

Supporting the Success of Students—One of the Factors to Optimize the Role of the School through Its Cooperation with the Family

Sc. Vlora Sylaj

Department of Pedagogy, University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo
Email: vlora.sylaj@gmail.com

Received February 5th, 2013; revised March 7th, 2013; accepted March 21st, 2013

Copyright © 2013 Sc. Vlora Sylaj. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

This article aims to contribute to the growing interest and consideration to support the success of students by the school and the family. This actually leads to the optimization of the role of the school. Through answering the research questions, the paper could serve readers to reflect for the better cooperation between parents and school in terms of supporting the success of students. This study reflects upon the importance of qualitative collaboration, namely to enrich the public opinion with the valuable information about the cooperation between school and home. The purpose of this article is to ascertain whether it affects the level of contacts between school and family by supporting the success of students from the school. This study used quantitative method and aims to find answers to the following questions: What are the school and the family factors that support the success of students? Does this affect the level of contacts between the family and the school? Research hypothesis: The level of contacts between the school and families affected by the support by the school for students' success. We have included 400 teachers and 400 parents from rural areas in this study, as well as 300 teachers and 300 parents of fourth classes' from the urban areas. They come from the various city schools in Kosovo. Systematic sample was randomly selected, and we have compiled the questionnaire. A team of pedagogues, who have been previously trained to use this questionnaire, took attitudes of both subjects. Data were analyzed by SPSS 20 program. The study has reached some findings and conclusions. Participants' responses indicate that the level of contact between the school and families is affected by the factor supporting the success of students by the school.

Keywords: Optimization; School; Family; Family Involvement; Cooperation

Introduction

Parents make many efforts for development, education and achievements in the child's success in school. Family involvement in the child's success means everything to the family in order to support the success of children from different directions in terms of higher achievements, learning, being an advocate for them when they have a problem, and to cooperate effectively with the school in this regard. However, for higher student's achievements, the support of the family is not enough; success must be lead by the school's professional commitment in this regard. While the commitment of the school to support students' success in school means that, firstly the school must recognize assessment standards, to continuously keep families informed about student's success in school. Family should be provided with information about improvement of the student's success in school. The family should be contacted as soon as possible for any student's delays in lessons. Schools need to motivate students to do their best. Family should be enabled to take part in the monitoring of the child's performance in school.

When it comes to student's achievement, of course they are not all the same. We presented challenges in collaboration be-

tween the school and family to support student success. Why it is not considered a challenge? Because, the school should first draw up quality programs for students' achievements. Moreover, having in mind that students' achievements are not the same, and then the strategy for working with the family in this respect cannot be the same. The family certainly considers the school responsible for the success of the child. Expecting the child's success to come only through the support from school, sometimes families even blame the school for their obligations and responsibilities to support the child's success.

Nevertheless, despite this, it is a moral obligation and responsibility above all, that parents and schools pass these barriers and give their best to achieve the best results in students' success. The student's success should be supported until he becomes an adult. Even to support the success of his own family, and during his entire education career, although adult child/student should take his responsibilities for learning.

Survey's Methodology

Operational definitions: Family is a group of individuals related by blood, marriage or cohabitation approval. Family

should be more involved and participate in school. School is the educational institution in which the organized activity of upbringing and education of the young generation takes place. Establishing the highest level of school role through cooperation with the family. Cooperation between school and family are activities and cooperation agreements between them to achieve common goals.

The aim of the study: This study aims to reveal the relationship between the family and school contacts for cooperation between school factor, as it is to support the success of students by the school.

Study questions: Does the support affect the success of students from the school level meetings between school and family? Do you have significant differences on this issue between the family and school environment when families comes from urban and rural areas?

Research hypothesis: Supporting student's success increases the level of contacts between the school and the family.

Second hypothesis: To support the success of students from the school is top notch.

Alternative hypothesis: Level of meetings between school and home is not dictated by the fulfilment of cooperation between the school and family factors such as to support student's success.

The importance of the study: This study is important because it affects the support to students' success in school and it establishes the contacts with the family. Also, note that the relationship between these variables is the same in urban and rural areas.

Limitations of the study: This study may be limited by the following factors:

- Teachers may be cautious in providing information in collaboration with the family.
- Restrictions on giving honest responses may also encounter family.

Population and sample: The population of this research are all teachers and parents of elementary schools in Kosovo. Population is determined numerically and the largest number of pupils comes from rural areas. Since it is the large population to study the problem, we have defined the version of the study—sampling was done through systematic random selection. The sample included 300 teachers and 300 parents of fourth grade school from urban areas in Kosovo, and 400 teachers and 400 parents of school fourth grade from rural areas in seven regions of Kosovo.

Instrument applied. We have applied research assessment to determine the relationship between students' success support from the school and the level of contacts between school and family. We applied comparative research for the comparison of differences in school and family attitudes and cooperation between them.

Applied instrument is a questionnaire for parents and teachers, which consists of questions through which we discover how the success of students is supported by the school. The questionnaire consists of five scales: "strongly agree", "agree", and "undecided", "disagree", and "strongly disagree".

Examination of the Literature

All studies in the field of cooperation between the school and family shows that parental involvement in the school is the educational factors in higher student's achievements. If parents

are knowledgeable and present in their children's school life, children will be motivated and achieve better results (Schumm, 2005). Motivation provided by the child's parent and its support are decisive elements in the child's success in school (Bojagjiu, 2009).

Research has found that parents who provided active support to their children contributed more in their children's success in school. More than those who offer passive support. Parents less effective in this regard, there are those who do not support their children. Parents should help their children and encourage them to achieve success (Berger, 2000). However, of course, support the success of children/students must be done by schools, through professional support.

Joyce Epstein (1995, 2001) has based its practices in a partnership model and cooperation and shared responsibilities between families and schools. "There are many reasons for school, family, and community partnership to exist. Partnership can improve school programs and school climate, to provide services and family support, parental skills and leadership. Connect families with others in school and in the community, and help teachers with their work. However, the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all young people to succeed in school and in later life ..." (Epstein, 1995: p. 702). Over the years, Epstein has found that parental involvement is crucial to success. A small number of schools have had as their purpose to make cooperation through training and external support (Fullan, 2001).

While Decker, considers that the most accurate predictor of student success in school is not the welfare status, but the extent to which the student's family is able: 1) Create a home environment that encourages learning; 2) Communicate expectations and achievement; 3) Become more involved in their child's education at school and community (Decker, 2003).

In their study of family involvement in school, Henderson and Mapp (2000), reached the conclusion that the evidence is consistent, positive and convincing that families have a major impact on their children's performance in school and life. The researchers also show that children whose parents: 1) Provide high expectations and aspirations; 2) Assist and control the children's homework; 3) Participate in parent meetings and parent-teacher associations; 4) Talk to their children about school, tend to have higher grades, superior performance on tests of achievement ... (Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Muller, 1993). Researchers have found correlation between the quality of partnerships and student achievement. Schools with high quality partnership programs report greater volunteerism of parents and their participation in school events. Involvement in the decision making process. In addition, more involvement in the students' homework, that require interaction, rather than lower quality school programs (Sheldon, 2005; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004). Given the importance of cooperation between family and school achievements of students, we should aim to be efficient in cooperation, as this will have on impact on the nation. When at the family, community, schools and systems are strong, the nation is strong, too (Kreso, 2004).

Results of the Study

Data in **Table 1** shows that teachers in urban areas considers that their support to student's success is high, 94% of them out of total of 300 teachers have expressed such an approach, while

Table 1.
Support success of students by teachers of the urban environment.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	1	.3	.3	.3
	Medium	16	5.3	5.4	5.7
	High	282	94.0	94.3	100.0
	Total	299	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.3		
Total		300	100.0		

5.4% of them consider their support level being average. **Table 2** shows the relationship between the support for the success of students by teachers of the urban area and the level of their meeting with the family. The relationship is linear, positive and substantial and statistically significant ($r = .568$, $p = .003$, $n = 300$). We can conclude that the level of families and school meetings increases thanks to higher support of the success of students by teachers in urban areas.

Table 3 shows statistics of teachers who support the success of students in rural areas, 95% of them expressed that attitude, and only 3.7% of them consider that their support to the success of their students is the average. While the results of the study on the link between student's success and support of teachers in rural areas and school's level of contacts between rural areas and the same family environment, are presented in **Table 4**, which reveals that support to the success of students and the level of contacts between the school and the family in rural areas liaison moderate but significant, which means that the teachers in rural areas supports student's success, and that increases the level of contacts between their family ($r = .499$, $p = .005$, $n = 400$).

Study data from **Table 5** reveals that from all surveyed families that come from urban environment 85% of them consider that support the success of their children by teachers is in high level, only 10% consider it is medium level and none of them valued low-level. As **Table 6** shows that teachers support the success of students from urban school, based on the family responses, increases the level of meetings between them and school ($r = .377$, $p = .000$, $n = 300$).

The data in **Table 7** it makes us clear that the families from rural environment consider high level of children support the success by school. In total, 90% of parents express this attitude. High indicator level of rural environment school support children's success. Only 7.8% of families consider this average level of support and 2.3% low level of support. According to the data in **Table 8** it becomes clear that the family of the rural environment have moderate positive linear correlation but with statistical significance between supporting success of students and the level of contacts between rural environment family and school ($r = .326$, $p = .002$, $n = 400$), which means that the level of contacts between rural environment household and school grows with the support the success of students from school.

Discussion

Our study found that teachers from urban environment highly support students' success in school, which factor assumed that increases the level of meetings between school and family, study confirmed our assumption by relationship of these two

Table 2.
Correlation between support success of students by teachers of urban environment and number of family-school meetings.

		Nr. meetings	Supportsuk
Nr. Meetings	Pearson Correlation	1	.568
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	300	299
Supportsuk	Pearson Correlation	.568	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	299	299

Table 3.
Support success of students by teachers of rural environment.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	1	.2	.3	.3
	Medium	15	3.7	3.8	4.0
	High	383	95.0	96.0	100.0
	Total	399	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.0		
Total		403	100.0		

Table 4.
Correlation between support success of students from rural and counting teachers meetings between school and family.

		How many meeting have been held with family on half term	Supportsuk.R
How many meeting have been held with family on half term	Pearson Correlation	1	.499
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	400	399
Supportsuk.R	Pearson Correlation	.499	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	399	399

Table 5.
Support success of students from families of the urban environment.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Medium	33	10.6	11.0	11.0
	High	266	85.3	89.0	100.0
	Total	299	95.8	100.0	
Missing	System	13	4.2		
Total		312	100.0		

factors through Pirsons Correlation. So we discovered that as much is supported students success from the school, the family will be more cooperative with it - school.

In the interest of our study it was to understand also the stay of rural environment teachers on supporting student's success by them, and our study found that teachers from this environment highly value supporting success of students from schools, also we found that supporting success by rural environment teachers increases level of meetings with family. We found that

Table 6.

Correlation between support success of students from families of the urban environment and counting family-school meetings.

		On half term how many meeting been held with teacher regarding your child	Supportsuk.R
On half term how many meeting been held with teacher regarding your child	Pearson Correlation	1	.377
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	299
Supportsuk.R	Pearson Correlation	.377	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	299	299

Table 7.

Support success of students from rural environment family.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	9	2.3	2.3
	Medium	31	7.8	10.0
	High	360	90.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0

Table 8.

Correlation between support success of students from rural and counting family to family-school meetings.

		On half term how many meeting been held with teacher regarding your child	Supportsuk.R
On half term how many meeting been held with teacher regarding your child	Pearson Correlation	1	.326
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	400	399
Supportsuk.R	Pearson Correlation	.326	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	399	399

it is at the same level of students supporting success by teachers on both environments, also support of success by teachers of both environments as factors affects the number of meetings between school and family, and it is known that more frequent meetings lead to higher level cooperation between these two factors school and family, and does not end here, the higher level meetings certainly contributes to higher student achievement.

We can conclude that family from urban environment believes that the success of their children is supported from school, considering this support as high level. With insignificant differences with 10% more than urban environment family, rural environment family defends the position that their children's teachers support children's success in school even more. Also, we found that the family of the urban environment and urban environment teachers, supporting student success increases cooperation between family and school. We found that even at

rural environment family support children's success increased the level of its meetings with the school.

Our study thus reveals that schools from both environments, highly backs student success, conclusion that is found on both school and family environments, also we conclude that level of meetings between family and school increases with higher support student success in school. There are no significant differences between urban and rural environments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our study showed that support student success is very important factors in the cooperation between school and family and even increases meeting level between them.

Based on our study results school is standing good in support the student success. However the study shows that as much as supportive student's success is from school as much as cooperation between school and family will be. So, disturbing is the fact that the school does not have a strategy for higher student achievement, while it is known that it is not enough that student's success only to be supported, but schools must work on strategies for higher student achievement.

Family shouldn't leave everything in the hands of school but to collaborate in student achievement, monitor and support student learning at home, and certainly when encounter difficulties in this area to address the school as a professional institution.

REFERENCES

- Bojagjiu, A. (2009). *The preparation of the child and education*. Tirana: Toena.
- Catsambis, S., & Beveridge, A. A. (2001). Does neighborhood matter? Family, neighborhood, and school influences on eighth grade mathematics achievement. *Sociological Focus*, 34, 435-457. doi:10.1080/00380237.2001.10571212
- Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we have. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 701-712.
- Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School and family partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13, 1-22. doi:10.1023/A:1009048817385
- Fullan, M. (2001). *New understanding of change in education*. Soros.
- Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southeast Educational Development Laboratory.
- Muller, C. (1993). Parent involvement and academic achievement: An analysis of family resources available to the child. In B. Schneider, & J. S. Coleman (Eds.), *Parents, their children, and schools* (pp. 77-114). Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Kreso, A. P. (2004). *Coordinates of family education, Sarajevo*. New Jersey: Merrill Publishing Company.
- Schumm, J. S. (2005). How to help children in homework. Tirana: Max.
- Sheldon, S. B. (2005). Testing a structural equation model of partnership program implementation and parent involvement. *Elementary School Journal*, 106, 171-187. doi:10.1086/499197
- Sheldon, S. B., & Van Voorhis, V. L. (2004). Partnership programs in US schools: Their development and relationship to family involvement outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 15, 125-148. doi:10.1076/sesi.15.2.125.30434

Appendix

Dear Teachers,

The best way to achieve a satisfactory success of students in our school is through cooperation between you as a school and you as a family. This survey gives you the opportunity to show what schools are doing to support this collaboration. The survey is anonymous, we appreciate your sincerity. Thank you for your cooperation.

Vlora Sylaj

In the Following Questions Mark Sets X in Family Welcoming of Schools

- 1) I feel welcomed at organized meetings.
- 2) Parents can meet me whenever they need.
- 3) I show respect to parents whenever they are in school.
- 4) I do not distinguish parents despite their cultural level, educational, material, etc.
- 5) We have a dedicated room at school, where you can meet child's teacher.

Effective Communication

- 6) I make it easy parental communication with me.
- 7) Teacher informs me regularly regarding various activities in the school.
- 8) I communicate with parents and families in multiple ways (such as, e-mail, telephone, website, parent meetings, working notebook home visit, etc.).
- 9) I'd help parents solve problems related to their child.
- 10) They can communicate with me whenever they need.

Only one of the Alternatives (Squares)

strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Information about Families

- 11) I inform parents with the program (curriculum) of teaching subjects.
- 12) I indicate what ways of cooperation can be used (parent meetings, phone, website, home visits...)
- 13) I inform them with school rules and policies.
- 14) I offer information about the existence and the number of Parent Councilor's in schools.
- 15) I inform what is the function of these councils.
- 16) I know (I've read) the law on primary education in Kosovo.

Supporting Student Success

- 17) I inform parents consistently regarding child success.
- 18) I contact with them only when the child stall in lessons.

- 19) I encourage students to do better in classes.
- 20) Students learning difficulties I solve in liaison with parent.

strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Family Confidence in School

- 21) I have confidence on family that has leading control on child's lessons.
- 22) I have confidence on family that will inform you of any changes on child's success.
- 23) I am confident that the school will inform you of any change of child's behavior.
- 24) Cooperation with the family is essential to me as a teacher.

Segregation of Duties and Responsibilities

- 25) I ask parents to discuss with consulting service of school regarding child's specific concerns (psychologist, director ...).
- 26) I have made it clear objectives and tasks parents must realize.

Decision Making

- 27) Parents participate in making important decisions in the school.
- 28) In school decisions are taken without asking a parent.

The Level of Contact

- 29) How many times you meet the parents per half term?

strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	totally disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Comments if Any
