamental pillars of wellbeing.

The interaction between parents and children influences the growth, development and wellbeing of the latter.

Wellbeing involves achieving satisfaction and optimal functioning in various areas: cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual. It is a complex concept that integrates biological, psychological and social aspects, being closely related to life satisfaction, self-confidence, social engagement and personal values.

From the point of view of positive psychology, individuals achieve a state of wellbeing, if they reach the five fundamental elements, which constitute the famous P.E.R.M.A. model, namely: (P) positive emotions – joy, satisfaction, hope, optimism, pleasure, etc., that have an important role in increasing performance and reducing stress, (E)

engagement – the mood reached after performing a pleasant activity, (R) positive relationships – importance of communication with others and engagement in healthy social relationships, (M) meaning – outstanding contributions of one's personal actions to solve community related problems, (A) accomplishments/achievements – the satisfaction based feeling that occurs when the positive impact of the work done is apparent both in relation to one's self and to those around them (Seligman, 2011).

A person's wellbeing state can be perceived as a multidimensional construct, encompassing mental, physical, and social dimensions (Skogberg et al., 2022).

Wellbeing indicates the extent to which individuals perceive their lives as fulfilled, being the result of a positive/negative ratio, of a good/bad one respectively. Although sometimes wellbeing is conceptualised as a result of one's living conditions, it has a functional role in a person's life (Harpaz et al., 2021).

Wellbeing is frequently considered equivalent to happiness and is heavily shaped by the Hedonist philosophy, which asserts that anything producing pleasure is inherently good (Wahyuningsih et al., 2022).

The hedonic paradigm emphasises pleasure and desire, being measured by means of both the positive and negative emotions ratio and life-related satisfaction. Although the hedonistic approach was dominant in wellbeing studies, the addition of eudaimonic philosophy increased the general understanding of the idea itself (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The eudaimonic paradigm originated from Aristotle, being introduced into psychology through A. Maslow's humanist paradigm by A. Maslow through self-actualisation and by C. Rogers, through the individual's tendency to achieve the ideal self and become a fully functional person (Ursu, 2015). The eudaimonic path does not exclude life satisfaction, but focuses primarily on realizing the full potential of the individual as a human being and fulfilling the purpose of his or her life (Bošković & Šendula Jengić, 2008).

According to Ryff & Keyes (1995), psychological wellbeing comprises six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal development, positive relationships with others, life purpose and self-acceptance.The authors suggest that psychological wellbeing involves self-actualisation employed in order to achieve happiness.

Combining the two approaches to wellbeing (hedonistic and eudaimonic) has resulted in a tool for measuring emotional and

psychological wellbeing (PWB) in children aged 8 to 15 - *The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale* (SCWBS). The scale was proposed by *The Educational Psychology Service Stirling Council* to assess the effectiveness of both the interventions and the projects focussed on promoting children's wellbeing (Liddle & Carter, 2015).

The wellbeing state generally takes into account an individual's quality of life. The concept includes elements that relate to children's psychological and emotional development (identity and trust, self-management, initiative, resilience), social behavior (empathy, self-care and care for others, self-help), relationship management skills (friendship, communication, respect), supportive learning environment, promoting collaboration and diversity, availability for development (Nedelcu et al., 2018).

A lot of research has been carried out in recent years to investigate child wellbeing.

A study conducted by UNICEF in 2013 analysed the wellbeing of children from 29 economically developed countries. The study included Romania which ranked last alongside the United States of America. For the assessment of children's wellbeing, five dimensions of their life were taken into account: material wellbeing, health and safety, education, risk-taking behaviors, and housing and environmental conditions (Adamson, 2013).

In the study entitled *Students' Wellbeing*, PISA 2015, the determining factors of school performance in young people were analysed at an international scale. The results of the study showed the fact that teenagers who feel they belong to a supportive school community and who also have positive interpersonal relationships, perform better at schooll and are overall happier (OECD, 2017).

The aforementioned studies highlight the importance of children's wellbeing, and support the idea that one of its determining factors is the relationship between parents and children. This relationship highly depends on the parenting style, a fact that confirms the existence of a connection between the child's wellbeing and the parenting approach in the respective family.

The impact of parenting styles on children's -especially teenagers'- psychological and emotional wellbeing has consequently been the subject of extensive research.

Research conducted by Rodrigo et al. (2014) have highlighted the important role of parenting styles in influencing adolescents'

wellbeing and socioemotional development, providing key insights into the connection between parenting approaches and adolescents development.

Numerous studies it is confirmed that the democratic parenting style improves wellbeing, the authoritarian parental style decreases autonomy whereas the permissive parenting style hampers personal development and neglectful parenting style impedes on teenagers' wellbeing (Francis et al., 2021).

Other studies emphasise the fact that the most important factors in determining the child's wellbeing are the practices and parenting styles, which involve how parents interact with their children in everyday life and their general behavior as caregivers (Wu & Qi, 2020).

A group analysis focussing on both parental support and behavioral and psychological control was conducted by Kuppens & Ceulemans (2018), who identified four congruent parenting styles: democratic, democratic positive, authoritarian and uninvolved. The results showed that the inclusion of parental psychological control contributed to a deeper understanding of the relationship between the three dimensions of parenting styles and how they are associated with wellbeing and child development.

According to the research conducted by Vijimon et al. (2022), parenting education based on democratic principles is particularly important in meeting the subjective needs of children, thus contributing to improving wellbeing through parental interventions.

The impact of the parenting style on children's daily choices and overall well being is profound, having an impact on parent-child attachment and family dynamics (Rutigliano et al., 2023). Furthermore, parenting practices have been shown to have a significant impact on children's social, emotional and cognitive development (Var et al., 2015; Lakkis et al., 2020).

While parenting styles are positively linked to children's physical health, excessive parental involvement in parenting can have a detrimental effect on children's wellbeing (Yerkes et al., 2019).

In this research we have analysed the relationship between authoritarian, democratic, and permissive parenting styles and the wellbeing of secondary school pupils in the rural environment.

Research methodology

Research objectives

Our research has focussed on the following objectives:

- Highlighting the parent-child relationship, revealing the influence of parenting styles on the wellbeing of pupils in secondary education;
- Investigating the relationship between democratic, permissive, authoritarian parenting styles, the positive emotional state and the positive outlook on the future in middle/secondary school children.
- Identifying the existing types of correlations between parenting styles and children's wellbeing.

Research questions

In our investigative approach we started from the following research questions::

- To what extent is pupils' wellbeing influenced by the parenting style adopted by their parents?
- Which of the parenting styles: democratic, permissive or authoritarian positively correlates with secondary school students' positive emotional state and their positive outlook on the future?
- Which of the parenting styles: democratic, permissive or authoritarian negatively correlates with secondary school students' positive emotional state and their positive outlook on the future?

Research hypotheses

There are the following correlations between the parenting style and children's wellbeing:

- H1: A positive correlation exists between the democratic style and children's positive emotional state, and their positive outlook respectively.
- H2: A negative correlation exists between the permissive style and children's positive emotional state, and their positive outlook respectively.
- H3: A negative correlation exists between the authoritarian style and the children's positive emotional state and their positive outlook respectively.

Research variables

Independent variable: Parenting styles, associated with the following 3 dimensions: *democratic style, authoritarian style, permissive style;*

Dependent variable: Children's wellbeing, pertaining to the following three dimensions: *positive emotional state, positive outlook/perspective, social desirability;*

Participants and procedure

Our research study was carried out during February-March 2024, and the participants were 115 pupils aged between 13 and 14 years old, together with their parents. There was a relatively equal ratio of female students (48 people, 41.7%) and male students (67 people, 58.3%). In order to allow the minors' participation in this study, the parents submitted their written consent, and for the collection of data within the school premises, the approval of the management of the educational institutions was obtained. The pupils –i.e. the study participants – originated from 7 schools located in the countryside, the NorthEastern part of the country. The children were accompanied by their parents. The collection of the research data was made by the paper-and-pencil method.

The majority of the parents were female (103 participants, 89.6%) while fewer of them were male (12 participants, 10.4%). In terms of parents' age, most were between 41-50 years old (57 people, 49.6%) and between 31-49 years old (46 people, 40%). Fewer of them were between 51-60 years old (10 people, 8.7%) or between 20-30 years old (2 people, 1.7%). With reference to the parents' level of education, the majority graduated 10 grades (31 people, 27%), high school (26 people, 22.6%) or 8 grades (24 people, 20.9%). The rest had the following levels of education: one person had studied fewer than 8 grades, 15 people (13%) completed a vocational school, 11 people (9.6%) have completed their undergraduate studies and 4 persons (3.5%) have completed their Master's studies. Regarding their marital status, most (102 people, 88.7%) were married. The rest were single (5 people, 4.3%), divorced (5 people, 4.3%), in a committed relationship, without being married (2 people, 1.7%) or widowed (one person, 4.3%), 0.9%). Regarding the parents' number of children, most of them have 2 children: 47 people, 40.9% of participants. The rest have 3 children (28 people, 24.3%), more than three children (21 people, 18.3%) or one child (19 people, 16.5%).

Materials and methods

Our study was a quantitative one, using the questionnaire-based inquiry as a research method. This is a commonly used methods in quantitative research, constituting an efficient way to obtain information by means of coherently recorded questions that are presented in a logical sequence while requesting a written reply from the respondent.

To measure the parenting styles, we used the short form of *The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire* (PSDQ; Robinson et al., 2001). Drawing on the theory of parenting styles proposed by Diana Baumrind, the questionnaire provides parents with a framework for the self-assessment of how they perform their parental role. It has 32 items the participants were able to respond to using a 5- point Likert scale, through which adults indicated the frequency of engagement in different parental behaviors. Thus, the significance of the figures was 1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = almost always and 5 = always. The questionnaire has three dimensions: the authoritarian style,the permissive style, and the democratic style.

The authoritarian style is measured through 12 items: 2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 16, 19, 23, 26, 28, 30, 32. Examples of items for this parenting style: *I use physical punishment as a method of disciplining my child*; *I shout or scream when my child is acting inappropriately*.

The permissive style is measured by means of 5 items: 8, 15, 17, 20 and 24. Examples of items for this parenting style: *I find it hard to discipline my child*; *I give in to the child when s/he becomes agitated about something*.

The democratic style is assessed through 15 items: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, 31. Examples of items for this parenting style: *I am receptive to my child's feelings and needs*; *I take into account my child's wishes before asking her/him to do anything*.

There are several other specific sub-dimensions that belong to each parenting style: *Physical coercion* (item 2, 6, 19, 32), *Verbal hostility* (item 13, 16, 23, 30), *No reasoning/punitive* (item 4, 4, 10, 26, 28) – the authoritarian style; *Indulgence* (items 8, 15, 17, 20, 24) – the permissive style; *Connection* (warmth and support; items 1, 7, 12, 14, 27), *Regulation (reasoning/induction*; items 5, 11, 25, 29, 31), *Granting autonomy* (democratic participation; items 3, 9, 18, 21, 22) – the democratic style.

The score for this questionnaire was obtained by calculating the average of the responses to the three parenting styles: permissive, democratic and authoritarian. High scores indicate heightened levels of adoption of behaviors and practices pertaining to a certain parenting style.

The Alpha Cronbach coefficients for the three dimensions are: 0.795 (authoritarian style), 0.560 (permissive style) and 0.773 (democratic style). They indicate a satisfactory reliability of the questionnaire dimensions, except for the permissive style. The dimension-*permissive style* - has a small number of items, which is the reason why the average of inter-item correlations, which had a value between 0.15 and 0.50, was taken into account, allowing statistical analyses to continue (Table 1).

Table 1. Inter-Item correlation- permissive

	Mean	Min.	Max.	Range	Max./Min.	Variance	No. of Items
Item Means	2.424	1.713	3.557	1.843	2.076	.489	5
Item Variances	1.108	.933	1.334	.401	1.430	.021	5
Inter-Item Covariances	.225	.073	.473	.399	6.440	.018	5
Inter-Item Correlations	.199	.074	.385	.311	5.191	.012	5

In order to measure the children's wellbeing, we have used *The Stirling Children's and Wellbeing Scale* (SCWBS). The scale was designed and standardized by administering the questionnaire to a sample of 1800 children in 18 schools in the Stirling Council area. It consists of 12 items, 6 of which for the positive emotional state: (9, 14, 15, 10, 12, 11; example item: *I have been calm/ felt calm*) and 6 items for the positive outlook (8, 5, 1, 4, 6, 3; example item: *I thought good things would happen to me in my life*). The scale also incorporates a social desirability sub-scale to assess whether participants' responses are influenced by a response pattern or bias, indicating a tendency to provide socially desirable responses (items 2,7,13; example item: *I have always told the truth*).

All items are rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1-never, 2-seldom, 3-sometimes, 4- many times, 5-all the time). The score for this instrument is obtained by summing up the items, thus succeeding in calculating either a total score for the two dimensions (positive emotional state and positive outlook) or a score for each dimension. In this study, the two subscales of the questionnaire were considered for hypothesis testing: positive emotional state, positive outlook.

The Cronbach alpha coefficients for this questionnaire have the following values: 0.928 (positive emotional state), 0.928 (positive outlook), 0.849 (social desirability). They indicate a satisfactory fidelity with reference to the size of the questionnaire.

The testing of the normality of data distribution was carried out by using the method of the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients. Skewness - indicator used in the analysis of the data distribution to indicate the deviation of the empirical distribution in relation to a symmetric distribution around the mean. Kurtosis - indicator used in the analysis of data series distribution to indicate the degree of flattening or sharpening of a distribution. The value of the Skewness coefficient is between –2 and 2, whereas the Kurtosis coefficient is between –3 and 3. Some researchers suggest that scores ranging from - 1 to +1 relative to Skewness and Kurtosis are acceptable, while others argue that an acceptable degree of asymmetry should not exceed the standard error twice (Cohen et al., 2002).

Results

For data analysis and results interpretation, we used the program SPSS 20.0 for Windows. Before testing the hypotheses, we ran a descriptive analysis of data. The minimum, maximum, and mean values as well as the standard deviations can be observed in Table 2.

Table 2. Minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation for study variables

Variables	Min	Max	M	SD
Democratic style	2.33	4.87	4.00	.49
Permissive style	1.00	4.20	2.42	.63
Authoritarian style	1.00	3.67	1.82	.48
Positive emotional state	8.00	30.00	19.91	4.27
Positive perspective/mindset	9.00	29.00	19.94	5.09
Desirability	4.00	15.00	9.05	2.54

Additionally, we tested the normality of data distribution through the method of the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients. The values of the two coefficients can be observed in Table 3; they are included in the range (-2, 2), a fact that means that all data of the research variables were normally distributed.

Table 3. Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients for research variables

Variables	Skewness Coefficient	Kurtosis coefficient
Democratic style	-1.083	1.447
Permissive style	.404	-.174
Authoritarian style	.606	.805
Positive emotional state	-.224	-.040
Positive perspective/mindset	-.275	-.740
Desirability	-.046	-.775

The normality of data distribution has involved the use of the Pearson correlation in the analysis of the relationship between the study variables, namely the three parental styles and the three wellbeing dimensions. The results can be observed in Table 3.

Table 4. Pearson correlation between the research variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Democratic style	-				
2. Permissive style	-.004	-			
3. Authoritarian style	.016	.084	-		
4. Emotional state	.425**	.093	-.216*	-	
5. Positive outlook	.359**	.098	-.212*	.878**	-
6. Social desirability	.057	.038	.002	.884**	.838**

*Note: * p<0.05 ; ** p=0.00<0.01*

Based on the results included in Table 3, we can state the following:

- There is a statistically significant positive correlation between the democratic parenting style, the child' s positive emotional state and positive outlook: *r = 0.42, p=0.00<0.01, r = 0.35, p=0.00<0.01*, hence the $\mathbf{H_1}$ hypothesis was confirmed (*A positive correlation exists between the democratic style and children's positive emotional state and their positive outlook respectively).*
- There are no statistically significant correlations between the permissive parenting style, the child's positive emotional state, positive outlook on the future, and desirability; consequently, the $\mathbf{H_2}$ hypothesis has not been confirmed (*A negative correlation exists between the permissive style and children's positive emotional state and their positive outlook respectively*).

- There is a negative correlation between the authoritarian parenting style, the child's positive emotional state and the positive outlook on the future: $r = -0.21, p<0.05; r = -0.21, p<0.05$; hence the $\mathbf{H_3}$ hypothesis has been confirmed (*A negative correlation exists between the authoritarian parental style and children's positive emotional state respectively*).

In order to analyse gender differences with reference to the wellbeing dimensions, we used *the t-test for independent samples*, but the results indicated that there are no significant gender differences in the three wellbeing dimensions (positive emotional state, positive outlook, and desirability) in secondary school/ middle school students.

Table 5. Gender differences between students regarding the wellbeing level

	Female (N=48)	Male (N=67)	
	M(SD)	M(SD)	t (113)
Positive emotional state	20.12	19.76	-.449
Positive outlook	20.10	19.83	-.279
Social desirability	9.10	9.01	-.185

Conclusions and discussions

Our research started/originated from the hypothesis that democratic, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles correlate with children's wellbeing.

According to existing studies, the parenting style employed by parents influences to a certain extent the creation/fostering and maintenance of children's wellbeing. The parent-child relationship that is based on warmth, affection, support and positive emotions, aims to develop children's social-emotional skills and improve their wellbeing (Scaramella & Leve, 2004; Scaramella et al., 2008).

Despite the fact that they have high expectations from their children, democratic parents display a supportive behavior towards them, which contributes to developing self-confidence and maintaining wellbeing, as demonstrated by the present study, and other research in the field (Rodrigo et al., 2014; Francis et al., 2021; Vijimon et al., 2022).

The permissive parenting style is characterised by a lack of clear boundaries and consistency in providing affection and support for the

child. Although children may initially perceive the freedom and lack of constraints offered by a permissive parenting style as positive, the absence of boundaries could lead to difficulties related to the management of emotions and interactions with others. Children educated in a permissive environment may tend to feel insecure or misunderstood when faced with certain situations.

According to the research results, there are no correlations between permissive parenting style and wellbeing, although some studies state that there may exist negative correlations between the two variables (Spera, 2005; Marcone et al., 2018). A possible explanation for this result may be connected to the carelessness that permissive parents manifest towards the child, their corresponding disinterest and non-involvement. Another possible explanation could be connected to parents' living standards and conditions. There are families from rural areas that have a precarious material situation, the parents being forced to work most of the time to ensure the basic necessities for their family members. In this case, children's emotional wellbeing is not a priority for parents as they are particularly concerned about the family's material wellbeing.

Authoritarian-style parents show exaggerated control over their children, displaying an attitude of rejection, low level of support and emotional engagement. The authoritarian parenting style involves the imposition of strict rules and high expectations, without taking into account children's opinions and feelings. Authoritarian parents often make use of punishments and threats to achieve compliance. This parenting style has frequently been correlated with emotional and behavioral problems as well as with children's maladjustment to various social situations. (Baumrind et al., 2010; Delvecchio et al., 2020; Jing, 2022).

According to our research results, the authoritarian parenting style negatively correlates with children's emotional state and positive outlook. This relates to the explanation that an authority-based parenting style will lead to a reduced level of emotional and psychological wellbeing. Moreover, children with authoritarian parents will be distrustful of their own strengths, displaying limited perspectives on their personal and professional future.

Taking into account all the above mentioned results in a systematic summary, we can state the following: the democratic parenting style positively correlates with wellbeing in children in a rural environment; the authoritarian parental style correlates negatively

whereas the permissive parenting style does not correlate with rural children's wellbeing.

It is important to note that in rural communities, parental styles can be influenced by traditions, culture, socio-economic conditions, and family access to resources as we acknowledge the fact there is a possibility that our research results have also been influenced to some extent by the aforementioned factors.

In accordance with the specialist literature, these results confirm that the democratic parenting style is the most effective in promoting children's wellbeing, while the authoritarian style is considered a less favorable approach to parenting (Bornstein & Lamb, 2015; Larzelere et al., 2013). The present study has also confirmed this pattern with reference to parents in a rural environment.

The complexity between the parental style and children's wellbeing could be studied in more depth in further research studies taking into account additional variables such as parental stress, parental support as perceived by the child, interparental conflict, parent-child interaction, mother's and father's parenting style, etc.

Research limitations

- The transversal nature of the study as well as the low number of participants hinders the generalisation of data;
- Subjectivism and the tendency to choose the desirable option when completing the pencil-and-paper questionnaire.

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