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**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ON
SCHOLAR ACTIVITIES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL'S
PUPILS**

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Abstract

Out of the numerous factors that influence the behaviour of children in the scholar environment, that is the hereditary factors, the psycho- social traits of the family, their social status, school management, we shall focus on this study on the impact the social environment of origin of these children has on the degree of school task performance and on their behaviour related to their didactic activities. The environment where the entire family lives represents the universe in which the child can find and make friends, or play fellows, the universe where they learn various social behaviours, by enculturation in some cases.. *The purpose of the study* is the analysis of the socioeconomic environment factors upon school activities of small age pupils. The following issues will be taken into account: the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks, the children's behaviours during scholar activities and homework accomplishment. *The methodology* used in this investigative approach is the questionnaire applied on a group of 30 primary education teachers in the urban environment and 86 parents of the pupils. *The findings and results* of this study allowed the reaching the intended purpose by identifying a correlation between the social environment of origin and the involvement degree in scholar activities of the small age pupils as well as the quality of the accomplishment of these activities

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Keywords: Sources of school results; primary education; scholar activities; social environment of origin.

1. Introduction

The environment where the entire family lives represents the universe in which the child can find and make friends, or play fellows, the universe where they learn various social behaviours, by enculturation in some cases. As a consequence, the social behaviours of the elderly, with whom the children interact,



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leave as well, to a great extent, their mark on later development of some positive or negative attitudes the child has towards school, which may lead to educational task performance or to their elusion.

2. Paper Theoretical Foundation and Related Literature

The cultural climate of the family influences the student's academic performance, particularly by: the aspiration of parents, their attitude towards school and education, the cultural baggage itself (language use, cultural practices) and value system promoted by parents. Thus, the socio-cultural level of the family determines to a large extent: the child's attitude toward school, and taste for culture, wealth and accuracy of language, the aspirations of the child (which is usually directly proportional to the parents'), motivational level, and the material conditions necessary for the assimilation of the culture. (Tăușan, 2012)

Family background is the key to student's life outside of school, is the most important influence on student learning and includes factors such as socioeconomic status, two-parents versus single-parents household, parenting practices and aspirations, family size and neighbourhood (Majoribanks, 1996). Studies shows that supportive and attentive parenting practices positively affect academic achievement (Eamon, 2005), and high parent aspirations have been associated with increasing students' interest in education (Majoribanks, 1996) and it should be taken into consideration when designing the complex learning situation students will be involved in school (Soare, 2015).

The findings from a study conducted by Yuping Zhang (2011) can be summarized into two main points: first, net of objective measures of children's family socioeconomic status and achievement at school, teachers' perceptions of the importance of children's home environment are closely associated with teachers' evaluations of children's academic competence and behaviour in school; furthermore, teachers' perceptions of home importance are closely associated with teachers' educational expectations, both directly, and indirectly through teachers' evaluations of children. Second, teachers' expectations of children's future school attainment at an early point in time are significant predictors of children's later school persistence.

The family environment influences the students' individual adaptation, especially their self-esteem, adaptation and optimism, influences academic achievement and success in school more than the schools' environment (Szöcs, 2013). Family activities such as parents attending school activities, spending time talking with their children, going on vacations and participating in fun activities may increase schools test scores (Barry, 2006). Regarding the benefits identified by parents in term of education upon the impact and the consequences that technology can have on children personality development, parents placed on top: the speed of accessing information and communication in the electronic environment, the development of mental abilities and the last was building and developing the skills for the use of PC and leisure function. (Tudor, 2015)

The influence of the familial socio-cultural status extends to the leisure time and has repercussions, indirectly, on school achievement. Children from disadvantaged families spend their free time on spontaneous activities and functional games which develop physical and motor skills, preparing them, to some extent, for life, but which do not favour intellectual maturity. Conversely, children from higher social classes benefit from activities that stimulate intellectual and perceptual skills and have an

extensive experience with both the physical world and the social issues. Their psychic energy is channelled into constructive activities that favour school acquisitions.

Besides the predominant influence of the familial socio-cultural status which is widely recognized, there is also a considerable influence of economic conditions on the child's schooling. Within vulnerable environments, parents are often concerned about material problems, sometimes serious, and cannot be to their children's disposal. The lack of affective relationship strengthens cultural effects of family poverty. Moreover, housing and overcrowding are likely to cause some tensions and disrupt the family atmosphere. And, finally, quantitative and / or qualitative chronic malnutrition, insufficient sleep or disrupted by bad material conditions are harmful to the psychological balance of the child's physical development and, consequently, to his schooling.

Parents' education level and the family income level have a lower impact on the school performances of small age pupils. Langa (2012) underlines once more the necessity to establish a more solid partnership between school and family to make easier the pupils' way to school success.

Pointing the importance the environment has in the process of developing pupils' social behaviour, Ezechil (2015) underlines the necessity of a reform targeting – on the one hand - to restructure the content of pupils' behaviour in the classroom and also - on the other hand -to restructure the content of the relation teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil and the relation of the pupil with himself.

3. Methodology

2.1. The purpose of the study

The analysis of the socioeconomic environment factors upon school activities of small age pupils. The following issues will be taken into account: the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks, the children's behaviours during scholar activities, homework.

2.2. The research hypotheses of this study

1. There are significant differences among children who come from different residential areas as regards the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks.

2. There are significant differences between children left to spend their spare time with their peers and those having a stable program to spend with their friends, as regards the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks.

3. There are significant differences among children who come from different residential areas as regards a consistent way of doing their homework.

4. There are significant differences between children left to spend their spare time with the elderly and those having a stable program to spend with their friends, as regards a consistent way of doing their homework.

2.3 Description of the Instrument

The method used in this investigative approach was the questionnaire-based investigation. The questionnaires were applied using an online platform and face to face sessions. The questionnaires for teachers were structured based on the following dimensions:

- ✓ obtainment of information as to the number of pupils in the classroom, the education level and the income level of the children’s parents;
- ✓ the results obtained by pupils, their behavior during the school activities, consistent way of doing their homework.
- ✓ the factual data – socio-professional status, education seniority, the environment of the education unit they activate in.

The questionnaires for parents were structured based on the following dimensions:

- establish a rigorous program of work and play for children;
- monitor the time spent with friends;
- homework supervision.
- the factual data – socio-professional status, education seniority, income level, residential area.

2.4. Target group

The methodology used in this investigative approach is the questionnaire applied on a group of 25 primary education teachers in the urban environment and 86 parents of the pupils.

Table 01. Socio-demographic variables of study participants

Variables	Primary education teachers	Parents
	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %
Total number of participants	30	86
Third grade	60%	60%
Fourth grade	40%	40%
<i>Area of residence</i>		
Urban	100%	100%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	5%	15%
Female	95%	85%

4. Findings and Results

The first hypothesis “There are significant differences among children who come from different residential areas as regards the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks” was tested through *chi square test*. In Table 2 the results of the Person χ^2 test show that students involvement in solving teaching tasks in the school environment depend on the children’s residential areas [$\chi^2 (3) = 23.182, p < 0.01$]. According to the teachers included in the investigation, the residence of students is an important factor in

terms of their attitude towards school activities. Students from disadvantaged residential areas tend to be less involved in solving school tasks and need to be constantly stimulated by teachers. Children who live in a safe environment are more involved in school duties in that they are more willing to answer teachers' questions and are more attentive to instructions needed to perform various school tasks.

Table 02. The chi-square analysis regarding the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks according to the residential area

Variables	Pupil's Residential area			χ^2	df	P
	N	Safe residential areas	Disadvantaged residential areas			
<i>Involvement degree on solving didactic tasks</i>				23.182	3	<0.01
In a very large extend	3	3	0			
In a large extend	11	9	2			
In a small extend	6	0	6			
In a very small extend	10	0	10			
Total	30	12	18			

According to the results obtained (table 3) through the application of the Person χ^2 test for the verification of the second hypothesis, there are no significant differences between the pupils that spend time with their friends as regards involvement degree on solving didactic tasks [$\chi^2(12) = 26.093, p > 0.01$]. In the teachers' opinion, the time children spend with their friends has not a decisive influence on their involvement and performance of school tasks.

Table 03. The chi-square analysis regarding the involvement degree on solving didactic tasks according to the time spent with their friends

Variables	n	Time spend by children with their friends					χ^2	df	P
		More than 5 hours per day	Between 3- 5 hours per day	Between 2- 3 hours per day	Between 1- 2 hours per day	Less than 1 hours per day			
<i>Involvement degree on solving didactic tasks</i>							26.093	12	=0.10
In a very large extend	3	0	1	2	0	0			
In a large extend	11	0	1	4	6	0			
In a small extend	6	0	0	3	3	0			
In a very small extend	10	6	2	0	1	1			
Total	30	6	4	9	10	1			

The third hypothesis "There are significant differences among children who come from different residential areas as regards a consistent way of doing their homework" was tested through Person χ^2 test. According to the results obtained (table 4), there are significant differences between the parents who live in different residential areas as regards a consistent way of doing their homework [$\chi^2(3) = 68.666, p < 0.01$]. Parents who come from disadvantaged backgrounds claim they cannot give more support to their children to homework, because of material deprivation, inappropriate living space and the length of time they have to spend at work to ensure an acceptable standard of living. On the other hand, parents

who live in safer residential areas, give more support to their children to homework and to fostering a favourable attitude toward school.

Table 04. The chi-square analysis regarding the consistent way of doing homework, according to the residential area

Variables	Families' Residential area			χ^2	df	P
	n	Safe residential areas	Disadvantaged residential areas			
<i>Consistent way of doing their homework</i>				68.666	3	<0.01
In a very large extend	9	9	0			
In a large extend	32	27	5			
In a small extend	17	0	17			
In a very small extend	28	0	28			
Total	86	36	40			

Through Person χ^2 test was tested the fourth hypothesis "There are significant differences between children left to spend their spare time with the elderly and those having a stable program to spend with their friends, as regards a consistent way of doing their homework". According to the results obtained (table 5), there are significant differences between the parents who give full freedom to children in deciding on the length of time they spend with their friends, and the parents who establish, for their children, a program of spending time with peers as regards the consistent way of doing homework. [$\chi^2(12) = 78.866, p < 0.01$]. At this particular age, the parents are those that can control the work and relaxation time of their children. Children who spend more than 3 hours a day together with their friends do not pay too much attention to a consistent way of doing their homework.

Table 05. The chi-square analysis regarding the consistent way of doing homework, according to the time children spend with their friends

Variables	n	Time spend by children with their friends					χ^2	df	P
		More than 5 hours per day	Between 3- 5 hours per day	Between 2- 3 hours per day	Between 1- 2 hours per day	Less than 1 hours per day			
<i>Consistent way of doing their homework</i>							78.866	12	<0.01
In a very large extend	9	0	0	0	7	2			
In a large extend	30	0	2	17	11	0			
In a small extend	19	0	4	14	1	0			
In a very small extend	28	13	7	6	2	0			
Total	86	13	13	37	21	2			

5. Discussions and Conclusions

As they grow up, from small schooling to preadolescence, adolescence, the social environment becomes a second family, which will prepare children for their adult life. Student performance and failures are largely conditioned by the real support of their parents and the influence of the domestic socio-economic environment.

Each parent should try to answer the following questions: Have I given a few hours to correctly and critically observe my child's performance? How much time have I spent playing with my child? Have I been able to step in with the first responsibilities? Have I managed to establish a balanced program of work and play?

A parent who is constantly aware of its role and understands its mission, will know how to guide the child on the path of knowledge, will know how to be a good partner in order to act simultaneously in his/her efforts to support the child's progress. We can speak of parents with higher education who have an easy-going attitude towards their children's performance, and also of families having a limited economic level, a low level of instruction (secondary school or vocational school graduates) who want their children to overcome their own condition.

The urban residential area of a family has a significant influence on the children's school work. Whichever side of town where they might be living, families are anchored in the nearby reality and comply with the specific behavioural characteristics of the local population. Knowing the peers with whom their small schoolchildren socialize represents a dream for any family, especially for those living in deprived residential environments. Children spend their free time on social networks that can have negative effects on their emotional and social development. Therefore, parents should know first what kind information their child can access and, secondly, how much time and with whom their child communicates.

The primary school teacher is the first person with epistemic authority, who recommends, suggests, using clear and coherent arguments, auxiliary materials, books for the first library, educational programs, and, therefore, the relationship between family and school is essential in correctly guiding the child on the educational path.

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