



Different Aspects of Involving Family in School Life

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Abstract: *The school has come to not have a huge credibility even, sometimes being abandoned, primarily because, nowadays, no matter hierarchy and is not perceived as a value. The actual society no longer has trust in the educational establishment, the values acquired and ranked by the amount of learning embedded in it. Such an attitude is reflected by the relationship between "parent - teacher" and "student - teacher". Based on these findings, the present study aims to investigate the main features of the relationship that is established between school and family, concerned how parents can get involved in school life effectively. The lot of subjects was represented by 212 teachers from secondary schools in Bihor, Romania and the instrument used in the research was a questionnaire consisting of 46 objective and subjective items. The results are very interesting and shows that many respondents argue that parents show indifference to the formal education of their children, not involved in the didactic or extracurricular activities and in school life, not take part in parent meetings or when called for, is difficult to communicate with parents etc. There are some cases when, because of the family economic situation is poor, parents send their children to work, offering less time and interest in their education and instruction.*

Keywords: formal education, involvement of parents, school life

The problem

The Concept of "family" was so frequently used in different contexts and by different people that few are those who make longer relevant problem of a definition. Surely, each of us have own variant, more or less subjective to define family. On the other hand, psycho-sociologists tried to define a more rigorous family, seeing it as "a group of people joined by marriage, blood or adoption who housekeeping together, interact and communicate by their own roles (husband-wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother-

sister) and create and maintain a common culture (Muntean, 2003:668). It follows that the family is the nucleus containing people, including family relationships that are established, and which are aimed at helping its members for a better integration in external company. According to Muntean (2003:669), the main functions that a family must have are:

- providing comfort by meeting the needs of all its members;
- education of new generations.

The first category includes physical and psychological human needs necessary for comfort of the individual and, from unit-systemic perspective, of whole family. Maslow recalled in this physiological needs, safety and security, belonging and love, respect and self-esteem or the self-development. By organizing its systemic family has a duty to ensure all its members meet these needs, for which can create internal equilibrium, called the Woods and Hollis (1990) "family homeostasis" that perpetuated over time. Any dysfunction occurred in meeting these needs will lead to resizing homeostasis (balance) family and an adaptation of its operating mode in "crisis". This explains why including children from families that are not fully meet the needs of its members will integrate into school and social life as effective ways those from environments where those needs are fully satisfied, but perhaps with effort bigger.

Regarding the education of new generations, *Karl Killen* (Muntean, 2003:671-675), identifies seven skills necessary for any parent:

1. The ability to prioritize basic needs of the child;
2. The parents ability to offer for their child new experiences to stimulate them cognitive and affective;
3. The ability to have an empathic relationship with the child;
4. parents' ability to restrain their impulses without reflect them on the child;
5. aability to formulate realistic expectations for the child;
6. ability to punish children in a realistic way;
7. ability to reward and value the child properly.

Developing these skills of parents and their implementation in relation to children resulting socialization process that can be defined as one in which biological nature becomes the subject of a specific culture (Neamțu, 2003:64). When such a process is carried out by the family, we are talking about "primary socialization". This means the exercise by children's of social roles that they were committed within the culture to which they belong, participating in full awareness of the aims and activities of the group / community they live in, acquiring the ability to discern between what is permitted and illegitimate and so on.

We summarized the common characteristics of family to get an image about the importance that the primary environment for growth and child development has in its evolution from educational, vocational and social point of view. Any malfunction appeared at this level and which is not managed and rebalanced accordingly, may create problems in integrating children into the community and are created premises of deviant behavior (Marinescu, 2013).

According with the mentioned in the previous paragraphs, we can draw at least two fundamental roles in the family's relationship with the child. First, it were necessary to ensure physical and emotional comfort for harmonious development of children' personality. Indeed, family is designed to meet its basic needs (proper nourishment, clothing and other material needs etc.), to ensure that optimum conditions for building quality interpersonal relationships (primary socialization) and his create the opportunity to development and appropriate expression of his creative potential. Secondly, the family has a duty to ensure its child's access to quality education by promoting constructive cooperation with school. This means, on the one hand, that family would be better to support the child - material and spiritual - to give a school performance up while on the other hand, the family would be better to cooperate with teachers for a complete success of its child in school. The reality is much more complex and forms how parents understand their children needs and decide to help school being much more nuanced. Thus, not infrequently, some parents "pass" the responsibility of educating their children exclusively in the school account, forgetting that education is a multi-factorial process and determined by that each agent has a crucial role in fulfilling the final objective. We believe that a relationship "school - family" founded on mutual respect and cooperation can increase the quality of education and balanced development of the child's personality (Piquero et al., 2009).

The objectives

Based on these preliminary theoretical observations, the aim of this research was the identification of parents' attitude towards the current system of formal education, depending on their willingness to get involved in school life of their children. Specifically, the research objectives were: (1) analysis of promptness with parents responses education requirement, (2) identify the availability of parents to propose school some curricular or extracurricular activities and (3) establish the level in which parents want to be involved in maintenance of school property. We believe that, in this way, we can have an overview vision on the way in which partnership "school - family" and the parents are willing to be actively involved in their children's education.

The sample

The sample of research consisted in 212 teachers from 7 secondary schools from Bihor County, Romania. Of these, 57% come from urban and 43% rural, 72% are women and 28% men, 35% achieved academic degree completed, 14% second degree and 51% first didactic degree, while 65% are masters of a class of students.

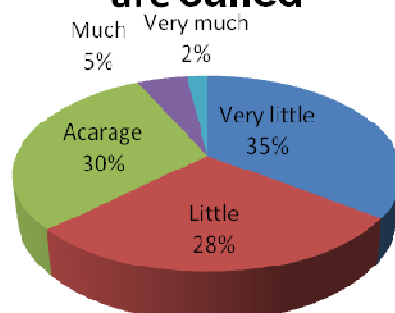
Instrument and Procedure

The instrument used in this research was represented by a questionnaire consisting in 46 items (38 multiple choice ones and 8 open-response ones). Depending on the theme, these items can be grouped into the following categories: direction where is heading the Romanian education, communication in education and ways of different conflict are solved, involvement of educational agents in the life of school, or the school in the community to which it belongs. The questionnaire was printed and completed by each respondent between February to April 2016 and quantitative interpretation was done by calculating the statistical frequencies of responses.

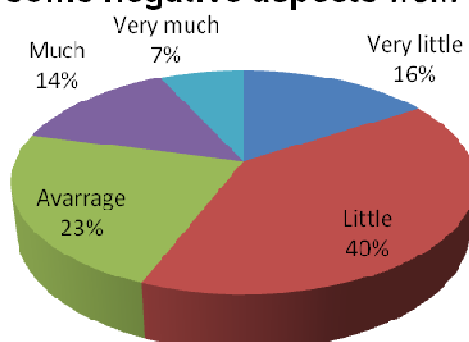
The results

The obtained results are very interesting and presented in following pictures:

Picture 1. The level in which parents are willing to support the school when they are called

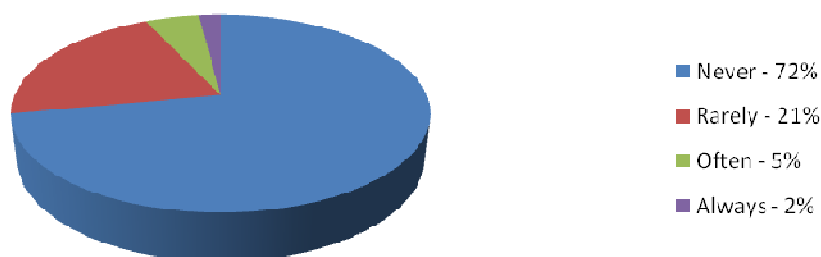


Picture 2. The level in which parents are willing to claim some negative aspects from school

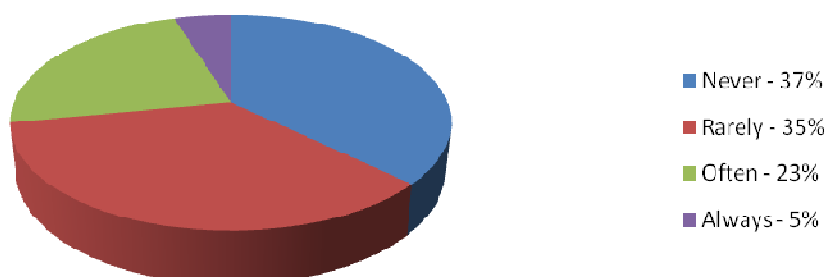


Most teachers investigated (86%) say they have requested the support of parents, at least one time when they are working in education. However, 35% of respondents said that parents engage in very little level when they are asked by school, while 2% of them do very much (Picture 1). On the other hand, complaints of parents seem to be more visible, 21% of teachers finding that parents are willing to large or very large extent to complain regarding various negative aspects of school activities (Picture 2). The obtained results indicate that although theoretically aware of the importance of good cooperation with the school, in practice, only a few parents promote a constructive relationship with teachers, despite requests from them. Moreover, the tendency of some parents to claim certain negative aspects of school life induce the idea of “competition” between those two educational agents, the responsibility of educating the child is "passed" each other. Of course, each of them has its role in educating students that no one else can fill, but the shared responsibility needs to be taken seriously and fulfilled by each involved partner.

Picture 3. Designing curricular activities together with pupils' parents



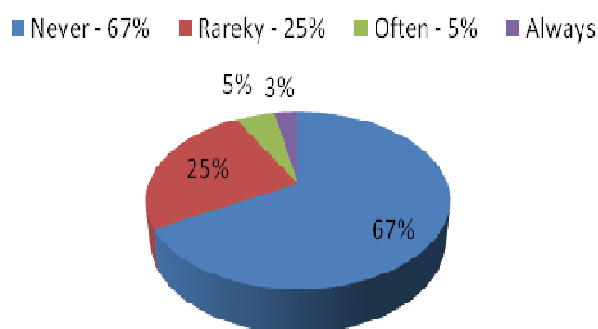
Picture 4. Designing extracurricular activities together with pupils' parents



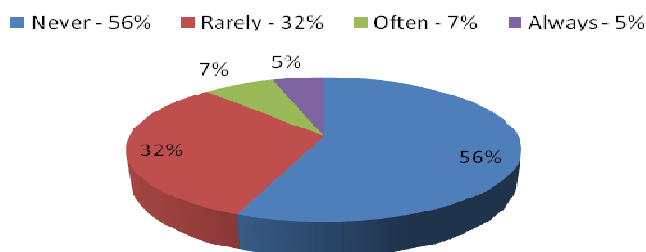
Teachers surveyed say that only 7% of parents involved in the design of curricular activities (Picture 3), while that 30% of them do the same regarding extracurricular one (Picture 4). The results seem somewhat natural, since Core-curriculum (which includes compulsory school disciplines) is designed to national level by Ministry of Education from

Romania and leaves little possibilities for parents or other educational agents' initiative. On the contrary, extracurricular activities are part of the School Based Curriculum (SBC) and it is developed in consultation between educational institutions and other interested educational agents. Unfortunately, still stands a parental involvement in designing SBC below expectations, a sign that either are not sufficiently prepared for such a task, or are not interested to engage in formal and non-formal education of their children.

Picture 5. Involving parents in developing teaching materials



Picture 6. Involving parents in the maintenance of school facilities



Tendency of negative polarization of responses is maintained in these two cases, 67% of respondents claiming that their parents is never involved in developing teaching materials needed in class (Picture 5), and 54% believe that their parents do not at all support school repair / maintenance of education facilities (Picture 6). At first aspect, it would not necessarily be the duty of parents to do such things, but is known many cases where school spaces were significantly developed with support of local community. It would be in the interest of parents that their children learn into clean school, sanitized classrooms, equipped with new furniture and teaching materials appropriate in gyms or appropriately equipped laboratories in modern schools etc. Even if it is not their duty, parents can help schools and local authorities in the maintenance of these spaces, each

of them according with their possibilities and in compliance with the law, so that be created the premises for a modern and quality education.

Discussion and conclusion

The results analyzed in the preceding paragraphs suggest the idea of a lack of communication between school and family. On the one hand, the school expects from family to be a support in educating students, reinforcing at home what they have learned at school, correcting any of their deviant behavior or responding promptly to requests from teachers. On the other hand, the family expects from schools to teach their children, to prepare them die for a successful profession and, in general, train them for succeed in life. It is created, in this way, a competition between those two educational agents, each trying to take only the successes and "passing" the responsibility of any failures toward other partner. In reality, literature (Pontzer, 2010) and common sense notes that educational roles of those two partners are complementary and may not be strictly separated. Indeed, the school has a duty to convey a range of knowledge related to the general and specialized culture and to form different life skills of their students. In turn, the family has the mission to create optimal conditions for successful child, to offer them material and moral support necessary to obtain maximum school performance and to effectively integrate the social environment. When the school or the family is trying to shirk from assuming their mentioned tasks, occurs premises of failure in education and life. Therefore, we can consider that the first step would be that each educational partner to assume and successfully fulfill their roles incumbent in respect of the other collaborator, but primarily, to the child that must to educate (Hébert et al., 2006).

The second step is a substantial improvement of communication between school and family. In this sense, *Petra Kunkel* (Kovacs & Dragomir, 2015:12-17) proposes *Dialog Change Model* (DCM) which aims to optimizing the relationship "school - family" by social dialogue. According to the author, the main phases of DCM are:

1. *exploration and involvement* - requires the evaluation of context if relationship "school - family" and creation of an expert group to organize cooperation between the parties by establishing regular meetings on a specific topics;
2. *building and formalization* – means development of mixed structures of collaboration between school and family and formalize them by a written document (non-governmental association of parents, school, etc.);
3. *implementation and evaluation* – means implementation of program agreed between partners and ensure an adequate system of control and quality management;
4. *continuous development, multiplication and institutionalization* – means continuing to work together, even after getting visible results, dissemination of working model to a higher level and formalizing cooperation (for instance, by creating a networks of institutions and / or associations with legal personality).

A such model supposes building relationships of communication / cooperation between school and family by several hierarchical steps, started by assessing the context in which it operates two educational partners, continued by developing a joint program of work and completed by the establishment of formal networks where can be attracted more participants. Subsequently, DCM can be replicated "spiral" leading in thus way to a higher and higher quality of education received by children.

In summary, although declaratively, all educators agree that there should be open to cooperation between schools and families, in practice this is made more difficult. Teachers blame parents for their lack of involvement, while that they "pass" whole responsibility to school for their children education. In reality, each of them would be good to know their tasks they are to perform, to assume responsibility and to support the other partner in its implementation. Thus, it creates prerequisites for a successful collaboration between schools and families, impacting the quality of education, development of student's personality and, more generally, the future of the society (Blândul, 2012).

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