PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AT HOME

Ausra Kazlauskiene
Siauliai University, Lithuania

Justina Kravčenkaitė
Siauliai University, Lithuania

Abstract. *The article analyses the involvement of parents participating in the child's education process. The semi-structured interview method was chosen to collect the survey data. The content analysis method was used for the analysis of the research data. During the study, the aim was to find out what were the possibilities of parental involvement in the child's education process, and which parents were satisfied with the needs of the children. Parents who live in cities and villages are selected by the participants of the study. Data from a qualitative research analysis suggests that parents are divided into different parties to the opposition, where no one wants to engage in the child's educational process, while others actively contribute to the process of child's education. It has been disclosed that the lack of time planning and other factors make it impossible to contribute or minimally contribute to joint activities with the child.*
Keywords: *parent education, child development, parental involvement in child development.*

Introduction

Parental involvement in child development makes a positive impact on children's attitude towards school, attendance of lessons, learning attainments, mood at school (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Pomerantz, Monti, & Litwack, 2011; Čiuladienė, Valantinas, & Pilkauskaitė-Valickienė, 2016). As D. Manukian (2015) has it, parents who are involved in the process of child development acknowledge the background of interrelations, and, therefore, school students' academic achievements increase, school attendance improves, the number of children consuming drugs and psychotropic substances decreases. Parental involvement in child development activities positively influences not only achievements in child development but also the future prospects, social relationships, mental condition (Gelžinytė, & Bagdonas, 2017; Walker, 2011; Warren, Hong, & Rubin, 2010). According to the mentioned authors, due to an increasingly rapid pace of life, challenges faced by society members in their career and personal life pursuits, parental involvement in child development activities is not always sufficient. Significance of education manifests through specificity of mutual collaboration, which determines a positive impact of identification of set

problem areas on mutual functioning of both parents and children. The emphasis is laid on importance of parents' orientations: controlling a child or, on the contrary, stimulation of his/ her independence; the very process of child learning or mostly the focus on the outcomes; what reactions (positive or negative) prevail in assessment of learning outcomes, what expectations (positive or negative) are underlined in communication with a child (Moorman, 2011; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2011; Cook, 2013). It can be stated that parental involvement is becoming a strongly pronounced prediction for academic achievements at all levels (from kindergarten to secondary school).

Grounding on research works (Kazlauskienė, Valančienė, & Krasauskaitė, 2012; Leliūgienė & Kaušylienė, 2012; Clark, Sheridan, & Woods, 2010), parents tend to delegate the responsibility for child's learning, creation of safe educational environment at school to the school rather than the family. Not by accident, majority of research studies (Bednarska, 2014; Clark, Sheridan, & Woods, 2010; Barker, 2008; Bajoriūnas, 2014; Juodaitytė, 2000; Mcintosh & Luecke, 2008; Moss, 2006; Cleary, 2008; Juodaitytė, Gaučaitė, & Kazlauskienė, 2009; Lewis & Forman, 2002) mostly focus on parental involvement in child development through collaboration with an education institution. Such phenomenon of collaboration is complex and presently usually explained by several theories: seven levels of parental involvement in child development (Valantinas, 2012). These theories treat the phenomenon of parental involvement in child development in the aspect of activities arranged by school or the aspect of formation of mutual relationships between teachers and parents. E. Patrikakou, N. Evanthia (2016) put it that strong collaboration between parents and teachers in classroom and outside it brings both short-term and long-term benefit to children. The conducted surveys of the mentioned authors demonstrate that there are some positive academic results achieved in relation to parental participation in school activities. Obviously, majority of research studies focus on collaboration between family and school; however, there is lack of research works emphasising parental involvement in child development processes at home. In this context, the aim to reveal parental involvement in child development at home is set. The research data can contribute to practice of improvement of parent education.

Research Methodology

Method of data collection. The method of a semi-structured interview has been chosen to collect the research data. The interview enables the informants to reveal themselves and express their opinions on the phenomenon under investigation (Bubnys & Žydžiūnaitė, 2012; Sabaliauskas, 2017). The semi-structured interview has been chosen to not only purposefully organise a

conversation, obtain information required for the research but also to provide an opportunity for an informant to give more detailed answers.

Qualitative content analysis as **the method of data processing**. Content analysis is a valid method that allows drawing specific conclusions on the ground of the text under analysis (Bitinas, 2013).

Organisation and ethics of the research. 12 informants from various cities and towns (Šiauliai, Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Radviliškis) as well as villages (Agluonėnai, Rainiai, Skaidiškės, Lioliai) of Lithuania participated in the survey. Collection of the research data was stopped in compliance with the data saturation principle. When it was noticed that the answers obtained during interviews started repeating the earlier received data, the new to-be-surveyed individuals were not included in the research. Before starting the interview, the time and place were agreed with all informants in advance; the research topic, aim and objectives, the right to refuse participating in the research were introduced to them. The surveyed were explained that the information heard during the interview would remain confidential, and the obtained data would be presented in the research study only in a generalised way.

By employing the semi-structured interview, 12 parents were surveyed: 6 parents from a city or a town (marked as C) and 6 parents from a village (marked as V), which is sufficient to deeply and comprehensively analyse the current situation. The questions asked during the interview allowed recognising strengths and weaknesses of these families in meeting the needs of their children; moreover, answers to the questions revealed the alternative ways how to help solving a problem or misunderstanding. The data obtained during the interviews was compared with other conducted research cases and theoretical considerations of scientists. All these actions allow better assurance of reliability of the results.

Analysis of Parental Involvement in Supporting Their Children at Home Analysis of the obtained data led to singling out 4 categories: time, workplace, support and condition (Table 1). The first category (time) was oriented to finding out about the planning of time resources. After conversations with the informants, 2 sub-categories have been formed (early morning, afternoon/ evening). The goal is to find out when the support is provided: in the morning, during the day or in the evening. Interviews of the informants revealed that in cities and towns the support was provided after extra-curricular activities, late in the evening: *"...in the evening, when they do their homework" (C1), "...after work we do the most important tasks and only then we start" (C3), "...we work when I return from my job" (C5).* In villages, the support was provided at various times: *"...after returning from school and having one hour rest" (V5), "...early in the morning or late in the evening" (V6).*

Table 1 **Planning of time resources by parents while involving in the process of child development**

Sub-categories	Statements
Early morning	<....>early in the morning<...>V6
After work/ evening	<...> in the evening, when they do the homework C1 <...> in the evening, after work <...> C4 <...> after returning from work <...> C5 <...> we start working at around 3 p.m. <...> C5 <...> at 9 p.m. <....> V1 <...> in the evening <...> V2 <...> after returning from school and having one our rest V5 <...> early in the morning or late in the evening<...>V3.

For some children, the time immediately after school was the best time to do the homework. "Some others need a break to play and have some rest; therefore, the best time for homework is from 3 to 5–6 p.m." (Bortkevičienė, 2018, p. 1). The research data revealed that parents living in a city or a town dedicated their time and attention to their child after finishing their own work; whereas parents living in villages dedicated their time and comprehensive attention after lessons ended.

The second category (workplace) aims at revealing what are the home conditions available for work with a child (Table 2). Four sub-categories (child's room/ home office room, desk, soft furnishings, kitchen) have been pointed out. The interviewed informants from cities and villages revealed that they were mobile; therefore, they could work in various settings of the living premises: *"in child's room" (C1), "at home, at the desk" (C4), "in the drawing room or kitchen" (C5), "at home on the sofa" (V2), "in the child's room" (V4), "everywhere possible" (V6).*

Table 2 **A place at home where parents provide support to child development**

Sub-categories	Statements
Child's room / home office room	<....> in child's room <...> C1 <...> a child has one's own room <...> C5 <...> in child's room <....> V3 <...> in the home office room <...> V4
Desk	<...> at the desk <...> C4 <....> in the room at the desk <...> C6
Soft furnishings	<...> on the sofa <...> V1
Kitchen	<....> in the kitchen <...> C5 <...> we always work in the kitchen only <...> V5.

J. Bortkevičienė (2016) emphasises that it is important to have a workplace which is bright and full of fresh air, where a child would have sufficient space for extensively spreading all his/ her books, writing utensils and other school materials. Therefore, it is important to create suitable environment where a child could comprehensively relax and work responsibly, not being distracted by undesired sounds and various technological devices, such as computers, telephones etc.

The third category (support) aimed at finding out who initiate support, is support asked for by a child himself/ herself (Table 3). Two sub-categories (parents, children) have been singled out. It was learnt that in a city support was initiated by children: *"...the child asks for some help" (C1), "the child asks for our support, we do not offer our support openly" (C3), "the child asks" (C4)*; whereas in villages support was initiated in various ways, i.e. by both parents and children: *"I initiate myself; otherwise the child wouldn't do anything himself" (V3), "The child asks for help" (V4)*.

Table 3 **Initiation of parents' support to children development**

Sub-categories	Statements
Parents suggest	<....> I initiate myself; otherwise the child wouldn't do anything himself <...> V1 <....> usually I <...> V5
A child asks	<...> the child asks for help <....> V3 <...> I help when the child asks <...> V4 <...> the child himself asks for some help <...> C1 <...> the child asks <...> C4 <...> when the daughter says/ asks <...> C6

The obtained data allows drawing a conclusion that parents delegate all responsibilities to children, this way teaching them to be responsible for their actions; and parents living in villages usually willingly involve in the process of child development themselves, engage themselves and child in joint activities, enhance mutual relationship.

The fourth category (condition) targeted at finding out how parents were feeling while helping their child, and, vice versa, how a child was feeling when being helped (Table 4). Two sub-categories (positivism, thankfulness) have been singled out during the interviews. The goal was to find out how parents recognised the condition of their child, how they decided about it. It was discovered that, independently of the place of residence, children who received support were feeling acknowledged, valued, understood, were thankful: *"...the child is happy.... positivism is seen on the face" (C1), "...a smile is on his face and the work is done easier" (C3), "...he is happy" (C4), "He is thankful, embraces me, says 'thank you', smiles" (V2), "...she is happy when she gets an answer to her question"*

(V3), "...shows little emotion" (V5); whereas parents were feeling the mutual relationship getting stronger: *"I feel like a dutiful and responsible father" (C2), "I feel like having fulfilled my duty as a father" (V2)*. As N. T. Liobikienė (2009) states, the major duty of parents is to take care of a child, i.e. to notice child's needs and meet them without delay.

*Table 4 **Indicators of parents' and children's conditions***

Sub-categories	Statements
Positivism	<....> the child is happy; positivism is seen on his face. C1 <....> a smile is on his face <...> C3 <....> smiles <...> V1
Thankfulness	<...> he is thankful, embraces me, says 'thank you', smiles. V1 <...> she is happy when she gets an answer to her question. V2 <...> is thankful <...> V6 <...> always thanks and says why expresses thankfulness <...> V6
Mutual relationship	<...> I feel like being a dutiful and responsible father <....> C2 <...> I fell like having fulfilled my duty as a father <...> V2

Parental involvement in child learning makes a beneficial impact on learning achievements thanks to two described models: child's skills of learning are being formed, and the motivation for learning is increasing as a result of parents' endeavours. These two models function simultaneously and reciprocally condition each other; and this allows stating that it is purposeful to talk about parental involvement not in the process of child learning but rather of child (self) development (Moorman & Litwack, 2011, p. 2). The impact made by parents on child's learning outcomes is a conscious process, when mutual benefit: better learning outcomes and enhanced feedback, is obtained.

J. Nacevičienė (2017) underlines that two distinctive groups of parents who would contribute from support are observed. One group comprises highly involved parents who do their best for their children, offer them support at every instance, resent if their learning child fails at something and start seeking those who are responsible for the failure. Insufficient freedom, little room for independent perfection are left for such a child, and that child remembers that whenever a challenge occurs, the mother or father will take care of everything. As the author holds it, another group that raises some concern includes parents who delegate all the responsibilities for child learning to school; they suppose they should better stay aside. It is proper to stimulate child's independence; however, his/ her achievements very much depend on the example and support of parents, too.

Conclusions

To sum up, it is important for a child to see what parents demonstrate by their actions, they involve in development activities themselves because in such a way a child perceives that performance and endeavours of both parents and school are mutually meaningful. Majority of parents wish and demand that their children would learn at school well, be leaders; majority of them would be proud of them. Child's success requires parental support, help, authority. Therefore, without demonstrating an example of proper behaviour, parents prevent their children from being successful. It can be stated that the added value contributed by parents, encouraging children to follow the road to success occur from the constant wish to perfect together, endeavours, collaboration and demonstration of a proper example for a child to follow.

Parents are concerned about creating favourable environment for their children, where a child would comprehensively relax and responsibly work, without being distracted by undesired sounds and various technological devices, such as computers, telephones etc. In such a way, parents can comprehensively stimulate child's independence and deeper engagement in the learning process.

It was found out that involvement of city and village informants in the process of child development significantly differed. City informants were more focused on external factors; whereas village informants were oriented towards child's interior sphere. Parents living in cities are focused on actions, fast results; and parents living in villages are oriented towards what is felt by a child. The research revealed the fact that all these factors were determined by the prevailing attitudes: parents living in cities are disappointed with the system of education; whereas parents living in villages believe that all changes should start from the self.

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