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Education, Reflection, Development**CHALLENGING THE MINDSET: AN OVERVIEW OF PARENT
EDUCATION IN ROMANIA**Andreea - Ionela Dohotaru (a)*, Horațiu Catalano (b)
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Abstract

The place where all children define their personality is the educational system with its instructional process run by teachers while parents are equal partners. From this point of view, the school is facing new educational approaches determined by the diversity of society's problems and the multiplication of areas of necessitous educational intervention. An integral array of both educators and parents 'intervention concerns internet addiction and its effects on children, the impact of technology on intellectual and mental development, parental education done remotely or child. The impact on society is a landmark from these educational occurrences which draw attention to the need for parental education. Literature teaches us that the development of parenting skills and the participation of parents in school activities are effective in children's academic success. The partnership school - community is an answer to the problems that educators have been stressing - students' lack of interest/motivation, high dropping out rate, etc. However, it is challenging for schools to motivate parents to participate in parenting programs without strategies based on knowing their specific educational needs as well as a profound knowledge of their mentality. Such strategies also require a "self-accountability" system of learning to be achieved both by calling on specialised trainers as well as by appealing to their children's teachers who have a strong grasp of students' strengths and weaknesses. Parents need to be helped to adapt to the unpredictable requirements of modern society so that, in turn, they can teach their children resilience, adaptability, grit and tolerance.

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1. Introduction: School vs Parents?

In recent years, in Romania, a cheerful outlook towards parental education has been promoted through various initiatives aimed at developing skills (especially through sharing information) and parenting skills (through pilot projects for parental education). They are addressed to parents with young children and adolescents (provided by medical, educational or social staff). The main objective of parenting activities is to raise awareness among parents, caregivers, legal representatives, about the importance of their role in supporting his growth and development, so that they can improve and improve. acquire some knowledge, attitudes, care practices and education. There are several parent education programs that take place through several channels: in schools and kindergartens, by specially trained teachers that offer such courses for parents, in medical units (especially for pregnant mothers or young mothers), in social services (intended for different particular categories of parents who face certain problems and are direct or indirect beneficiaries of social services). Parenting styles can be educated, learned, adjusted and adapted to social needs; thus, through parental development services, parenting styles can be promoted, trained, encouraged and strengthened according to the needs of parents and children.

The school-community partnership is a possible solution for the real solution of the problems appearing in the students' education: disinterest in education, truancy, etc. All partnerships, interested institutions, school human resources, local authorities, students' families, businesses, the police and the Church find their place in this partnership. We cannot stimulate the motivations to participate in parental education programs without strategies based on knowing their real, specific, educational needs. Such strategies also involve a system of self- learning to be achieved both by appealing to specialised educators (trainers) and by appealing to their children's teachers who know very well the weaknesses and the strong ones of the children. There is a need for a permanent education of parents, they must be helped to adapt to the needs and requirements of modern society so that, in turn, they can educate their children for a good integration into today's society.

We are not wrong in stating that, in general, a certain psychological distance separates the two main categories of educators: parents and teachers. It manifests itself in different ways, of which we will mention three, more common. The first is parents bypassing the school or vice versa, the teacher bypassing the child's family. The second is the demure, scholastic attitude of some parents, who come to the meetings convened by the teachers, sit at their child's desk and hardly dare to breathe, let alone ask more questions. The third is the condescending attitude, sometimes even aggressive, of some parents, who come to school to threaten, to loudly complain about one or the other, refusing dialogue and demanding drastic measures against one teacher or another. Where does all this come from? Obviously, from an exact misunderstanding by parents of the relationship with the school, with the teachers. There are parents who consider that the whole task of education belongs to the school and as such they may adopt a passive attitude. Others, on the contrary, adopt an excessively critical position, creating a conflicting drama between themselves and the school staff. Starting from a subjective position and taking into account only the version that the child exposes at home about a school issue, such parents look for a knot in the teacher's method or decision in front of the student, which cannot be more negative for the effectiveness of educational action of it and, therefore, for the formation of the child.

Frequent visits of parents in school to deal with an “issue”, inconsistent participation in parents - teachers meetings, debates during parents public assembly remain verified ways of the wrong psychology that some parents still have about school climate (Moisin, 2007).

2. Problem Statement: Romanian View on Parental Education

The school-family relationship is an endangered relationship in today's Romanian society. The causes are varied: from the family climate that has deteriorated under the pressure of unemployment, finance worries, loss of confidence in values, to parents still victims of the old mentality according to which school graduation is guaranteed from the start. They are still expecting everything from our school. Now faced with children's school failures, they still do not react to their obligations, thus encouraging the phenomenon of dropping out of school, running away from classes, and vagrancy. And the pedagogical literature for parents is little represented on the book market or is not capitalised by the responsible factors. Also, not understanding their roles correctly, teachers and parents blame each other. The school accuses the parents of educational incompetence, disinterest, exaggerated standards and even aggression. Parents, on the other hand, either demand a more intransigent attitude towards students from teachers, or blame their children's failures, not understanding the demands of the present workforce market demands. We add here the schools' educational offer, which is reduced or inadequate in relation to the expectations and educational needs of parents, because teachers do not know said needs and/or do not care about them. In addition, there is a lack of a modern and active institutionalised programme of parental education and partnership. Thus, we have to take note of the failure of many students in disadvantaged classes. Faced with this situation, school educators often make mistakes, categorizing students from the very beginning and maintaining this discriminatory attitude for a long time, usually until the end of the school year.

Some opinions that have emerged in recent decades have advanced the idea of a disjunction between family and school, a phenomenon caused by the characteristics of a specialised capitalist society. The school has acquired very high competencies in children's education and an increasing autonomy, triggering the family from its functions (Stănciulescu, 1997, as cited in Cosma, 2001, pp. 14-16). Nowadays, it is increasingly required to understand the educational partnership as a form of unification, support and assistance of formal educational influences. The introduction of collaboration between parents and specialised educators, regular and permanent communication between them, as well as cooperation at certain times are required by the efficiency of school learning itself. Experience shows that a relaxed atmosphere between educational agents facilitates learning. Also, the existence of common rules, known and established in collaboration, greatly facilitates the learning effort. There is a complex network of relationships within a school, which have an important potential to influence children's education, both positively and negatively.

The most important relationships are: relationships between teacher and student, interindividual relationships (between students, between teachers and school administrative staff), relationships between teachers and parents, relationships between professionals who support the child's development with parents and teachers (teamwork for to make decisions and take action in favour of the child). Collaboration between school and family involves effective and efficient communication, a unity of

requirements and a unity of action when it comes to the best interests of the child. exchanges of views and discussions, and when it comes to decisions, each retaining its identity and input specifically.

Henripin and Ross (1976), cited by Vărăjmaş, identify two main dimensions of the mutual involvement of school and family in favour of the child. The first is the dimension of the parent-child relationship, aimed at controlling attendance, school results, homework, and in general tasks and material. The latter is the spiritual support of the child's teaching activity and the size of the family-school relationship, which refers to the choice of school and school, as well as direct contacts of parents with school representatives, teachers and administrators. These contacts can take the form of collective meetings held in the formal framework of negotiations between the school administration and parents' associations, meetings and information of parents on school content and methods, class schedules, teachers' requirements, etc. In an informal setting, parents can collaborate with the school on the occasion of trips, celebrations, visits, joint meals, etc. To these forms of collaboration we add today's school for parents, psycho-pedagogical counselling, family orientation according to individual or group needs, in a professional manner, by specialists trained specifically as support teachers and counsellors of problems involving developmental risks and child adaptation.

Involving parents in school problems does not only mean paying for material support or warning about their children's problems. It is bigger than this. It refers to the construction of positive relationships between family and school and to a unification of the system of values and requirements related to the child. This can have a beneficial effect on students, as they see teachers collaborating with the family, positively influencing them and helping to defuse problems before they become uncontrollable. The collaboration and cooperation of parents with the school are efficient and beneficial to both parties, given that the communication is authentic, depending on its human dimension.

If we refer to the optimization of communication between teachers and parents, we take into account: the quality of the two poles of collaboration (teachers and parents); everyone's perceptions; the attitudes that characterise them; the characteristics of the school institution, the characteristics of the family; types of communication. The involvement of parents in solving school problems and in supporting the instructional-educational process has a number of motivations, among which we list several aspects: parents know their children and want to know them and as students, they know their child better than anyone else, they need of information regarding the fulfilment of the role of student by their child, deserves to be respected for their child's ideas and knowledge. Parents take care of their children and want them to reach their full potential, the learning rate increases and learning is maintained longer if parents are involved in supporting them at home through various activities. Working with parents is a support for the way they raise and educate their child and the effects of parents' involvement in school support programs are reflected on the other children in the family.

The involvement of parents in their child's learning program and in school activities can create a sense of self-esteem, which helps children and the whole family. The way parents understand their own child and are aware of its real possibilities is often a support for understanding learning situations. Partnering with parents can make it easier to solve various didactic and extra-didactic problems. By helping parents become more involved in their child's school life problems, we can strengthen the interactions and relationships between parents and their children. Activities with parents lead to solving

problematic situations, possible conflicts, and highlight ways to solve risky situations that might arise in the development of children.

In general, in the field of literature, the most frequently invoked consequences of parental education are: improving parents' knowledge of children's development, their needs and how they can be met, so as to support the child's physical and mental health; informing parents about children's rights and how they should be respected; improving parents' abilities to communicate with their children, to adjust their expectations towards them in a realistic way; improving the responsive and supportive attitudes of parents towards children, their ability to support children's empowerment through their positive discipline, etc. All these things can be possible solutions to a number of important social problems: child abuse, reducing school dropout, adolescent social problems (drug use, delinquency, etc.), school failure, youth violence; they also positively affect adults in the construction of parental identity and parental dignity, in their social networks, which they energise, restructure and strengthen, in the management and reduction of parental stress (Goddard, 2004).

In general, parental education programs in Romania focus, in particular, on the family; the aspects related to the representation of the child in relation to different institutions are presented in the background. The premise from which these programs start is that parents need information, methods, parental education in Romania 36 techniques to help them develop their parenting skills. Family-centred approaches (developing and promoting prescriptions focused exclusively on intra-family relationships) manage to reduce children's emotional problems and develop communication and relationship skills between parents and children, but do not bring significant improvements in behaviours and relationship skills. children with other backgrounds outside the family (peer groups or other people outside the family) (Wyatt Kaminski et al., 2008).

Parents should be permanently involved in the work of the school, not only when problems arise. When analysing parent-teacher relationships, it is good to take into account the following parameters: parents do not form a homogeneous group, often they do not identify their problems or do not trust to ask for support in solving a certain situation. The first question we need to address is what kind of information parents need. Do all parents need basic information about their children? And do they also need to know what the main purpose of a school is, what the goals are and to be aware of the school's educational policies? Where possible, they should be involved in decision-making (schedule changes, preparations and additional programs). They must also be aware of the progress made by their children, as well as the school's perception of the child's qualities and problems. Most parents appreciate any information about their child, because it contributes to certain decisions of the family for the future. Another set of information that parents need is how they can help their children at home, in homework, as a form of support provided by the family in order for children to participate in various competitions and competitions.

In addition, parents can also provide support to their children and even to the school. It is not about taxes or financial help, but about the fact that the parents are the ones who really care and show interest in various aspects of education for their child. In addition, parents are a source of support through the way they relate to other children, to school, to their professions, etc. Parents can be partners in education because they have the most information about their children. Also, their cultural and social status can give

valuable information about problems, growth crises, desires, expectations, mistrusts, passions, etc. In order to achieve the partnership with parents, it is essential that parents be seen as active participants, who can make a real and valuable contribution to the education of their children. Parents have a decisive role to play in making decisions about their children.

In 1992, with the support of UNICEF, a pilot early education program was initiated - PETAS (Early Stimulus Education Program) which included a parent education component, in which Resource Centres for Parents were established. Parents (CRP). The program has run with relevant results for the preschool education system and, until its completion in 1998, has been expanded nationally with the help of county school inspectorates and local public authorities who, in most cases, have supported the establishment and endowment of the new Resource Centres in accordance with the principles of early education. In 2000, Holt Romania, in partnership with ANPDC (Romanian Child Protection Services) and with the support of UNICEF, developed the program to strengthen the capacity of DGASPC to provide parental education for parents whose children are 12 years old from birth to age 3, according to the model "Birth to Three" in the United States, in fact, are a "pioneer" in the field of parental education and, implicitly, in the field of early education. After about ten years of adaptation, it has been extended to the category of parents with older children, including school-age children and adolescents, and is still successful today.

Since 2000, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Children's Foundation (FCN) with assistance from UNICEF Romania, has been running the National Parent Education Program, based on the "Educated So" method, developed and tested by the Dutch Institute for Care and Welfare. from the University of Utrecht (Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare). The program gradually developed at the national level and, as a result of very good results, was taken over in 2004 by the Ministry of Education, the database and monitoring remaining the responsibility of the Our Children's Foundation.

Components of parental education were included in various programs run with external funds, after 2000, respectively: support programs, type "Parents' School", within the PHARE projects "Access to education for disadvantaged groups", conducted by the Ministry of Education, at by May 2010; setting up resource and assistance centres for children and parents (initiatives of the Ministry of Education, Save the Children, Our Children's Foundation, etc.); providing accredited education modules for teachers / other categories of staff involved in child development and protection, in which special emphasis is placed on the elements of parental education, carried out in projects aimed at inclusive education, socio-emotional education or pre-school education (initiatives of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, RENINCO, Our Children's Foundation, Step by Step Centre for Professional Development). Starting with the 2006-2007 school year, the Equality Partnership Centre struck a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Education, based on which it initiated, with the support of UNICEF Romania, training instructors from the "Educated so" program, in order to approach education for gender equality in meetings with parents.

An important aspect is that the information provided by parents regarding their children must be recognized and appreciated, so that this information can be used and used in addition to professional information. Responsibility must be shared between parents and teachers (Vrășmaș, 2008). We could say that parental involvement in the child's education is an indispensable piece in schooling. The

improvement of the school results depends on the increase of the intensity of this dual partnership. From this idea derives the main objective from which my research started (Cojocaru & Cojocaru, 2011).

2.1. Objective of the research

The objective of the present research was to analyse the ways in which the involvement of parents in children's education leads to high performance among primary school students. I was thus interested to find out to what extent the involvement of parents in the school-family partnership, their involvement in achieving education in the family environment and the attention paid to education at the level of family discourse has effects on school performance in primary school students.

Finally, I aimed to check to what extent the involvement of parents in children's education differs depending on the level of their education. Vrășmaș (2002) recommends considering: the level of education of the two participants, the time chosen for collaboration, difficulties encountered by children in school activities or other development problems. Teachers generally refer to the socio-professional categories from which the parents come, the family structure and its special problems.

In 2016, we started a parental program in a rural school in Suceava county that has been running since, aiming to involve parents in their children's school activity. To this purpose, we also conducted this case study, using our own survey and setting targets suited to the community.

2.2. Thesis

The hypothesis is a tool of crucial importance to the scientist and, as Claude Bernard states, is the main tool in research. An investigation has never been conducted outside or in the absence of a hypothesis. The general thesis that formed the basis of this research was formulated as follows: The involvement of parents in the education of the high school student influences his school performance. Several research questions have arisen from the thesis: a- The involvement of parents in the relationship with the school positively influences the school performance of the student in the secondary level. b- The involvement of parents in the child's education at home positively influences the school performance of the student in the secondary level. c- Discussions about school in the family positively influence the school performance of the student in the secondary level. d - There is data that correlates parents' level of studies to their involvement in the child's education.

3. Research Method

The research methodology included a quantitative component. In the quantitative component we used the face to face oral survey. The type of research used was one based on the interaction with the participants and this interaction was done through the use of the questioning technique. We chose quantitative research in order to discover all cases of parental involvement in children's school success. This type of research allows a larger scale analysis than qualitative research, and as a method we used the survey because it allowed a much broader research sample than other research methods. Through the questioning technique, exact data could be obtained regarding a person or a social group, as is the case of students and their parents.

The variables involved in conducting our case study are: independent variables -involvement of parents in the relationship with the school implies a close, open relationship between the parent and the teacher, based on communication. The involvement of parents in the child's education at home involves a high attention paid to the child in solving homework, in managing an optimal educational program for homework and developing motivation for learning. Discussions about school in the family involve a high level of attention paid by parents to education and the presence of this topic in family discussions. The dependent variable represents "the effect and the results obtained by the students following the introduction of the independent variable" (Bocoş, 2003, p. 66). In the present research, the dependent variable represents the school performance, operationalized by the students' school results on the last semester (general average).

3.1. Participants

The research was conducted on students from grades V-VIII, of a middle school in rural areas, Suceava County as well as on their parents. We worked with the teachers to get in touch with the students and they took home questionnaires for their parents, in order to eliminate the difficulty of communicating directly with the parents. Many parents have high school education and they live in rural areas. But there were also parents with secondary education and higher education. The age of the respondent parents varies between 22 and 56. If some parents needed help completing the questionnaire, they received additional explanations, or completed the questionnaire at school.

3.2. The tool

The tool used is the questionnaire. We used an adaptation from the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) developed by Fantuzzo et al. (2000). The questionnaire is a multidimensional scale of parental involvement in the early education of children. It was developed in partnership with parents and teachers at an urban school in the northeastern United States. The theoretical basis of the questionnaire was mainly the famous classification of parental involvement of researcher Joyce Epstein.

3.3. Procedure

From the all students of the school, 248 students were selected whose parents agreed to participate in the research. Students were asked to take home the questionnaire to be completed by parents. They completed the questionnaire and sent it back to school with the help of the child, within two days. Only the correctly completed questionnaires were taken into account and then the information on the school results from the previous year was collected, this being done with the help of the teachers. Then followed the centralization and interpretation of data. In addition to the parental involvement questionnaire, the parents also completed a questionnaire with demographic data.

The data were centralised using the SPSS program. To test the first hypothesis, the correlations between the three types of parental involvement and school performance were analysed. The correlation was calculated using the Bravais-Pearson correlation coefficient. The following tests were used to test the relationship between parental involvement and different demographic variables: t test in the case of the

relationship between parental involvement and the child's gender and occupational status and between school performance and parents' educational level; ANOVA test in case of the relationship between parental involvement and the level of education of the parents.

4. Findings

The present research started from the idea that the involvement of parents in the education of children both within the family, as well as in their relationship with the school, has positive effects on school performance of children. We were thus interested to find out to what extent the involvement of parents in the relationship with the school, in home education of the child as well as discussions about school in the family influences the school performance of primary school students.

The first conclusion is that we need to expand the study to dimensions that include analysis of pedagogical conditions, a factor complementary to the socio-cultural environment in determining school success. The obtained results confirm the hypotheses launched. Thus, the more parents get involved in the relationship with the school, in the realisation of the child's education in the family environment, the more the performance of children will be higher. In addition, family discussions about school or education have a strong effect on increasing the motivation and performance of primary school students.

We also found that families in which parents have higher education are much more involved in the education of children compared to families in which parents have secondary education. So expectations on the parental role in the child's academic success may be different in different groups. Although the decision-makers of education have recognized the importance of parental involvement in children's education, there is no consensus on its content and form. Efforts related to parental involvement have the benefits agreed by the teachers: the improvement of the grades, the attitude towards the school, behaviour, homework, participation in class activities and school attendance. Parental involvement has beneficial effects on both student performance and school results in general (Harris & Godal, 2007).

The term parental involvement is a relatively recent term in Romanian literature. However, foreign researchers for more than three decades have conducted studies in which they analysed the different relationships between parental involvement and school activity. The most important idea from these studies is that there is a strong relationship between parental involvement and school performance. Going further, differentiations are made between certain aspects of parental involvement. There is talk of: parental involvement in school (which may include volunteering in various school activities or classroom work, active role in decision making), parental involvement at home (homework help, time management), family-school communication, etc). What is certain is that not all these aspects correlate equally with school performance. In this sense, the opinions of the researchers are divided, some supporting the importance of involvement in school, others of family-school communication, and others of parental involvement at home.

There are also certain factors that can encourage parental involvement or, on the contrary, reduce it. The first type of factors contains aspects such as: the attitude of teachers and family resources, lack of parents' free time. Among the positive factors are: daily routine in the family, monitoring extracurricular activities, encouraging the child's development and progress in school, etc. Other aspects that are related

to parental involvement can be considered demographic data such as: parental education, occupational status, child gender.

5. Conclusions

Although Romanian specialists are aware of the importance of parental involvement, there are few studies in Romania in this regard. However, national research shows that many families consider school solely responsible for the education and future of their children (M.E.N., 2022). If something goes wrong in the child's development and education, teachers are solely responsible for this unpleasant stalemate. It is recommended to keep alive and strengthen the parent-school relationship. Just as there is a school for the little ones, it is just as normal for there to be a school for the parents that clarifies many of the aspects related to the child's development and educational route. The "seven years from home" (an old Romanian saying) is no longer enough in light of major changes and transformations of contemporary society in which the question of what happens to the new generations is increasingly asked.

It is necessary to know the needs of young people, the needs of the workforce market, in order to provide effective educational measures, which would thus ensure a real chance for socio-professional integration. The performance and efficiency of the educational process depends on the degree and quality of involvement of all factors in this process- parents and educators. The new educational guidelines, adapted to the needs of nowadays work requirements, are a "mystery" for many parents and career counselling and guidance can provide the necessary answers for children and parents alike. In this respect, communication plays an essential role that can decide whether a child is successful or not. The involvement of parents in the long-term development of their children must be done with great responsibility and in full comprehension of today's context .

The study proposed in my paper aims to emphasise the importance of parental involvement and the results of research could be a starting point for the school in establishing a partnership with parents. Future research could focus on analysing a correlation with other variables as well as with other types of parental involvement.

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