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Students' School Achievement and Parents' Level of Education in the Context of Family Environment

Extended summary

Though school as an institution can and must include all children in the educational process, the school achievement of a student depends on the context of the family environment, school environment, and personal characteristics of the students, which are all interconnected. The context represents a complex set of environments in which education occurs and the success of students in school subjects is achieved. In this research, the context of the family environment stands out, which implies a complex system that functions based on the interpersonal relations of its members, socialisation, family climate, a child's development in the area of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development, which is of key importance for school achievement. The elements of the context of the family environment that are investigated in this research are the following: parents' education and family structure. The educational level of parents is an important factor in the outcome of education and behaviour of children. In pedagogical research, the family is approached as the basic social environment in which a personality develops and forms, given the strong emotional ties between parents and children. A family consists of several people who live together. The structure of the family can be defined as a traditional union of blood relatives resulting from marriage (full), as incomplete (single-parent), multi-generational, partnership (without children), family with children from differ-

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ent relationships, adoptive, and foster family. The goal of the research is to determine the basic characteristics of the connection between student achievement in the field of mathematics and the Serbian language and the level of education of parents and the structure of the family. The student achievement in the field of mathematics and the Serbian language in this research represents the level of achieved results in mastering the teaching content, expressed in grades in these two school subjects. Six hundred seventh-grade students participated in the research. A descriptive method was used in the research, and a survey was used as a data collection technique. The instrument for students is given in the form of a survey. The survey contains multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questions refer to student achievement in mathematics and the Serbian language in the sixth grade and the students' family environment. The results of the research indicate that both the father's education and the mother's education have a statistically significant influence when it comes to the Serbian language score of their children. The situation is similar when it comes to the grades in mathematics. Parents with higher education often have greater access to different learning opportunities, such as courses or educational programmes outside of school. This can further support their children's academic success. Children often imitate the behaviour of their parents. If they see that their parents value education and set high standards of learning, they are likely to develop a similar attitude toward learning themselves. The results of this research indicate that there is a statistically significant connection between the life of a student in a complete family and his/her achievement in mathematics and the Serbian language. Therefore, the life of a student in a complete family impacts their better school performance in mathematics and the Serbian language. The number of siblings shows a statistically significant negative correlation with school achievement in both mathematics and the Serbian language. This means that as the number of siblings increases, there is a tendency for school achievement to decline. This could be due to the fact that with more children in the family, resources such as parental time and attention, as well as financial and educational resources, may be more widely distributed, which may affect the individual academic development of each child. The difference in the results of this research is reflected in the correlation between a student's grades in mathematics and the Serbian language and the size of the family in which the student lives and grows up. It is noticeable that the structure of the family, as a predictor of success, has a very small influence in terms of percentage relative to the educational level of the parents. The data may indicate that the family structure itself is not of greater importance for the school achievement of students, but the support and encouragement from parents and the environment in which we grow up. The support is reflected in: parental interest in the student's school life and success, providing help with homework, understanding and support in difficult situations, encouraging curiosity, providing a healthy environment in which the child grows up, providing space and resources for learning, stimulating social interactions, providing cultural and moral support. It is important to enable parents to actively participate in the planning of educational activities in cooperation with school employees. This means that parents should not only be informed about the activities and programmes at school, but also be involved in the decision-making process and the development of these activities. Such collaboration allows parents to offer their ideas, preferences and needs, which can improve educational practice and student achievement.

Keywords: student achievement, teaching, parents' education, family structure

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