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Research of parents’ attitudes concerning cooperation with primary school in relation to their socio-demographic characteristics

Despina Sivevska a [[1]](#footnote-1), Biljana Stojanova b, Biljana Popeska c

aassistant, University“Goce Delcev”, Hristijan Karpos 47, Stip, 2000, Macedonia

bassistant, University“Goce Delcev”,Krste Misirkov, Stip, 2000, Macedonia

c assistant, University“Goce Delcev”,Krste Misirkov, Stip, 2000, Macedonia

Abstract

Mutual cooperation between parents and teachers and professional services in primary schools is key to overall development of child personality. Many studies have shown that involvement of parents in the work of primary school is of great importance for improving the quality of the educational work of the same. The quality and intensity of cooperation between parents and primary school is determined by several factors, including the interest of parents and their socio-demographic characteristics.

For this purpose we realized research, where we use questionnaire, where are examined parent’s attitudes for their cooperation with the primary school and their socio-demographic characteristics (educational, economic and marital status, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation, order of birth of the child and family structure) as determinants of that cooperation.

*Keywords:* parents’ attitudes, cooperation, primary school;

1. Introduction

The first teacher of the child and the center of his life is family. The child depends on his family in all aspects of life (existence and educational). Through relationships with their parents, the child gains confidence and develop a strong sense of belonging in the community. The care, love and tenderness which the child receives from his parents offered him a sense of confidence to themselves and others. The network of relations that form in the family effects on building emotional, moral and intellectual capacity of the child. In that sense, life in the family has a function of school for social and emotional relations of children to other people and society.

Besides family, the school is part of social reality that significantly affects the development of children. Form school is expected to get along with other factors of upbringing and education to contribute to the overall development of children (physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of each individual).

Cooperation between school and family should contribute to their interconnection and mutually activity. The results of numerous studies show that parental connection with the school depends on many complex phenomena, such as family structure, cultural framework, educational and economic status of family, ethnic origin, age (class of child), school success and sex of child (Scribner & Scribner 2001; Fergusin, 2005a; Waden & Westat, 2006; Polovina i Stanišić, 2007). Practice to involve parents in cooperation with the school (parental and individual meetings, written progress reports of the child, the parents' participation in decision making for various activities in school) depends on several factors: the total social and economic historical context in which they realize the cooperation among family and school, school characteristics and individual characteristics of parents / family and teacher.

In this direction, we can formulate two research issues, which are leading issues that we want to respond with our research: What are the attitudes of parents for their cooperation with the elementary school in which to educate their children? Are there differences in the attitudes of parents for their cooperation with elementary school depending on their socio-demographic characteristics?-text for the abstract text.

1. Methodology

The sample in this study is convenient and constitutes form 68 parents of children from 1th till the 5th grade of primary school "Goce Delcev" in Stip.

For the purposes of the survey questionnaire / scalar is created for parents who assess their views on cooperation with the school. The questionnaire contains the following 12 claims:

1. I think I should be informed of school activities in which my child participates in during the day.

2. Teachers need to inform parents with their child's progress.

3. Teachers need to inform parents with the content to which the child shows a particular interest.

4. Teachers need to inform parents with content that the child adopts difficult.

5. The school should initiate greater involvement of parents in the activities implemented in schools (curricular and extracurricular).

6. The school should organize some collective activities with parents (art, music, sports activities, workshops on specific occasion, e.g. New Year, March 8th, Easter, etc.)..

7. The parents should be allowed to visit their child's school whenever they wish.

8. The parents should be allowed to participate in making decisions about the employment of teaching staff and budget planning of primary school.

9. Because of work and other commitments I am not able to be in constant contact with my child's teacher (individual meetings).

10. Because work and other commitments I am unable to regularly attend parent group meetings.

11. My work and other obligations do not permit me to engage in activities that are implemented in school, which provided the inclusion of parents (art, music, sports activities, workshops on specific occasion, e.g. New Year, 8th March, Easter, etc.)..

12. Because work and other commitments, I do not have time to engage in the performance of homework and other school obligations of my child.

Each respondent was asked on a scale of 5 degrees to determine the extent to which agreed with each statement, where 1 means "Strongly disagree", while 5 means "completely agree".

The results of the survey are processed, in addition to basic descriptive statistic, using t-test and analysis of variance.

1. Results and discussion
   1. Attitudes of parents

In a survey of the attitudes of parents in co-operation which they have with a primary school that their child has visited, a total of 68 parents participated. The results are shown in Table 1

Table 1: Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the attitudes of parents

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| statement | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** |
| M | 4,56 | 4,75 | 4,76 | 4,68 | 3,65 | 3,53 | 4,00 | 2,76 | 2,78 | 2,41 | 2,88 | 2,09 |
| SD | ,632 | ,500 | ,461 | ,800 | 1,033 | ,985 | 1,093 | 1,161 | 1,413 | 1,318 | 1,287 | 1,26 |

М= mean, SD= standard deviation

The obtained results in statement 1 show that for the parents is very important to be informed of school activities in which their child participates in during the day.

The result of statement 2 and statement 3 shows that most parents believe that they should be informed with the progress of their child and the content to which their child shows special interests. This indicates that parents are interested in the progress of their child and that in this area they want to collaborate with elementary schools.

The data obtained for statement 4 suggest that most parents completely agree that they should be informed about the contents of their child's difficult to adopt.

Regarding the statement 5 parents said they agree with that school should initiate greater involvement in their activities (curricular and extracurricular) that are realized in it. Parents were compliant with the claim (statement 6) that the school should organize some common activities with them (e.g. art, music and sporting activities, workshops on specific occasion and holiday, etc...), and the claim (statement 7) that should be allowed to visit their child whenever they wanted to do it.

Parents who participated in our study showed hesitation regarding the statement 8th. Most number of parents said they neither agree nor disagree with the view that should enable parents to participate in making decisions about the employment of teaching staff and budget planning of primary school.

The parents showed hesitation in terms of statement 9, which refers to their contact with their child's teacher. Parents declared themselves undecided in relation to the claim concerning that not being able to constantly be in contact with teachers, etc. because of their job responsibilities

The data obtained from the statement 10 suggest that parents disagree with the claim that because of their work and other commitments are unable to regularly attend group parenting meetings.

In terms of statement 11 parents showed hesitation. Namely, they neither agree nor disagree with the statement that their work and other commitments do not allow them to engage in activities that are implemented in school, and that their inclusion is provided.

Parents showed disagreement with the claim that because their work and other commitments do not have time to engage in the conduct of homework and other school obligations to their children (statement 12).

* 1. Differences in the attitude of parents

The aim of our research, among other things, was to determine whether there is a difference in the attitudes of parents for their cooperation with the elementary school set in terms of socio-demographic variables.

Values ​​obtained by testing the significance of differences between means, concerning the application of t-test and F-test showed that there were no significant differences between the parents regarding the most variable set.

Statistically significant differences were observed in some individual statements. Thus it is noted that there is a difference between parents who are with secondary and higher education in terms of the statement: *Because of work and other commitments I am not able to be in constant contact with my child's teacher (individual meetings).* The difference between them is statistically significant at a level of 0.05. Arithmetic mean for parents who have secondary education is 2.98, while those with a high 2.07. This leads to the conclusion that parents that are with secondary education, because of obligations, less frequently able to attend school and consult with the teacher about the progress of their child.

Statistically significant difference at the level of 0.05 exists between parents who have a different number of children in family in relation to the statement: *Teachers need to inform parents with difficult content that adopts the child*. Parents who have more than one child in the family believe that teachers should introduced problems that children encountered in overcoming the specific content of classroom material (M = 4.77), unlike those with one child in the family (M = 4.18).

Statistically significant difference at the level of 0.01 was observed between parents of children with different birth order of the family. Differences between them are observed in relation to the statement: *Because work and other commitments, I do not have time to engage in the performance of homework and other school obligations of my child.* The data obtained can be seen that parents whose children were firstborn in the family have more time to work with their children and to assist in solving homework and other school tasks, unlike the parents whose children are second born in family.

Table 2: T-test and F-test for the research variables

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** |
| Age | t | ,97 | 1,54 | -,35 | -,87 | -,36 | ,44 | -,93 | ,08 | -,23 | ,17 | ,03 | ,1,81 |
| p | ,34 | ,13 | ,72 | ,38 | ,72 | ,67 | ,36 | ,94 | ,82 | ,87 | ,97 | ,07 |
| Completed education | t | -,84 | 1,25 | ,23 | -,36 | -,98 | -,83 | ,68 | ,28 | 2,31 | ,89 | 1,21 | ,93 |
| p | ,41 | ,22 | ,82 | ,72 | ,33 | ,41 | ,50 | ,78 | ,024\* | ,38 | ,30 | ,35 |
| Monthly income | F | ,77 | 1,23 | ,84 | ,79 | 1,21 | ,84 | ,84 | ,23 | ,50 | ,12 | ,14 | ,86 |
| p | ,57 | ,31 | ,53 | ,56 | ,31 | ,52 | ,53 | ,95 | ,78 | ,99 | ,98 | ,51 |
| Marital status | t | 1,27 | -,71 | -,73 | -,58 | -.49 | ,77 | -1,32 | 1,58 | -,22 | -,64 | -,69 | -,46 |
| p | ,21 | ,48 | ,47 | ,56 | ,63 | ,44 | ,19 | ,12 | ,82 | ,53 | ,49 | ,64 |
| Number of children | t | ,48 | -,14 | ,44 | -2,2 | ,93 | ,99 | -,55 | -,43 | -,39 | ,43 | ,42 | -1,62 |
| p | ,63 | ,89 | ,66 | ,026\* | ,35 | ,32 | ,58 | ,67 | ,70 | ,67 | ,67 | ,11 |
| Order of birth | t | ,43 | ,97 | -,77 | -,50 | -,16 | -,48 | -1,34 | -,51 | -1,73 | -,77 | -1,37 | -3,24 |
| p | ,67 | ,33 | ,44 | ,62 | ,87 | ,63 | ,18 | ,61 | ,09 | ,45 | ,17 | ,002\*\* |
| Religious affiliation | t | -,22 | ,34 | -,26 | ,325 | ,15 | -,24 | ,31 | -1,29 | -,05 | -,23 | ,48 | -,84 |
| p | ,82 | ,73 | ,79 | ,75 | ,88 | ,81 | ,76 | ,20 | ,96 | ,82 | ,63 | ,40 |
| Nationality | F | ,34 | ,35 | ,55 | ,15 | ,58 | ,89 | ,88 | ,84 | ,71 | ,27 | ,10 | 1,06 |
| p | ,79 | ,79 | ,65 | ,93 | ,63 | ,45 | ,46 | ,47 | ,55 | ,84 | ,96 | ,37 |

\*p< 0.05 \*\*p<0.01

1. Results and discussion

The space for cooperation between school and parents / family is complex and dynamic, honeycombed with numerous macro systems and microsystems factors. Some of these factors are included by our survey.

Form the results of our survey can be concluded that large number of parents completely agree that they should be informed by the primary school that educate their child about school activities in which their child participates in during the day, and the progress of their child for content to which their child shows a special interest, but also content that the child difficultly adopt.

Parents agree that they should be involved in activities that are implemented in the school, that is necessary to organize common activities (art, music and sports) as well as workshops on various occasions and events (New Year, March 8th, Easter, etc. .) and should be allowed them to visit their child's school whenever they wish. By contrast, parents show hesitation when it comes to their involvement in the work of primary schools in the area of decision making regarding the employment of teaching staff and the planning of the school budget. Even though parents fully agree that they should be informed of their child by the school and agree that they should be involved in the activities of the school, still undecided when it comes to their presence at meetings with individual teachers and their inclusion in activities realized in school. However, when it comes to the presence of group meetings and involvement in the performance of homework activities of the child most parents said they disagree that they are able to do so because of their work and other obligations, or that their work and other obligations are not an obstacle to engage in these activities.

The results showed that there were no significant differences in the attitudes of parents regarding the most established socio-demographic variables, concerning, significant differences were obtained only for statements 4, 9 and 12 and when it comes to the number of children in the family (of statement 4), completed education (statements 9) and order of birth of the child in the family (of statement 12). The parents who are with secondary school because of obligations, less frequently able to attend school and consult with the teacher about the progress of their child, parents who are more than one child in the family think that teachers should introduce them with the problems that children encountered in overcoming the specific content of classroom material, unlike those with one child in the family, and parents whose children were firstborn in the family have more time to work with their children and to assist in determining homework and other school activity, unlike the parents whose children are second born in the family.

From all shown, it can be concluded that parents, despite some differences that we noticed in certain statements, are prepared to work with primary schools. However, in our case because it is a small sample, the results obtained by this study have limited value and cannot be generalized.

In which the intensity and continuity, in what relationship the parents / family and school (partner or authoritarian) will cooperate in the future depends on a multitude of social and personal (interpersonal and intrapersonal) factors, which could be the subject of future research.

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1. Despina Sivevska. Tel.: +389-032-550-517

   *E-mail address*: [despina.sivevska@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:despina.sivevska@ugd.edu.mk) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)