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Children's Upbringing in the Perception of Engaged Couples

Abstract: The period of engagement is vital to discussions on the issues connected with marriage. One of such issues is children's upbringing. This is why the main problem of this research is found in the question: What are the engaged couples' views on children's upbringing? In the research procedure the following problems have been brought to attention: the respondents' the opinion on the topic of awarding a child with money or other material profits for its fulfilment of the household duties, the respondents' interest in information on children's upbringing, the respondents' ways of acquiring knowledge on upbringing of a child, the respondents' views on a so-called 'tight front' in a child's upbringing (the same expectation of parents towards their child).

Key words: engaged couples, upbringing, styles of upbringing, household duties, parenting models.

From the point of view of etymology, "upbringing" in Polish *meant the same as "feeding" or "providing for"*. Only since the 19th century the term acquired its figurative meaning and replaced a Latin word "education". Latin "educare" – education – stemmed from *ex-duco*, which meant "I am bringing it up from a worse to a higher, better state" [Dąbrowska, Wojciechowska-Charlak 1997, p. 18].

Wojciech Pomykalo [1993, p. 918] maintains that *upbringing is an overall influence of specified pedagogical stimuli and general social, group, individual, professional as well as non-professional experiences, which cause lasting effects in the development of an individual in the physical, mental, social, cultural, and spiritual sphere*. Upbringing can be understood in a broader as well as narrower scope. A broader meaning of upbringing encompasses

all influences on a human being in all aspects of life, for example: family, environment, school, work influences. These influences shape an individual's character, his or her personality, psyche, opinions, and lead the individual to the formation of permanent types of behaviour, according to normative social rules. However, a narrower interpretation of education includes only intentional and conscious influence on an individual, performed according to a specific aim and situation. It relates only to certain influences on specific spheres. Thus, a notion of intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and physical upbringing is used [Tyrła 2001].

In the case of upbringing we can include different factors, which affect an individual's development: family influence, peers, social and local environments, place of work, mass media and institutions created with the aim of organising planned educational processes, e.g. kindergartens, schools, and other education centres. However, from all of the above mentioned, family is the factor most influential to an individual's development.

Family upbringing *constitutes the first school of behaviour for the vast majority of people; it comprises care and nourishing activities of the parents towards their children (providing for safety, food, clothes, roof over one's head) and activities ranging from health and physics upbringing to mental, moral, social, religious and aesthetic education as well as children's activities which start from playing up to more varied tasks* [Okoń 1992, p. 236]. According to Wincenty Okoń [1992, p. 236] parents' attitudes and behaviours, emotional and cultural atmosphere of family life, children's engagement in home-related duties, cooperation of family and school, and the family participation in socio-cultural life of a country plays an important role in home upbringing.

Family house – created by parents' own relationship arrangements, standards and atmosphere it represents through care for a child – impacts the child's development and shapes its personality. Parents are the ones that provide proper role models for their children – it is them, especially in the early ages of a child's life, who fulfil most of the child's biological and cognitive needs. By answering the child's inquiries parents form its emotional life, serve much needed help and advice, give proper attention, and, most of all, provide models of behaviour and conduct. If a child, in its early stages of life, misses proper family care, it may develop worse physically, encounter more problems with knowledge acquiring and group or society functioning.

Methodological notes

The purpose of this research is to find out the views of engaged couples on the topic of children's upbringing. This is why the main problem this research is about to analyse is stated in the question: "What are the opinions of engaged couples on children's upbringing?" This question raises further detailed ones:

1. Do engaged partners raise discussions on the topic of their prospective of-

- spring's upbringing?
2. What ways of upbringing do they choose?
 3. What is the view of engaged couples on children's obligations in house duties?
 4. What is the level of the surveyed couples' interest in possessing knowledge on a child's development and upbringing?

This research was conducted on 171 engaged couples (EC) and used the method of a diagnostic survey. The technique comprised questionnaires and statistical techniques. The research process lasted from May 2012 till February 2013. The research was carried out by the author and students of Jan Kochanowski University Subsidiary in Piotrków Trybunalski. The research method used a snowball mode (friends' friends), which enabled finding and contacting engaged couples.

Social and demographic characteristics of the researched population

Results presented in this research paper are a part of more extensive research, which the author conducted on the topic of contemporary engaged couples. Thus, the author's knowledge on the researched group is quite comprehensive. For the purposes of this article only a few questions have been raised.

Table 1. Relationship period*

*relationship period includes both dating and engagement period

answers	EC	%
up to 1 year	8	8,5
1–2 years	55	58,5
2–4 years	19	20,2
4 years and more	12	12,8
in total	94	100,0

Source: own study.

Most of the surveyed people, up to 59%, have been together for the period of 1 to 2 years. 20% of the respondents declares 2 to 4 years of a relationship status. Similar percentage relates to people with over 4 years' period (8,5 % and 12,8%, respectively).

Table 2. Respondents' approach towards faith

Answers	EC	%
strong believer practicing regularly	19	20,2
believer practicing unsystematically	55	58,5

non-practicing believer	20	21,3
non-believer	-	-
in total	94	100,0

Source: own study.

All of the respondents state they are believers. Most of them (58,5%) are people who are believers practicing unsystematically. Strong faith and systematic participation in the Church life is declared by 20,2% of the engaged couples. Only a little more, 21,3% constitutes people who deem themselves believers, but not practicing.

Research results indicate a growing discrepancy between attitudes and beliefs of Christian faith and the moral doctrine it entails. Active participation in religious practices and the official acceptance of canonical law goes hand in hand with the negation of the basic faith orders (living together before marriage). The phenomenon of such incoherence of behaviour and declared values, which are promoted by the Church, seems to be quite regular.

Table 3. Declared marriage model

answers	EC	%
Traditional model	65	19,0
Mixed model	128	37,4
Partnership model	110	32,2
Reverse model	39	11,4
in total	342	100,0

Source: own study.

Most of the respondents (37.4%) prefer mixed marriage model, in which both spouses work professionally, but a woman is responsible for housework, children's upbringing etc. Similarly (32.2%) would like their marriage in future be based on a partnership model, which includes both spouses working professionally and equally caring for the house and children. Research also shows that the traditional marriage model still has its supporters. Almost 1/5 of the engaged people think that a husband should be responsible for earning money in order to provide for the family, and a wife should provide for the house and bring up children. The smallest number of respondents (11.4%) supports a reverse marriage model, in which only a wife works and earns enough money for the family's needs, whereas a husband cares for the house and children's upbringing.

Table 4. Partners' age

answers	EC	%
same age	27	7,9
less than 3 years difference	235	68,7
3–6 years difference	37	10,8
6–9 years difference	26	7,6
more than 9 years difference	17	5,0
in total	342	100,0

Source: own study.

Engaged couples formed by peers are only a small percentage of the respondents (8%). Most of the surveyed (69%) indicate a small age difference between partners, which counts up to 3 years. Almost 11% of engaged partners declare 3 to 6 years' difference between them. Only a small percentage of pairs admit age differences of 6 to 9 years or over 9 years (7.6% and 5%, respectively).

Table 5. Partners' education

answers	EC	%
the same	174	50,9
one-stage difference	135	39,5
two-stage difference	33	9,6
three-stage difference	-	-
In total	342	100,0

Source: own study.

The same level of education is declared by most of the surveyed (51%). A relatively high percentage of engaged partners, almost 40%, indicate one-stage of educational difference. Educational discrepancy at the level of two stages was found in 10 % of the respondents. None of the pairs exhibited three-stage difference in education.

Research results analysis

Future parents' views on raising children – as stated by Jacek Pulikowski [2012] – is usually characterized by discrepancies. It partly stems from the whole range of promoted educational conceptions, which are often mutually exclusive. These differences may result from varying outlooks of women and men on children and the manner of their upbringing. The roles that a mother or a father plays at each stage of child's development is also varied. Discussions, even arguments, on the topic of upbringing can have a substantial effect not only on the knowledge and choice of a spouse, but can also provide a fruitful result in a common style of raising children in future marriage.

In the light of this remark a question arises: do engaged couples start discussions on upbringing at all? Similar and other questions were asked, and all of the respondents, even the ones unwilling to have children, stated their opinions. It was presupposed, however, that couples who were not willing to have children stated this only as a declaration, which could change in time.

Lack of coherence in parent's views on education negatively affects their child's development. When dealing with a child, it is not easy a task to work out a uniform conduct, coherence in communication, consistency, and a decision making which would not be discredited by either side. If parents come from different family environments or have not inherited a set of positive models then reaching a common ground on upbringing requires several years of practice. In this case, it would be justified to discuss this issue already in the engagement period. It includes not only talking, but also reading books on upbringing, getting involved together in a babysitting of someone else's child, as well as discussing observed behavioural situations at playgrounds or in a shop upon meeting friends and family.

Table 6. Relationship period vs. starting a conversation on the topic of raising children

Question: Have you ever discussed the upbringing of your children?

EC1 – up to 1 year – 31

EC2 – 1 to 2 years – 201

EC3 – 2 to 4 years – 72

EC4 – 4 years and more – 38

answers	relationship period								in total	
	EC1	%	EC 2	%	EC 3	%	EC 4	%	EC	%
answer a)	-	-	9	4,5	5	6,9	4	10,5	18	5,3
answer b)	5	12,1	58	28,8	15	20,8	9	23,7	87	25,4
answer c)	-	-	10	5,0	3	4,2	4	10,5	17	5,0
answer d)	26	83,9	124	61,7	49	68,1	21	55,3	220	64,3
in total	31	100,0	201	100,0	72	100,0	38	100,0	342	100,0

*relationship period includes both dating and engagement period

Answers:

many times

we share sporadic opinions on our friends' and family's upbringing of children

I wanted to discuss this issue with my partner, but he or she did not show any interest in the topic

no, why?

Source: own study.

The issue of upbringing does not occur during the partners' dates. Most of the surveyed identify themselves with this opinion (almost 64%). The respondents explained their lack of interest in such topics in the following way: *We are still only engaged and we should not look so much to the future. In order to discuss a child's upbringing one has to have it first. I understand that it is possible to declare a willingness to have children, when and how many prospectively, but it is too early to discuss upbringing in itself.* Vast majority (83.9%) of respondents did not discuss children's upbringing at all – these were couples with short period of relationship up to one year. This percentage is similar in the case of the following researched groups, whose relationship timespan counted 1 to 2 years, and 2 to 4 years (61.7% and 68.1%, respectively). In the group in which partners are together for 4 or more years the percentage of pairs who did not discuss this topic is the smallest in comparison with other groups and amounts to 55%.

A part of the engaged couples wanted to raise this issue, but one of the partners was not interested in the subject matter. This state was proclaimed by 5% of the respondents.

Observations, carried out by couples on their family members or friends who already perform the social role of a parent, may be a good occasion to share views on the issue of a child's upbringing. Sporadic comments on such observations declared $\frac{1}{4}$ of the respondents, the lowest 12% was the group of the shortest relationship period. Other researched groups obtained similar percentage results (28.8%; 20.8% and 23.7%).

Only 5% of the engaged couples declared they brought up the issue many times, but this included none of the couples with the shortest relationship-span.

Statistic calculation demonstrated that $\chi^2_{emp.}$ value equals 13,172 and $\chi^2_{teor.}$ including $df = 9$ and $a = 0,01 - 21,666$. Comparison of statistic value of χ^2 with critical value: $13,172 = \chi^2 < \chi_a^2 = 21,666$. It can be stated that, including 1% of risk, the researched characteristics are not much dependant statistically, i.e. discussions on children's upbringing undertaken by engaged couples are not reliant on the length of their relationship period.

However, the fact that engaged couples do not discuss children's upbringing does not presuppose they do not have opinions on the issue of raising their future progeny.

Direct connection of the young with their parents, and the observation of their and offspring's reciprocal relations quite early allow them to individualise behaviour-affecting values. The models of relation between parents and children, types of bonds that connect them, as well as the preferred types of care and education, have a significant influence on the ways these processes run in the children's own families. Functioning image of one's own family includes not only reconstruction of care and education experiences but also a reflection of different

upbringing styles that young people encounter from different sources. However, the most important role here is played by parents themselves. *Their own example of parenting status is thus imprinted in the consciousness of their offspring. By parents' daily participation in all, more or less important, problems, children have the chance to observe parents' behaviour towards each other, their system of values, and the ways of its implementation* [Pielka 1998, p. 365]. Relations between parents and children differ and are subject to various circumstances – atmosphere at home, type of upbringing, parenting attitudes, relations between parents, communication between siblings. It is hard to find ideal relations between parents and children, because there exist none. However, as Henryk Pielka rightfully notes, *if parents patiently listen to and talk to their children, give counsel, explain, and if this communication is filled with sincerity, friendship, and love, we can expect that young people would like to continue the same style of relations in their own families.*

Table 7. Continuation of upbringing behaviours in engaged couples

Question: Would you like to share similar relations with your children as your parents shared with you?

answers	EC	%
yes	67	19,6
rather yes	119	34,8
rather no	99	28,9
no	57	16,7
in total	342	100,0

Source: own study.

More than a half of the engaged couples (when answers „yes” and „rather yes” are added up – 54.4%) declared their wish to continue the ways of their parents' upbringing. These are some of the selected answers: *Parents have been warm and sincere. I always had the impression I was most important for them. They were interested in my education marks, they knew my problems, I shared all my small achievements with them. In the future I would like to be the same mom for my children as my mother has been, and still is, to me.* Other answer: *I could always count on my parent. They have never let me down.*

Answers that were definitely negative were given by almost 17% of the surveyed, and the negative but wavering answers reached 29%. *Parents have been for me and my brother quite strict and rigid. There was no ease of manner in the relations between us and our parents. I would like to be more open and warm for my own children.* Other said: *My parents are lawyers. My mother is a judge and father a lawyer. They worked a lot. Not only outside the house but also when they were at home. They didn't have time for me. Now it's really hard for me to bring up memories of going out together or playing with them. I would like to have more time for my children.* Another one: *Parents loved me very much and maybe this is why there were so overprotective towards me. Now, when I am grown up, I notice my own lack of*

independence. I cannot do many things. I am scared and confused by things that seem completely natural for my friends. I wouldn’t like my child to have the same problems as I do now. The above answers prove that one’s home experiences are, to a large extent, the basis for shaping one’s opinions on caring for and bringing up a child.

Every type of family has its own specific ways of upbringing. *The style of upbringing is characteristic to a given family and constitutes a resultant of the ways and methods of influencing a child by all members of a family* [Przetacznik-Gierowska, Włodarski 2002, p. 127]. In small, two-generation families, due to their educational function, the style of upbringing is dictated mostly by parents. The style of upbringing in a family is determined by parents’ views on children’s upbringing, the ways of influencing a child in different stages of its life, as well as the means and forms of steering child’s behaviours. The views of the parents are usually based on their own childhood and youth experiences from the families crated by their own parents as well as the observations of varied types of educational hardships and problem solving performed by other people. Experiences of the spouses can be homogenous, if the mother and father have been raised in similar environments, according to similar examples of behaviour and parent authority, or heterogeneous if the examples and models of leadership and control were disparate in the father’s and mother’s families [Przetacznik-Gierowska, Włodarski 2002].

Pedagogical and psychological literature usually lists three styles of upbringing: autocratic (described also as authoritarian), liberal, and democratic.

Table 8. Style of upbringing in a generational family vs. preferred style of upbringing of one’s child

Question: Which style of upbringing do you regard as the best one?

EC1 – autocratic style of upbringing in a generational family – 97

EC2 – liberal style of upbringing in a generational family – 109

EC3 – democratic style of upbringing in a generational family – 136

answers	Style of upbringing in a generational family						in total	
	autocratic		liberal		democratic		N	%
	N1	%	N2	%	N3	%		
autocratic	8	8,2	16	14,7	-	-	24	7,0
liberal	12	12,4	34	31,2	-	-	46	13,5
democratic	77	79,4	59	54,1	136	100,0	272	79,5
in total	97	100,0	109	100,0	136	100,0	342	100,0

Source: own study.

A distinct majority of engaged couples, almost 80%, regards democratic style of upbringing as the most beneficial for the development of a child’s personality. This view is shared by all of the respondents who were brought up this way

themselves. A child's access to participating in a family life was declared the most by respondents raised autocratically (79.4%) and almost half (54.1%) that grew up at homes where liberal approach towards children's upbringing was preferred. *Mutual trust, love and kindness are most important in the relationship of a parent and a child.* Other answer: *A child is not an individual in part but a rightful human being, although a little one. Therefore we should treat it with due respect and take into account its opinions.*

Liberal style of upbringing is appreciated by almost 14% of engaged couples. This child approach is preferred by almost of the surveyed (31.2%) who experienced that type of parental treatment in their childhood. The respondents' answers indicate, however, that it was a loving-liberal style. Some examples of answers present as follows: *I would like to raise my child in a liberal style. This was the way my parents used towards me. Their attitude exhibited a lot of love and true warmth as well as interest in my life, however, it was not intrusive. I was not bothered by an overt inquisitiveness, but granted some freedom margin.* Other answer: *I have really strong bonds with my parents. I was given a lot of love, but, at the same time, freedom of action as well. It definitely resulted from trust, which my parents bestowed upon me.* Another one: *I appreciate the fact that my parents did not deliberately meddle in my life. I felt freedom. They intervened only when I asked them to. I would like to raise my children the same way.*

Small percentage of the engaged couples (7%) were of the opinion that a child is expected to be disciplined and obedient. Autocratic style of upbringing – as now discussed – was stated as the preferred one by 8% of the surveyed who were brought up by parents who used this style, and more (almost 15%) respondents who were raised in a liberal style. The respondents justified their choice in the following ways: *A child should know its rights and obligations. It should know what can and what cannot be done. The parent's task is to control the child's behaviour and punish in case of disobedience. Only then can a child be raised as a rightful and decent human being.* Other answer: *Today there exists no distance between parents and children. A child shouldn't have its share in deciding about family matters, this would mean crossing a line. Home matters are parents' business and a child should be dutiful.* Another one: *If children are not held in discipline by parents even a teacher can land with a bucket on his head. Because children feel they can do everything and do not respect grown-ups at all. We can call elections as 'democratic', but not upbringing.*

Statistic calculation shows that $\chi^2_{emp.}$ value equals 78,811, whereas $\chi^2_{teor.}$ for $df = 4$ and $\alpha = 0,01$ -13,277. Comparison of statistic value χ^2 with critical value: $78,811 = \chi^2 > \chi^2_{\alpha} = 13,277$. This means that, with 1% risk, it can be stated that researched characteristics are statistically essentially dependent, i.e. preferred style of upbringing of one's child is dependent on the style of upbringing in a procreation family. The value of V-Cramer convergence coefficient equals 0.339, which means that researched dependency is weak.

When analysing the engaged couples' views on upbringing of children, the question of children's share in house duties was also considered. The Sociological

Dictionary explains the notion of an obligation as *one of the social consequences of functioning of the codified and common law, which created the duty to obey a specific social norm. The behaviour, implied by the norm or "dutiful" action, can be executed from an individual in spite of his or her will; an individual can also be punished by a social sanction* [Gregrowicz 2004, p. 142]. In the eyes of the law, a 'duty' means *an order or prohibition of a certain behaviour, which is directed to an individual in a given situation* [Banaszak 2005, p. 310].

Halina Filipczuk [1987] categorised duties of the youth into two:

I. Permanent duties, which are conducive to the feeling of responsibility, *systematicity*, and a sort of initiative and invention. Assigning such duties to young people causes they are more precise and adequate in planning their own tasks.

II. Temporary duties, although bringing less relief to parents and exhibiting fewer educational qualities, have a value of creating more sense of helpfulness and openness in the behaviour of young people.

Each of these obligations has its pros and cons. Permanent duties can be regarded by some as tiresome, boring and deprived of any enjoyment. One could state even that a child performs these duties by heart, without learning other things at the same time. On the other hand, these duties teach *systematicity, a sense of responsibility, and, most of all, shape certain principles in young people. Thanks to such duties a child knows how long something takes, what it should do, and can easily plan the rest of the day. Repeated manner of permanent duties in time causes the child to know its own obligations, without the need of reminding.*

Temporary duties appear with a sudden need of a child's help. The advantage of these duties comes from the fact that a child is less burdened with work because the duties are not strictly specified. A disadvantage exists, however, in an unforeseen resigning or interruption of an important task in order to help in cleaning or shopping. These unexpected tasks can collide with child's learning or its planned time, therefore, when possible, should be previously agreed upon with parents.

The view of the engaged couples on children's share in house duties is explicit. All of them stated that a child should be engaged in common maintenance of the household. These are some of the chosen answers: *I think that a child, since its early years, should help parents at home.* Another one: *All the time the media tell us about a child's rights at school and at home. But we cannot forget that a child should also have its duties.* Another one: *Children should have household duties. Otherwise they would have claims and be egoistical. They have to know that living in a group also means giving something from ourselves.* And another one: *Children should have house-related duties because they prepare them for adulthood.*

Table 9. Style of upbringing in a generational family vs. determining child's household duties

Question: Do you think that a child's family duties should be rigidly determined by parents, decided together with parents, or voluntarily decided by a child?

EC1 – autocratic style of upbringing in a generational family – 97

EC2 – liberal style of upbringing in a generational family – 109

EC3 – democratic style of upbringing in a generational family – 136

answers	Style of upbringing in a generational family						in total	
	autocratic		liberal		democratic		N	%
	N1	%	N2	%	N3	%		
strictly determined by parents	69	71,1	11	10,1	-	-	80	23,4
decided together with a child	26	26,8	19	17,4	124	91,2	169	49,4
voluntarily decided by a child	2	2,1	79	72,5	12	8,8	93	27,2
in total	97	100,0	109	100,0	136	100,0	342	100,0

Source: own study.

Data included in the above table prove that most of the surveyed, almost half of them (49.4%), thinks that a child's duties at home should be decided upon along with the child's participation in the process. It can be supposed that engaged couples want to stay in good relationship with their children and care about mutual agreement regarding this issue. It should be noted that this view is shared by the vast majority of the surveyed (91.2%) who were brought up in a democratic-style generational family. The percentage of respondents who experienced autocratic and liberal style of upbringing is much lower (26.8% and 17.4%, respectively).

Almost 30% of the engaged couples (27,2%) hold the view that a child should voluntarily set its own household duties. In this case research results are not a surprise that most of the respondents who identify with this statement (72.5%) had parents who preferred liberal style of upbringing, and the smallest number 2% of the surveyed came from families with autocratic style of upbringing.

Almost ¼ of engaged couples (23.4%) is of the opinion that a child's household duties should be strictly determined by parents. Such stance seems mistaken, because the duties imposed on children by parents will not be willingly carried out by children, and the children are not going to benefit from them at all. Those who support such type of duty-assignment, almost 71% of the engaged couples, are the ones raised at homes where autocratic style prevailed; and nearly 7 times fewer respondents (10.1%) who experienced liberal style in a generational family. None of the surveyed brought up in a democratic way declared this style of home-duty assignments towards children.

Statistical analysis presents that $\chi^2_{\text{emp.}}$ value equals 336.507, whereas $\chi^2_{\text{teor.}}$ for $df = 4$ and $\alpha = 0,01 - 13,277$. Comparison of statistical χ^2 value with critical value: $336,507 = \chi^2 > \chi^2_{\alpha} = 13,277$. This means that, with 1% risk of a mistake, research characteristics can be stated to be statistically dependent, i.e. determining a child's household duties is dependent on the style of upbringing in a generational family. The value of V-Cramer convergence coefficient equals 0. 701, which means that researched dependency is strong.

Rewarding children for their house work is an important issue. Children should not be paid for the activities, which are a result of their share in a family life, because this might teach them cynicism and thinking: *one does nothing for free*. A reward can mean an approval, or more time spent together with a child. In the light of the Household Committee's research a money-reward for help was given to 14% of children. However, most commonly used form of rewarding was children's possibility to spend time in an attractive way; including going to the cinema, theatre, or organising a trip (52%). Only 16% of the parents rewarded their offspring with an approval and gratitude for the help they were given [Szymańska 1988].

Table 10. Opinion of the surveyed on children's money and other material rewarding for the duties they fulfilled

Question: Do you think a child should be given money or other material profits for fulfilling its household duties?

answers	EC	%
yes	-	-
rather yes	12	3,5
rather no	89	26,0
no	241	70,5
in total	342	100,0

Source: own study.

Almost all respondents, nearly 96% (when 'rather no' and 'no' are added up), were of the opinion that a child, for fulfilling its household duties, should not be given any money and other material profits, e.g. a gift. Without a doubt, such an approach of the engaged couples towards the analysed issue is the right one. Money or gifts for a child's fulfilled household duties are a form of bribery. What is more, it is dangerous when children are brought up this way because they will carry out a given task and, instead of drawing other profits, wait for their pay.

Only a minor percentage of respondents (3.5%) said yes, but wavered when answering the question. Such an approach of the surveyed may result from a lack of faith in the power of words or gestures, which can motivate one's children to do many things; or a conviction that children can do something as a result of their own initiative.

The knowledge on caring, development and upbringing of a child seems to be crucial when thinking about parenthood. Understanding the methods and rules of care and educational behaviours as well as psychosomatic characteristics of a child, in every stage of its development, is very important. As Henryk Pielka rightly notices, (...) *a positive attitude towards a child-to-be is not only material protection but also a whole scope of knowledge on child's upbringing and shaping an educational environment* [1988, s. 367].

Table 11. Respondents' interest in information on children's upbringing

Question: Are you interested in information or advice on how to bring up children?

E1 – women – 171

E2 – men – 171

answers	Respondents' sex				in total	
	woman		man		N	%
	N1	%	N2	%		
yes	117	68,4	34	19,9	151	44,2
not yet	54	31,6	137	80,1	191	55,8
in total	171	100	171	100	342	100

Source: own study.

Data included in the above table prove that 44% of the engaged partners are interested in receiving information on raising children. In this respect, however, women (68.4%) seem to be more interested in the issue than men (19.9%).

Table 12. Respondents' ways of acquiring knowledge on the issue of upbringing a child

Question: In what way do you acquire knowledge on the issue of a child's upbringing?

EC – 151 (respondents who are interested in information on children's upbringing)

answers	EC	%
I watch TV programs	99	65,6
I read specialist books, guidebooks and magazines	56	37,1
I talk about raising children among my friends	27	17,9
I observe the behaviour of my friends, who already are parents	32	21,2
in total	214	141,8*

*total numer of answers >100 % because respondents could choose more than one answer

Source: own study.

Most of the respondents, almost 66%, draws their knowledge from different TV programs. The surveyed often admitted they watched reality shows, such as *Super Nanny*, *World's Strictest Parents*, or *The Child Whisperer*. Among the watched shows also appeared *Naughty Angels* and *Young Mother's Club*.

Reading specialist books, guidebooks and magazines is declared by less respondents – 37%. The ones interested in these problematic aspects can choose from a broad range of published items existing on the market, which contain practical advice for parents. The surveyed are keen to read Polish authors. Among others, they list Dorota Zawadzka and Wojciech Eichelberger.

Another way to acquire knowledge on child's education is also to talk about it with friends (17.9%) as well as to observe the behaviours of friends, who already play the social role of a parent (21.2%).

Thomas Gordon [1994] maintains that one of the most rooted views on children's upbringing is that parents have to create the so-called *tight front*. According to this conception, parents should always support each other so as to make the child believe that both of them have the same attitude towards a given behaviour. This strategy, according to the author, leads to a lack of authenticity in one of the parents. This is an example that explains the author's viewpoint: *A room of a 16 year old girl is not always as tidy as her mother would want it to be. Ordinary way in which daughter cleans is unacceptable (within the range of the lack of acceptance). However, the father sustains that the room is clean and tidy enough. The same behaviour is placed in his acceptance range. The mother uses pressure on the father to share her opinion about cleaning the room in order to form a tight front (and have more influence on the daughter). If the father cooperates, he remains untrue to his own feelings* [Gordon 1994, p. 27].

Regarding the above issue, respondents were asked to take their stance on the thesis: Sharing same views by partners is important in children's upbringing because it causes a coherence of expectations. The research does not support Thomas Gordon's thesis due to the fact that all parents agreed with the above thesis. This uniformity seems to be important especially when using educational methods. A child quickly senses any incoherence and, by using one of the parent's submissiveness, breaks all assigned limitations. Lack of coherence of educational methods can also cause conflicts in a child. It happens when a child is punished by one of the parents and awarded by the other for the same behaviour.

Parent's coherence in upbringing a child gives them a feeling of co-responsibility in the processes of education and decision-making. Such cooperation of the spouses in the process of upbringing positively affects children's behaviour because it clearly shows which behaviour is, and which is not, accepted by both parents. If a child misbehaves, it knows the following consequences, including the fact of punishment by parents. In the case of upbringing methods, coherence between married partners seems to be more effective.

Engaged couples obtain their knowledge on a child's upbringing through personal experiences and by communication. The first way consists in acquiring information by a direct contact with parents as well as family environment, its impact and own influence on it. The advantage of information acquired in this way comes from the fact of it *being obtained according to one's own needs and being well selected, which makes it easy to use it in the future. On the contrary, information obtained through communication is selected and used according to the informant's needs* [Pielka 1998, p. 371].

Research analysis on the views of engaged couples on children's upbringing allowed for drawing the following conclusions:

1. Engaged couples do not take up the topic of children's upbringing during their meetings. This fact, however, does not imply they do not have views on the ways of raising their future offspring.
2. More than a half of the surveyed (55%) estimated their generational families with a positive mark. This is proved by the fact that engaged couples wanted to keep similar relations with their children as their parents kept with them.
3. A vast majority of the engaged couples, nearly 80%, regards democratic style of upbringing as the most beneficial for a child's personality development. It is interesting that almost 79.4% of the surveyed who were raised in an autocratic style identifies with this opinion. Thus, a thesis can be proposed that engaged couples' parents and their behaviour towards their children caused a lot of pain, which the engaged couples do not want to pass on their own children.
4. The opinion of the engaged couples on children's share in household duties is unambiguous. All of them stated that a child should be engaged in construing one's household. Half of the surveyed, however, claims that house-related obligations should be discussed together with a child. The respondents opposed the idea of motivating children to household duties through money or gifts.
5. Much more women than men present an interest in information on a child's upbringing. The respondents usually receive that type of information through TV shows or specialist books and guidebooks.
6. All of the respondents think that parents should form a so-called *tight front* in raising a child. They opt for the coherence of views on upbringing by both of the parents as well as a uniform set of expectations towards a child.

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