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FAMILY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S INDEPENDENCE

Abstract: Family is the only social group an individual does not choose, but he/she finds it as inevitability; at the same time it is also his/her first social group within which the process of upbringing, socialization, personality formation begins. In other words, family is a foundation everything starts from. Whether an individual will be formed as independent personality depends, before all, on the family he/she is born in, what are the parents like as role models, what are the features of the environment the child grows up and develops.

The assumption that family relations, as well as parental upbringing style are of key importance for the formation of independent and mature personality has served as a basis of the research. It is considered that warm family atmosphere and parents' democratic upbringing style are more suitable for the formation of independent personality of a child. This is why an effort has been made to investigate according to a research based on a relevant theoretical framework the level of child's independence (practical, intellectual, emotional independence, independence in relation to peers, independence necessary for finding one's way in the setting) and in what way a family, i.e. family relations influence the process of young people becoming independent in Serbia.

Having in mind pedagogical value of children independence, since it is closely related to socialization, successfulness and resourcefulness in work, relations with other people, as well as with creative personal development, the paper deals with the influence family has on its development. We dealt with the issues regarding the extent to which the characteristics of independent people, i.e. the people who know what they want, who do not expect constant support of others, who do not go by the influence of others, can be successfully developed, as well as how this can be done. Due to the complexity of the problem issue, apart from theoretical considerations, the paper offers an attempt to empirically consider the problem according to an undertaken research and statistical processing of the obtained data.

Key words: types of independence, family, children upbringing style.

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1. Introduction

As one of the positive personality features, independence has a special place in the life of each individual, it contributes to proper development of a personality and therefore is a significant assumption of physical, mental and moral education. Due to these reasons, it is a necessary precondition for successful development of each child, a condition necessary for a child to become a man, to find his/her own place in society and become equipped for responsibility of an adult. There are many occasions in life when one has to make a decision independently, to know how to defend one's own standpoint, to confront the opinion one does not agree with, to be able to make a choice in a decisive moment; in other words, it is necessary for a person to be true to him/herself. In order to be successful in any job, as well as in life in general, it is necessary for a person to be independent. Life seeks for independent people and therefore we have to make children independent and prepare them for life.

As a positive personality feature, independence is at the same time a necessary precondition for existence of any individual. Whether an individual will be formed as an independent personality is dependent on the kind of a family a child is born in, as well as the setting he/she grows up in. Actually, any child has in him/herself a potential personality requiring independence for versatile development. Independence should be constantly developed, having in mind the age of a child and his/her abilities.

M. Orlovic – Potkonjak defines independence as one of the necessary characteristics of a man and one of the essential conditions for proper development of his/her volition. Independence is also one of the basic personality features and, having in mind that it influences how a man will act in life, as well as his entire life, upbringing and modelling of character should start in first years in life; consequently, being its significant component, independence development should also start as early as possible (Orlovic – Potkonjak 1970: 7).

The aim of each family should be to form emotionally mature personality, within which independence has a significant role to play. It is important for parents to know that since the earliest age a child has a natural strive for independence which should be nurtured, empowered and developed. There are several types of independence. M. Orlovic-Potkonjak states the following types of independence:

1. personal independence in practical things – child's ability to get dressed, feed him/herself and maintains personal hygiene;
2. independence for managing in environment – child's ability to move around freely, get in touch with unfamiliar persons, go shopping;
3. independence in relation to his/her peers and the class the child belongs to – resistance to being abused and the need not to be content with him/herself imitating his/her friends;
4. emotional independence – a child is able to find his/her own way and entertain him/herself independently for certain periods of time, not always seeking for the presence and attention of adults;

5. intellectual independence – ability to search for and find one's own solutions for a problem, to think independently and not always believe blindly what others have to say;
6. independence in creative expression – reflects in originality, flexibility, creative production, construction, etc;

A pedagogue, Dr Ljubica Prodanovic in her book *Osamostaljivanje deteta – učenika: u porodici, školi i lokalnoj zajednici* [Making a child – pupil independent: in family, school, local community] (2003) collected recommendations of numerous experts studying children and young people between 7 and 16 years of age and the ways they gain independence for life in a family, school, local community. The author points out when, in what fields and in what ways a child should gain independence in family and school during primary education, as well as how the achieved results should be assessed. During nine-year-education in primary school, adults in family and school should organize nine steps in making a child independent, and one step is anticipated for each grade. The starting point on this road to making a child independent in each grade is to get to know the needs and abilities of a child. Thus, the same author recommends the following:

1st grade: making a child independent for moving around and communication, i.e. making a pupil independent in moving within a closer setting, equipping him/her with an ability to independently address familiar and unfamiliar person and teach a pupil react when others address him/her asking for help.

2nd grade: making a child independent for cooperation in meeting the requirements and performing duties; to encourage readiness of a pupil to help others in addressing their own needs, to develop humane relationship to others, both younger and older.

3rd grade: making a child independent for evaluation of his/her own behaviour and for creation of a belief that he/she does everything in the best possible way.

4th grade: a pupil should be made independent for judgement of the actions and behaviours of others; a pupil should be interested in what is happening around him/her and express his/her own opinion on the work and behaviour of others.

5th grade: it is necessary to make a child independent for planning his/her own work and behaviour.

6th grade: it is necessary for a pupil to gain independence for planning shared work and behaviour with others.

7th grade: making a pupil independent for the development of his/her own abilities through individual activities; opportunities should be provided for a pupil to express his/her curiosity and get familiar with his/her own abilities.

8th grade: providing a pupil with opportunities to gain independence for the development of his/her own abilities in common activities.

9th grade: making a pupil gain independence for responsible decision making; it is necessary to develop ability to trust adults, to nurture optimism while decision making, develop determination, sense of responsibility, self-criticism and persistence.

In a smaller-range research carried out by a psychologist K. Lackovic – Grgin in order to establish the way management style of parents influences school success of children, it has been found that the highest value in family conditions belongs to the very democratic relationship in which since the earliest age parents see and respect in a child a future man, aware that a child should be equipped for independent actions, respect of rules of

common life in a family and among people and for taking and performing necessary social duties. The research has shown that there is no significant difference between children coming from families dominated by authoritarian and anarchistic style of child upbringing. Both groups of children have shown significant falling behind the group of children from democratic families (Lackovic – Grgin 1974: 59).

So, according to the stated data it could be said that independence of children greatly depends on the variety of factors creating family relations. Having in mind the fact that family home is the first environment of a child representing the grounds of his/her later attitudes towards people, things and life in general, it is quite understandable that what entertains the greatest influence on the development of child's independence is family itself, parents and other family members.

Through their lifestyle, habits, beliefs and attitudes parents influence the development of child's personality as a whole. Their attitudes can be either positive or negative, which means that they can positively or negatively influence their child's development. Taking a right stand parents positively influence the personal development of their child, leading to development of child's independence. Parents can enable the child to: take responsibilities, independently take care of school obligations, not expecting contestant assistance of others, to address his/her own needs, to observe the phenomena around him/her and notice their interrelations, causes and consequences, as well as to express his/her own opinion and attitude.

2. The research subject, problem, aim, task and variables

Independence is not only positive personality feature, it is also a necessary condition for life. It is necessary so that we could cope in various situations and make right decisions not expecting help of others. If someone will form as an independent person depends before all on the family the child is born in, what are his/her parents like as role models, what are the features of the environment surrounding the child, ranging from neighbourhood, kindergarten, school to society on the whole.

These are the reasons why the research aimed at examining the nature and the level of child's independence (practical, intellectual, emotional independence, independence in relation to peers, independence necessary for finding one's way in a setting) and in what way family relations influence the process of young people becoming independent.

Research problem

Having in mind the fact that the process of socialization begins in a family aiming at forming a personality able to live in social community, it is clear what a significant role family has to play in the preparation of an individual for independent life. As a consequence, the key problem of the research is the following: How do family relations influence the formation of independence as a personality feature necessary for existence?

Research aim is to establish whether certain types of independence, i.e. practical, intellectual, emotional independence, independence in relation to peers, independence

necessary for finding one's way in a setting have developed in accordance to the age of the subjects, as well as if there are any significant differences in view of subjects' sex in regard to independence of the subjects.

Research tasks

The following research tasks have been determined according to its aim: to establish if and to what an extent independence of subjects is developed, in what ways family atmosphere influences development of independence and to examine whether there is statistically relevant difference in view of sex in regard to all the examined types of independence.

Research hypotheses

General hypothesis:

It is assumed that family is one of the key factors in the development of independence of a child. In other words, it is thought that warm family atmosphere and democratic style of upbringing make the foundations for the formation of independent, mature and all-rounded person; accordingly, the general hypothesis is formed: independence of the subjects is formed at satisfactory level in accordance to their age.

Individual hypotheses:

1. Independence of the subjects is developed to satisfactory level according to their age.
2. Warm family relations are more suitable for independence development than authoritarian family relations.
3. There is no statistically significant difference between girls and boys in view of practical independence.
4. There is no statistically significant difference between the sexes in regard to independence for finding one's way in a setting.
5. Independence in relations with peers is developed in the case of boys and girls to the same extent.
6. There is no statistically relevant difference in regard to subjects' sex when intellectual independence is in question.
7. There is no significant difference between girls and boys in view of emotional independence.

Research variables

Independent, dependent and intervening variable are defined according to the problem issue of the paper and the undertaken research. **Independent** variable refers to the following: the influence of family relations on the level and type of independence. Dependent variable: the level and the type of independence developed under the influence of family setting. Intervening: sex of subjects.

Research methods

Descriptive method intended for the examination of upbringing practice (empirical aspect) has been used in the research. The method is used in order to provide a true description of the existing facts. What is also used in the analysis of the results are analytical-synthetic and interpretative method. The instruments used for the need of

descriptive method are questionnaires. The reliability of these instruments is further increased by the anonymity of the subjects.

Research techniques

A technique of a poll, i.e. questionnaire distribution has been applied in the research. This is a technique in which subjects are asked certain questions they should provide answers to. Questions are asked in a written form. According to their answers facts are collected referring to the phenomenon which is the subject of the research.

Research instrument

A questionnaire consisting of 15 close type questions has been used in the research. The subjects opted for one of the offered answers to each question in order to gather adequate data; only in the case of the third and the last question the subjects had a possibility to choose more than one answers. The questionnaire served to examine the role of family in the process of gaining independence and forming of personality of the subjects.

Research population and sample

The research involved pupils attending the primary school "Vuk S. Karadzic" in Cuprija. The sample consisted of the pupils of three five grade classes. 42 boys and 41 girls were polled, in total 83 subjects. The sample is intentional, considering that a chosen sample should provide relevant data. Research was carried out in May of the school year 2011/2012.

3. Research results and interpretation

As it has already been mentioned, a research dealing with "the role of family in development of independence of children" was conducted in the primary school "Vuk S. Karadzic" in Cuprija. The sample consisted of 83 pupils, 42 boys and 41 girls. At the very outset the total results for boys and girls, as well as for the complete sample are presented in a table showing both percentages and numbers. In such a way presented results will be used in quantitative analysis, followed by comments and conclusions made according to the established hypotheses.

Analysis and comparison of findings obtained for girls and boys, as well as for the sample on the whole, is carried out for each question. The answers to each question are shown individually in a table along with comments and conclusions. In order to provide as good result perception as possible, the obtained answers to individual questions will also be graphically shown. Special attention is paid to the existence of statistically significant difference between the level of independence, depending on the sex of subjects.

The analysis of the selection of the level of agreement with the claim and the sex of the subjects will be carried out according to Hi quadrate test, through the comparison between the calculated values of Hi quadrate test and the border value. In the analysis and calculation of the values of Hi quadrate test for each individual question, border value will be used for the selected level of significance 0,01.

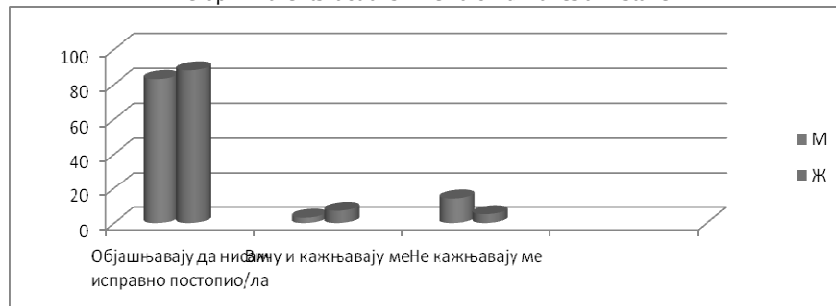
Results interpretation according to each individual question

In the text that follows an attempt will be made to interpret the obtained results and point to the reactions of parents and their behaviour in the situations in which a child makes a mistake.

Table 1: Parents' actions when a child makes a mistake

Responses	M	F	Σ
Parents explain that my actions were wrong	(35) 83 %	(36) 88 %	(71) 86%
Parents shout and punish me	(1) 3 %	(2) 7%	(3) 4%
Parents do not punish me	(6) 14 %	(2) 5%	(8) 10%

Graph 1 Parents' actions when a child makes a mistake



The results shown in the Table 1 and Graph 1 show that in regard to the question – When I make a mistake, my parents... - most parents of the subjects, more than 80% belong to democratic upbringing style, they show understanding for mistakes of their children and explain how they should behave in certain situations. However, although it is not a large number, there are parents who are inclined to punish the child and shout if a child makes a mistake. Such parents are present in 10% out of the total number of parents, with 3% of parents of boys and 7% of parents of girls; accordingly, it can be concluded that these parents are slightly stricter with girls than with boys.

In other words, majority of parents is patient and shows understanding for child's mistakes, explaining that they child had made a mistake in certain situations and giving them advice how to behave in the future.

Table 2: Actions of a child when parents ask him/her to do something

Answers	M	F	Σ
You always do what your parents say	(28) 69%	(27) 66%	(55) 67%
Sometimes you confront them	(13) 31%	(12) 29%	(25) 30%
You do not confront them, since they will punish you	-	(2) 5%	(2) 3%

According to the answers given by the subjects to the second question “When your parents ask you to do something, you...” it can be seen in Table 2 that majority of

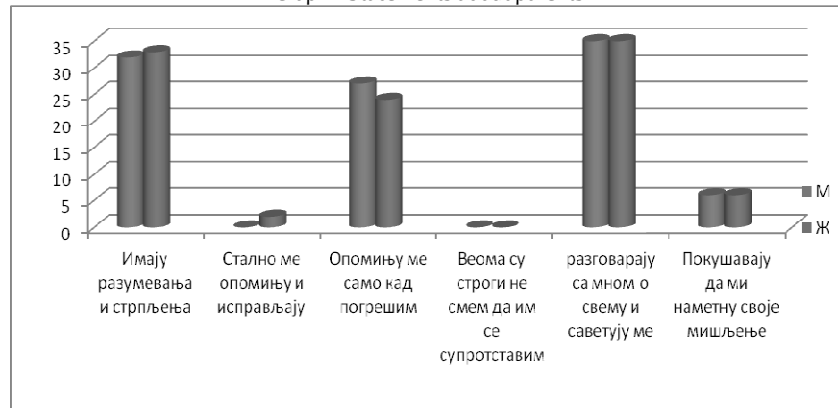
subjects obey their parents when they demand something from them, but their answers also show that obedience does not turn into submissiveness. In other words, the children do not act only as they are told, but they sometimes confront their parents, confirming their spontaneity in behaviour, characteristic for democratic upbringing style.

So, regardless of the sex of the subjects, they offered almost the same answers to the question, which can be seen according to the table. More than 60% of boys and girls obeys the demands of their parents and do as they are told, but about 30% of them confirm that it is not a blind submissiveness arising out of the fear from parental punishment. There are 5% of female population who do not confront their parents since they are afraid of their punishment; as a consequence, it can be concluded that for their parents authoritarian upbringing style is characteristic, typical for patriarchal family in which women were subordinated to men, who in turn used to have dominating position.

Table 3: Statements about parents

Responses	M	F	Σ
They have a lot of understanding and patience for me	(35) 32%	(33) 33%	(68) 32%
They constantly admonish and correct my actions	-	(2) 2%	(2) 1%
They admonish me only when I do something wrong	(30) 27%	(24) 24%	(54) 26%
They are very strict and I must not confront them	-	-	-
They talk to me about everything and give me advice	(39) 35%	(35) 35%	(35) 35%
They are trying to impose their attitudes and opinions	(7) 6%	(6) 6%	(13) 6%

Graph 2 Statements about parents



It seems that according to the answers offered by the subjects to the third question "My parents... (opt for more than one answer) we obtained slightly clearer and more complete picture on family relations as one of the factors influencing the formation of independent personality. In fact, the responses shown in the Table 3 and Graph 2 have confirmed the perception on the upbringing style of parents formed according to the

previous two questions. According to the obtained answers it can be seen that the majority of parents has understanding and patience, they talk with their children as equal family members and give them pieces of advice. The responses of boys and girls almost completely match. More than 30% of the subjects of both sexes have according to their answers pointed to understanding and patience they get from their parents; parents admonish 27% of boys and 24% of girls only when they do something wrong; at the same time 35% of boys and the same percentage of girls stated that their parents talk to them about everything and give them advice.

Having in mind all that has been mentioned above, a conclusion can be made that democratic parental upbringing style dominates, confirming the theoretical assumptions which were the starting points of the paper. We are talking about parents who build their authority with children through mutual respect and understanding. Personal example, i.e. parents being role models is their primary means in their efforts to influence the child, they behave naturally in front of the child and do not fear to admit when they do not know something or when they themselves do something wrong. In such parents a child can find a support for his/her own security and independence and it time a child becomes ready to bear responsibility. However, the influence of parents in upbringing and raising a child can lead to some mistakes the parents are often not aware of, life for example parents being overprotective, worrying about the child too much and thus isolating him/her from real events in the setting; as a consequence, the child is not able to cope with a variety of situations in the future without the assistance of others. Independence should be developed starting from the earliest age through play, through expression of desires and needs, through common activities as long as an individual is mature enough to make his/her own decisions, not expecting the help of others.

Table 4: Tiding up the room

Answers	M	F	Σ
I do it on my own	(23) 55%	(29) 71%	(52) 63 %
I do it with my brother/sister	(14) 33%	(7) 17%	(21) 26%
My mother or somebody else does it instead of me	(4) 12%	(5) 12%	(9) 11%

Table 4 shows the responses given by the subjects to the fourth question: "In the case of tiding up your room, bed, you.". According to their answers it can be seen that practical independence is developed to satisfactory level in the case of both sexes. This is further supported by the answers offered by the subjects according to which it can be concluded that 55% of boys and 71% of girls tidy up, i.e. take care of their room on their own. However, there is a certain number of subjects, i.e. 12% of boys and 12% of girls whose answers show that somebody else does these practical chores instead of them, which can be brought in connection with a possibility that practical independence in their case is slightly poorer.

The development of any type of independence starts to form depending on family climate and objective circumstances surrounding the individual; the same is with the development of personal independence in practical things referring to child's ability to feed him/herself, get dressed, maintain personal hygiene, puts his/her things in their own place, etc.

Table 5: Shopping on one's own

Answers	M	F	Σ
I choose my clothes on my own	(18) 43%	(12) 29%	(30) 36%
I go with my mother since she knows what fits me	(19) 45%	(23) 56%	(42) 49%
My mother buys my clothes in most cases	(6) 12%	(7) 15%	(13) 15%

One of the types of independence is the independence to find one's own way in the setting, implying that a child is able to move freely, get in touch with the persons s/he does not know, pay bills at the post office, go shopping on one's own, etc. Table 5 shows the answers to the fifth question: "When going shopping...". It can be seen according to the answers given by the subjects that there is a slightly higher number of boys who are more independent when shopping of clothes and shoes is in question: 43% of boys make their own choice, without help of others, while only 29% of girls independently choose their clothes and shoes. Greater number of girls, i.e. 56% of them go shopping with their mothers, while the number of boys who independently choose their clothes and those who do it with the help of their mothers is rather similar. There are also cases in which mothers are those who do these activities instead of children, i.e. 12% of boys and 15% of girls. Accordingly, it can be easily perceived that, apart from the fact that more than half of the polled girls go shopping with their mothers, choosing their clothes and shoes with their assistance, there is also a higher percentage of girls in whose case mothers are those who buy them staff. All in all, more than 70% of the total number of subjects choose their clothes and shoes on their own; thus, a conclusion can be made that independence for finding one's way in the setting is sufficiently developed, having in mind the age of the subjects.

Table 6: Allowing going out

Answers	M	F	Σ
Yes, always	(17) 40%	(18) 44%	(35) 43%
No, never	(2) 5%	(1) 2%	(3) 4%
Sometimes	(23) 55%	(20) 49%	(43) 51%
They do not allow me go out	0%	(2) 5%	(2) 2%

According to the answers given to the item: "My parents allow me go and stay out (cinema, theatre, birthday parties, etc) as long as my peers...", it can be seen whether parents have enough trust in their children and allow them go out to places children usually visit and stay as long as their peers or, on the other hand, they do not allow them go out since they are concerned that their children will get involved with a peer group with bad influence or that something bad will happen to them. In other words, those parents who let their children go out with peers and stay out as long as they are aware that a child might get involved with a peer group exercising bad influence, but they do not restrain them in expressing their needs and desires and offer them possibility to make their own decisions if they will go out somewhere and who with, as well as how long they will stay; in such a way children develop ability to estimate certain situations, as well as people who can behave other appropriately or inappropriately. On the other hand, parents who are too strict and suffocating their children, restraining their children from expressing their own desires, needs and opinions, cause their children to retreat into themselves, becoming inclined to blind submissiveness, so that they can also become

submissive to their peers, rather than being submissive solely to their parents. Children act in such a way since this is the model of behaviour they have acquired in their families. Overprotective parents live in constant fear that something could happen to their child when they are not with him/her and therefore they do not let the child go out on his/her own. In time they pass the fear to their child, so that he/she becomes increasingly more insecure and attached to parents, afraid to become independent thus being excessively dependent on his/her parents.

The subjects' answers given in Table 6 show that 40% of boys and 44% of girls are allowed to go out and stay out as long as their peers; in other words, there is no significant difference between sexes, even though it has always been thought that parents are more rigorous when female children are in question. Similarly, in the case of almost 50% of the total number of subjects, parents only sometimes allow children stay out as long as their peers. According to such a finding, it can be concluded that parents trust their children and do not restrain them from expressing their wishes and needs, but at the same time they do not allow their children always do what they want, imposing certain limitations, leading to a sort of mutual understanding and respect.

Table 7: Going to school

Answers	M	F	Σ
On my own	(24) 57%	(21) 51%	(45) 55%
With friends	(17) 40%	(19) 47%	(36) 44%
Always an adult goes with me	(1) 3%	(1) 2%	(2) 1%

According to the answers to the 7th question "You go to school..." shown in the Table 7, a picture could be formed whether the child has a freedom to move around his/her setting, which is a basis for the development of independence necessary for finding one's way in one's environment. A conclusion can be reached according to the table that 57% of boys and 51% of girls go to school on their own, without the presence of their parents or any other adult, while 40% of boys and 47% of girls go to school with their friends. The data indicate positive level of freedom of moving around the child's setting, as well as that there is no significant difference in this regard between boys and girls. However, there is a small percentage of subjects who are always accompanied by an adult on their way to school, even though they should have been allowed to go to school on their own, at least according to their age. This refers to 3% of boys and 2% of girls. It is assumed that these 5% of subjects belong to the group of boys and girls who have provided answers to the previous questions showing that parents shout at them and punish them when they do something wrong (3% of boys and 7% of girls), that they must not resist their parents out of fear from punishment (5% of girls), that parents impose their own opinions on them (6% of boys and 6% of girls), that their parents do not allow them go out on their own. According to this finding, a conclusion can be made that in the case of these parents we are faced with the features of authoritarian upbringing style which has a negative influence on the development of independence of children.

Table 8: Learning organization

Answers	M	F	Σ
You organize your learning on your own	(19) 45%	(15) 37%	(34) 41%
Parents sometimes warn me to learn	(13) 31%	(21) 51%	(34) 41%

Most often parents tell me when to learn	(10) 24%	(5) 12%	(15) 18%
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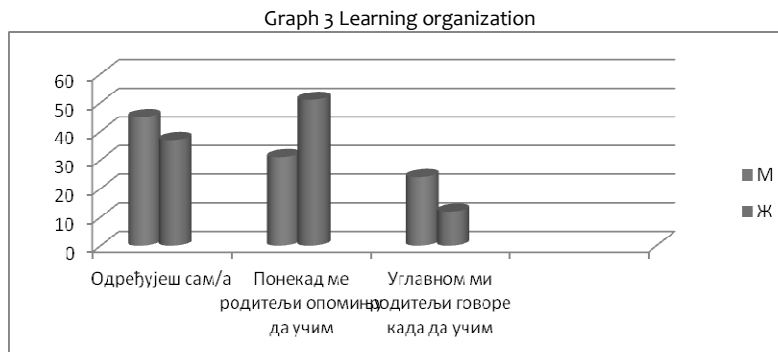
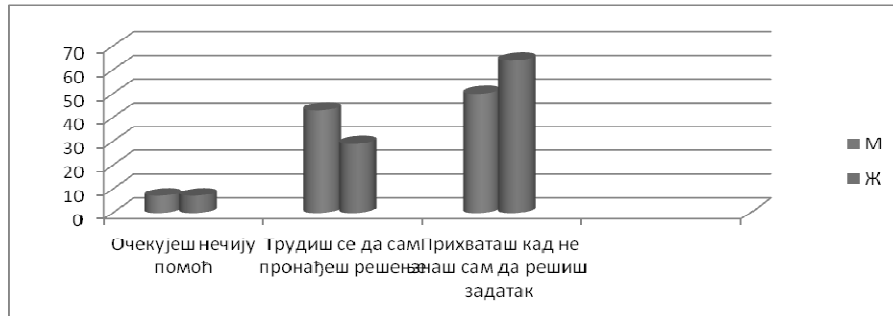


Table 8 and Graph 3 show the answers the subjects have given to the question related to time for learning... According to the shown data it is easily noticeable that 45% of boys determine their time for learning on their own, which is rather satisfying. The girls are slightly behind in their independent organization of learning, since 37% of them designate their time for learning on their own; on the other hand, the established difference is within normal range and we cannot talk about drastic variations. Girls are mostly considered more responsible, industrious, and more precise in regard to school obligations in comparison to boys; however, answers to the stated questions have shown that boys are equally successful in learning organization, and in this particular case it has turned out that they are even better. This is further supported by the fact that 31% of boys are warned when they should learn, while in the case of girls this percentage is even 52. Furthermore, it has been found that some subjects cannot organize their learning on their own, their parents' warnings are not enough for them, but it is necessary for learning time to be strictly designated for them by their parents. In this respect situation seems to be quite the reverse: there is larger number of boys, i.e. 24% of them who need their learning time to be designated by their parents, while only 12% of girls are most often told by their parents when to learn.

Having in mind the fact that the subjects are 5th grade students who have, after they had finished with class teaching, have been introduced into subject teaching, it can be claimed that learning organization at this age is rather important. Apart from successful mastering of the learning contents of new subjects, the students have to adjust their work to the criteria of each subject matter teacher individually. They had acquired certain elementary habits during the first four grades of primary school, some of them have become completely independent in view of learning, while others still need help of their parents in organization of learning time, as well as it learning itself and in writing homework.

Graph 4 Dealing with difficult tasks



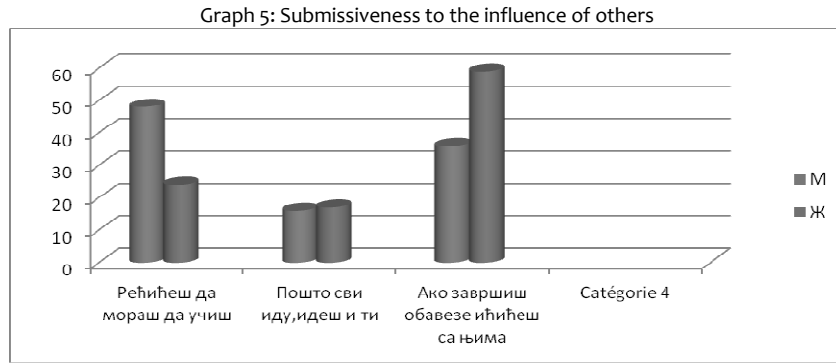
One of the characteristics of independent personality is the ability to use one's own head, not relying too much on the help of other and try to find solutions to problems of one's own. These individual characteristics have to be developed starting from the earliest age through various situations, no matter whether it refers to solving of regular school task, persuasion of peers or something else. All these are preconditions for formation of an intellectually independent personality.

Answers to the question "When you are faced with a difficult task, you..." are given in the Graph 4. It can be seen that boys and girls equally expect somebody's assistance when dealing with a difficult task, i.e. solving a complicated problem: 7% of boys and the same number of girls. 43% of boys and 29% of girls solve problems on their own, leading to a conclusion that boys are more persistent in solving a concrete task or problem on their own. Large number of subjects accepts help of others only when they are not able to find a solution on their own: 50% of boys and 64% of girls. In other words, boys are slightly more persistent in independent problem solving than girls, but there is no significant difference in view of sex in this regard, which has been confirmed by the score of the Hi Quadrate (Table 15).

Table 9: Submissiveness to the influence of others

Responses	M	F	Σ
You will say that you have to learn	(20) 48%	(10) 24%	(30) 36%
Since they all go, you will also go	(7) 16%	(7) 17%	(14) 17%
You will let them know: you will go if you finish your duties earlier...	(15) 36%	(24) 59%	(39) 47%

The 10th question "Your friends are persuading you to go to the cinema with them, and you have to learn..." was supposed to establish if independence of the subjects in relation to peers has been developed, expressed through the ability of a child to resist the demands of his/her peers which are at the given moment not suitable for him/her, capability to resist imitating others, i.e. actions of his/her friends and become subject to somebody else's influence, etc.



The answers to the question are shown in Table 9 and Graph 5. If the group of peers insists that a child should join them, while the child has to learn, the subjects have responded in the following way: 48% of boys and 24% of girls will say that they have to learn, i.e. higher number of boys will stick to fulfilling their duties in spite of the efforts of their peers to persuade them otherwise. Furthermore, 16% of boys and 17% of girls responded that since all their friends were going, they would also go, leading to a conclusion that they are ready to neglect their responsibilities and liable to the influence of others. 36% of boys and 59% of girls will let their friends know and join them if they finish their duties earlier. It seems that a conclusion can be made that at this age the subjects have formed independence in relation to their peers to satisfactory degree, as well as that they have the awareness on the importance of fulfilling one's duties. There is a little number of those who have to learn how to resist the influence of their peers regardless of whether their duties prevent them or not; if they do not learn this on time, later in life it will be easier for others to manipulate them.

Table 10: Choice of friends

Answers	M	F	Σ
On my own	(33) 79%	(28) 68%	(61) 73%
I listen to my parents' advice, but I make my mind by myself	(6) 14%	(12) 29%	(18) 22%
I respect my parents' opinion and I chose my friends according to it	(3) 7%	(1) 3%	(4) 5%

The answers to the item "You choose your friends..." are shown in Table 11. When choosing a friend it is important to estimate what kind of a person somebody is, what are her/his strengths and weaknesses, interests, if you can trust him/her, is he/she somebody's friend solely out of self-interest, etc. If we have a possibility to choose friends, we will mostly choose persons similar to ourselves. However, what should be born in mind is the age of the subjects which is characterised by weakened influence of parents and more emphasized influence of peers, as well as that children at this age are inclined to conformism. The need to belong to a group becomes rather emphasized and young people in most cases spontaneously (or investing certain amount of effort) become members of a group, or a "team" they belong to, they spend time with, go out with, go shopping, etc. It is rather important for them to fit in the group of peers, sharing

the views of the majority – they are worried about being excluded from the group and this can lead to becoming a part of the group with bad influence.

What can be concluded according to the answers of the subjects is that they are rather independent in their choice of friends: 79% of boys and 68% of girls choose their friends on their own. There are no significant differences between the sexes in regard to choice of friends. It only seems that boys are slightly more independent than girls. At the same time, the table shows that when choosing their friends our subjects have in mind the opinions of their parents: girls (29%) more than boys (14%). There is a small percentage of those children who choose friends solely according to the views of their parents: 7% of boys and 3% of girls. This can negatively reflect on the development of ability to evaluate other people and use one's own head.

Table 11: Resourcefulness and finding one's way in new situations

Responses	M	F	Σ
You start conversation easily	(16) 38%	(20) 49%	(36) 44%
You are mostly quiet and only occasionally get involved in conversation	(11) 26%	(10) 24%	(21) 26%
You do not talk, only listen	(2) 5%	(4) 10%	(5) 6%
You listen carefully what others talk and try to take an active part in conversation	(13) 31%	(7) 17%	(20) 24%

The answers to the 12th question “When you find yourself in a new peer group...” are shown in Table 11. According to the responses offered by the subjects it can be seen that this type of independence is present to the extent which is in accordance to their age. When they find themselves in a new group of friends, 38% of boys easily start conversation in spite of the fact that they do not know the present persons, which is a satisfactory finding. Girls have confirmed by their answers the general standpoint that they are more eloquent than boys, having in mind that 49% of them have no problem to initiate conversation with unfamiliar addressees, i.e. in a new company. 26% of boys and 24% of girls are mostly quiet and only occasionally get involved in conversation, indicating that it is slightly easier for girls to get involved in conversation than boys. 10% of boys and 5% of girls do not talk and only listen when they find themselves in a new group of peers. 17% of boys and 31% of girls listen carefully what others talk about and try to take an active part in conversation. It can be concluded that girls are a bit more resourceful in new situations than boys, but there are no drastic changes deserving special attention. Such a finding has been supported by the Hi quadrate.

According to the calculated Hi quadrate it has been confirmed that there is no statistically relevant difference in view of the sex of the subjects when finding one's way in new situations is in question, like, for example, starting conversation with persons you have not met before (Table 15). How an individual copes with new, unfamiliar situations, i.e. in a group of unknown people is another indicator of whether and to what an extent the independence necessary for becoming resourceful in a setting is developed.

Table 12: Alone at home

Answers	M	F	Σ
You read, listen to the music, learn...	(37) 88%	(35) 85%	(72) 88%
You do not like to be alone in the house and can hardly wait your parents to come back home	(4) 8%	(5) 12%	(9) 11%
Your parents never let you stay home alone	(1) 4%	(1) 3%	(2) 1%

If a child is able to manage and entertain him/herself on his/her own in certain periods of time, not looking for the presence and attention of adults can be one of the indicators of emotional independence of children. Through the development of emotional independence children are provided with the opportunities to mature and grow up freely, to think, make their own decisions and feel independent, making their behaviour in balance with their feelings.

Table 12 shows the answers to the question: "When you are alone at home, you...". When they are at home alone boys mostly read, listen to the music, learn, etc – even 88% of them; thus it can be concluded that they are independent enough to manage without the presence of parents or another adult. The situation is almost the same in the case of girls, which is confirmed by their answers: 85% of girls have a satisfactory emotional independence in accordance to their age. Certain number of subjects does not like to be alone in the house and can hardly wait their parents to come back home: 8% of boys and 12% of girls. In such cases parents should not leave the children on their own in order to prevent certain negative consequences in emotional development; however these children should also gradually gain independence in this regard.

There are parents who never leave their children alone in the house due to their exaggerated fear and concern that something bad might happen to them or they are aware that their child is not independent enough and still not ready to be left alone at home. This is the case of 4% of boys and 3% of girls. It is noticeable that there is no significant difference between the sexes in regard to staying at home on one's own. It is also beyond dispute that boys and girls at this age have expected level of emotional independence.

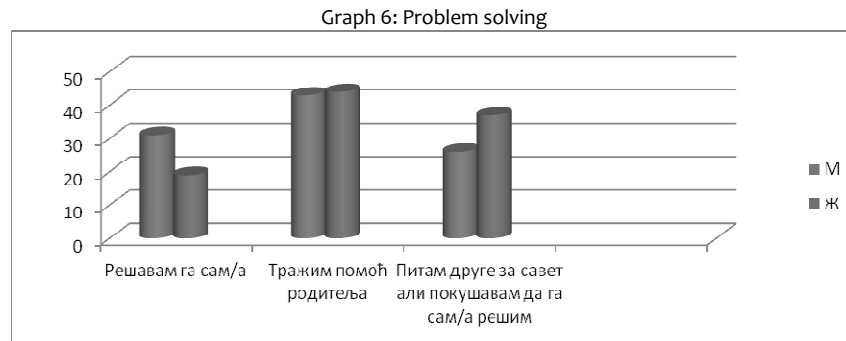
Table 13: Problem solving

Answers	M	F	Σ
I solve it on my own	(13) 31%	(8) 19%	(21) 26%
I ask for help of my parents	(18) 43%	(18) 44%	(36) 44%
I ask others for help and try to solve the problem on my own	(11) 26%	(15) 37%	(26) 32%

Answers to the question: "When you have a problem..." are shown in Table 13 and Graph 6. According to the data in the table it can be concluded that the subjects are aware that they have to deal with problems and try to solve them on their own. In regard to gender, 31% of boys and 19% of girls try to solve a problem independently. Answers to this question could be compared with the answers to the 9th question in the questionnaire, referring to the way the subjects act when they face a difficult school task. The results obtained in the case of 9th question have shown that the boys are a bit more persistent than girls when trying to do a difficult school task; however not no significant difference

was recorded. The situation with the 11th question is similar. Boys and girls equally (43% of boys and 44% of girls) ask for help of their parents in problem solving. In other words, the subjects try to deal with the problem on their own, which is rather important, but, having in mind their age, they still need their parents' help – either their advice or concrete help in problem solving. What is rather positive is that they also ask for help of others, as well as possible guidelines how to find a solution to a problem and then try to solve in on their own: 26% of boys and 37% of girls. So, they have good preconditions for the development of intellectual independence, having in mind that they are aware that they have to face difficulties on their own, but they are also open for asking guidelines and pieces of advice and accept them in order to solve a problem situation successfully.

Ability of a child to try and solve a problem on his/her own, regardless of whether we are talking about a dispute with friends, bad marks or something else, is important for the development of thinking and intellectual independence, as well as readiness to face a variety of situations, problems and resolve them.



In the case of the last question the subjects had the possibility to opt for two statements they agree with, i.e. which are true for them and reflect their characteristics; in such a way, it could be considered what their self-perception is like, i.e. if it matches the data gained according to previous questions. The data are shown in the Table 14.

Table 14: Self-perception

Answers	M	F	Σ
I do and talk about what I think is right, regardless of somebody else's opinion	(33) 46%	(24) 37%	(57) 42%
School failure discourages me and I cannot overcome the obstacle without the support of my parents	(9) 13%	(6) 9%	(15) 11%
I am trying to build my own personal way of conduct and I also create my dressing style on my own	(19) 27%	(21) 32%	(40) 29%
I am not liable to persuasions of my friends if I do not consider their ideas right	(10) 14%	(14) 22%	(24) 18%

The answers to previous questions show that the subjects have sufficiently developed independence in various fields, that they are not subject to the influence of others, that they independently choose their friends, easily manage in the environment and in new

situations, as well as that there is a small percentage of those who have slightly lower level of independence, without relevant statistical deviations.

According to the data shown in the table, it is noticeable that almost the same number of boys and girls act according to what they think is right, i.e. 46% of boys and 37% of girls do so, regardless of others may think. They try to build their own dressing style and the way they behave (27% of boys and 32% of girls). This is rather important for the development of their creativity, originality and this is also a feature of an independent and mature personality. When talking about the way they deal with failure, it can be seen that significantly smaller number of subjects opted for the statement that school failure discourages them and that they are not able to overcome it without the support of their parents. This is the case with 13% of boys and 9% of girls. Accordingly, it can be assumed that these are the subjects with a slightly lower level of independence, and that the finding refers to their insufficient self-confidence, rather than the lack of independence. Since more than half of the subjects has not chosen the statement that they have difficulties dealing with school failure, it is assumed that they are able to manage in these situations. In other words, the subjects have a positive self-image, implying the level of self-confidence characteristic for the upbringing directed to the development of features typical for independent adults.

According to the calculation of Hi quadrate (χ^2), it has been confirmed that there is no statistically significant difference in view of the sex of the subjects in regard to the asked questions. Using the Hi quadrate test it has been established that the obtained frequencies do not deviate from the expected. The calculated amounts of (χ^2) are lower than border values (bv) at the level of significance of 0.01 according to the related degrees of freedom (df), as it is shown in Table 15. According to this it seems that we can confirmed the established hypothesis that there is no significant difference in regard to their independence between boys and girls.

Table 15: χ^2 (Hi quadrate) calculated according to the responses of subjects

Question	df	bv (0,01)	χ^2
1.	2	9,210	4,66
2.	2	9,210	2,98
3.	5	15,086	2,57
4.	2	9,210	3,28
5.	2	9,210	2,41
6.	3	11,341	4,40
7.	2	9,210	1,13
8.	2	9,210	4,07
9.	2	9,210	2,50
10.	2	9,210	6,31
11.	2	9,210	5,01
12.	3	11,341	3,2
13.	2	9,210	0,99
14.	2	9,210	2,3
15.	3	11,34	2,31

4. Discussion

The paper was an attempt to, apart from theoretical grounds, i.e. defining of independence and explaining when and how to start with its development, examine whether independence is to a satisfactory degree developed in accordance to the age of the subjects, as well as what is the influence of family on the development of independence of children. The starting point was the assumption that democratic upbringing style is better for children gaining their independence than authoritarian style and it was confirmed by the research results.

The findings indicate that the subjects have sufficiently developed independence in a variety of fields, that they are not liable to the influence of others, that they choose their friends on their own, manage in their environment easily, that they are ready to face difficulties and problems, that they do not have a need for the constant presence of their parents, i.e. that they know how to spend their time when their parents are not at home, etc. There is a small percentage of those who have slightly lower level of developed independence, but without significant statistical deviations. It is assumed that the finding indicates present, temporary condition, probably a bit lower level of independence in comparison to their peers, which does not mean that in the course of their development they will not overcome the lack of independence and become independent persons. Majority of their parents, i.e. more than 80% can be classified within democratic upbringing style, i.e. they have understanding for the mistakes they children make, they are ready to give them explanations and guide them how to behave in certain situations, as well as to leave enough space and freedom for a child to develop their independence in an undisturbed manner. Majority of the subjects have a positive self-image, implying that the level of their independence is characteristic for the upbringing leading to the development of features typical for adults. In other words, the research findings have confirmed the hypotheses the research started from: independence of the subjects is formed at satisfactory level in accordance to their age, democratic upbringing style of parents is more suitable for independence development than authoritarian upbringing style, that there is no statistically significant difference between girls and boys in view of practical, intellectual and emotional independence, as well as in regard to independence for finding one's way in a setting and independence in relations with peers.

5. Conclusion

Independence could be defined as a condition of a person who does not need anybody else in order to reach self-realization and it implies determination, firm character and independence in behaviour. An independent person is the one who does not depend on others or does not want to depend on others, which does not mean that he/she does not need other people.

Formation of an independent and responsible personality starts before all in a family, according to role-models of parents and depending on the upbringing style of parents. It is considered that warm family atmosphere and parents' democratic upbringing style are more suitable for the formation of independent and mature personality of a child. This is why an effort has been made to investigate according to the questionnaire if the parents

have democratic or authoritarian upbringing style. If we are dealing with authoritarian upbringing style, parents are bossy, strict, they do not express love and patience, they do not allow any resistance, causing child's fear. The fear from punishment leads to a situation in which the child obeys with no objections, does as he/she is told to. In such a way the child is restrained from expressing his/her own attitude and opinions, he/she does not have opportunities to develop his/her own independence. Democratic upbringing style is characterised by expression of love towards the child, showing trust, support and understanding; in such a setting the child behaves naturally and spontaneously.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that we are living in a contemporary consuming society, imposing the levels of standards in the choice of friends, in view of life values and young people are subject to such influences. Profit drives any process, resourcefulness is the measure of someone's value and image is more important than the quality of a person, These are the reasons why it is necessary for parents to provide the child with certain guidelines and advise him/her not only in regard to the choice of friends, but also in other matters. However, parents should not impose their own opinion and attitudes on the child in his/her choice of friends; they should not tell the child who he/she should spend time with; in other words it is desirable for parents to guide the child, but to let him or her make their own choices. If this is not so, the child will not develop the ability to make independent judgements and assessments of people and their actions, intentions and, as a consequence, he/she will become liable to the influence of others.

Research results lead to a conclusion that the children between 12 and 13 years of age who participated in the research are sufficiently independent and self-aware in accordance to their age and expectations.

However, the situation is slightly different in the case of the group consisting of older subjects. According to the findings of a research on the independence of the group of subjects between 18 and 27 years of age, almost half of them still live with their parents. Even though they want to take responsibility and make progress in their careers, young people in Serbia become independent much later than their peers in the countries of European Union or USA, and the main reason for this is financial situation. Young people consider that the society does not acknowledge the need of the young to start to live on their own and gain financial independence. They think that family and closer setting are overprotective to young people, that they are not ready to accept the need of the young to be independent from their parents and live on their own; furthermore, the overall financial situation and the lack of social support influence the situation in which children, until certain age, show sufficient levels of independence, but later in life, in the age of extended adolescence they stagnate and even deteriorate in regard to gaining independence. Apart from the above mentioned, there are many more reasons for such a situation; thus a question could be raised – who should be considered responsible for the formation of dependent, unconfident, pliable and submissive personalities – family or society or both of them?

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Biographical note

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