

THE ATTITUDE OF THE PARENT COMMUNITY OF THE RUSSIAN METROPOLIS TOWARDS THE CONDITIONS OF TEACHING CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

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Abstract

Introduction

Active reformation of school education is a tendency of recent decades in Russia. However, carried out by administrative-bureaucratic methods, it sometimes does not reduce the number of problems, but increases them. In many respects, therefore, the parent community of large Russian cities is beginning to show more activity and interest towards the situation in school education. According to recent studies, parents become more organized and focused on solving real problems of the school where their children study. In this regard, in the framework of our study, the task was to identify the attitude of parents to the educational conditions of their children, as well as their ideas about the most pressing problems that require special attention from the educational authorities.

Materials and methods

The article is based on the materials of the research project of the scientific team of the Ural Federal University called "Parents and the School: Interaction in the City's Education System" (2019), implemented with the support of the Department of Education of Yekaterinburg. Using an online questionnaire, parents of children studying in Yekaterinburg were interviewed. The sample size is 7281 people, quota sampling, quotas are set by city districts and types of schools. The quantitative data obtained over a large sample made it possible to use statistical methods such as cluster and correlation analysis to solve the scientific problem, which allowed us to identify the typology of the parent community and describe its basic characteristics.

Results of the research

Using a two-stage cluster analysis based on a wide range of indicators, an empirical typology of parents was formed according to the criterion of satisfaction with the conditions of the educational activity of their children. Two clusters of parents were identified: those who rated the conditions for teaching children at school higher (61.9%) and less highly (38.1%). The use of correlation analysis made it possible to see that there are no fundamental differences in the socio-demographic characteristics of these groups of parents, however, significant differences between the clusters of parents exist in assessing the most pressing problems of the Russian school. The group of "dissatisfied" parents is characterized by increased requirements for the level of organization of the educational process, the professionalism of teachers and the level of training of students in general. They consider it necessary to reduce the level of bureaucratization and corruption in the school system; creating conditions for dialogue between teachers, students and parents.

Conclusion

The results of the study provide an opportunity not only to see the differences in the needs, goals and interests of different segments of the parent community, but also to draw a conclusion about the formation of

a social order for the public participation of parents in solving problems of school education, as well as about determining ways of its development.

Keywords: Educational reforms, parent community, social participation, elementary education

1 INTRODUCTION

Discussing the problems of school education in Russia, researchers traditionally turn to studying the conditions of educational activity of schoolchildren. At each stage of reforming the education system, this problem regains its relevance. This is a response to the society's request to correlate the need for modern and high-quality school education with the possibility of its implementation in specific socio-economic and sociocultural conditions. Parents, as an important factor in the effective educational activity of schoolchildren, are most sensitive to changes in the educational system. Over the past decade, the parent community, especially in large Russian cities, has begun to show increasing activity and interest in the situation in school education. According to recent studies, parents become more organized and focused on solving the real problems of the school where their children study, gradually turning into a significant factor in the formation of civil society in Russia (N. Shabrova, 2018, p.7-16).

Traditionally, researchers identify several models of parental participation in education (M. E. Goshin, T. A. Mertsalova, 2018, p.68-90). Noting their evolution, they state that in the second half of the 20th century there was a transition from the dominant school education (Mannan, Blackwell, 1992, p.286-293) to a model of expanding the capabilities of the parent community (Shepard, Rose, 1995, p. 373-377) in raising and educating the child. They indicate the need for a new interpretation of the concept of involvement (Vincent, Tomlinson, 1997, p. 361-377 ; Lareau, 1996, p. 57-64; Auerbach, 2007, p. 250-283; Galindo, Medina, 2009, p. 312-331), and show that the reform of education should go along the path of forming a dialogue between family and school, relations based on the principles of partnership and equality (Pinsky, 2004, p. 12-45). (Polivanova, 2015, p. 1-11).

In this regard, in the framework of our study, the task was set to identify the attitude of parents to the educational conditions of their children, the most pressing problems that require not only special attention from the educational authorities, but also the active participation of the parent community.

2 DATA AND METHODS

The article is based on the materials of the research project of the Ural Federal University's scientific team "Parents and the school: interaction in the city's education system" (2019), implemented with the support of the Department of Education of Yekaterinburg. Using the online questionnaire, parents of children studying in Yekaterinburg were surveyed. The sample size is 7281 people, quota sample, quotas are set by city districts and types of schools. The quantitative data obtained over a large sample made it possible to use such statistical methods as cluster and correlation analysis to solve the scientific problem, which allowed us to identify the typology of the parent community and describe its basic characteristics.

Using a two-stage cluster analysis based on a wide range of indicators, an empirical typology of parents was formed according to the criterion of satisfaction with the conditions of the educational activities of their children in school. The indicators of the attitude of the parent community of the Russian metropolis to the conditions for teaching children at school were presented in several blocks characterizing:

- Organization of the educational process ("quality of teaching", "organization of the educational process", "child's studying schedule");
- The organization of the child's cultural and educational environment at school ("conditions for the general cultural development of the child", "organization of extracurricular activities", "the availability of opportunities to receive various types of additional education at school", "the ability to attend electives in subjects of child's interest");
- The nature of the socio-pedagogical interaction "teacher-student-parent" ("psychological atmosphere in the school", "the relationship of teachers and students", "the nature of the communication of parents with the school administration");
- The level of methodological and technical equipment of the educational process ("the level of provision of educational literature", "technical equipment of classes (audio, video equipment, etc.)", "the ability to work on a computer, use Internet resources");

- Quality of food and sanitary conditions in the school (“food quality”, “sanitary and hygienic condition of classes, dining room, toilets”).

The attitude of the parent community to the conditions of the educational activity of their child was measured on a five-point scale (see Table 1).

Table 1. The attitude of the parent community to the conditions of teaching their children at school

Parental satisfaction with the following aspects of the child's educational activities ...	Average points		
	In the whole array	1st cluster	2nd cluster
Level of providing children with educational literature	3,61	4,19	2,65
Quality of teaching	3,50	4,10	2,51
Organization of the educational process	3,48	4,10	2,47
The relationship between teachers and students	3,47	4,07	2,50
Child's schedule	3,45	4,05	2,48
Technical equipment of classes (audio, video equipment, etc.)	3,44	4,09	2,39
Sanitary conditions of the classes	3,39	4,06	2,30
The nature of the communication with the school administration	3,33	3,98	2,27
Psychological atmosphere in the school	3,29	3,93	2,24
Sanitary-hygienic conditions of the school canteen	3,25	3,89	2,20
Conditions for the general cultural development of the child	3,20	3,85	2,14
Organization of extracurricular activities	3,15	3,81	2,01
Ability to work on a computer, use Internet resources	3,13	3,76	2,11
Quality of food	2,95	3,52	2,01
Availability of opportunities to receive various types of additional education at school	2,88	3,49	1,88
Ability to attend electives in subjects of child's interest	2,83	3,43	1,81
Sanitary-hygienic conditions of toilets	2,83	3,42	1,87

(measurement on a five-point scale, where 5 is absolutely satisfied and 1 is absolutely unsatisfied)

Based on the system of indicators, two clusters of parents were identified: “rather positively” and “rather negatively” assessing the conditions for teaching children in school. Clusters are not the same in volume. The first cluster of “positively-minded” parents is almost twice as large (61.9%) of the second — “negatively-minded” (38.1%).

In the future, the use of correlation analysis made it possible to identify the characteristics of the representatives of these two groups of parents and outline the main areas of work with them from the side of educational management.

3 RESEARCH RESULTS

The use of correlation analysis made it possible to see that there is no fundamental difference in the socio-demographic characteristics of the two parent clusters, except for the fact that the cluster of “dissatisfied” parents is more differentiated by the income level: it more clearly represents groups of both well-off families and families with low income. This suggests that the nature of the claims of these subgroups of parents can be based on fundamentally different motivations associated with the economic status of parents. However, there are no significant differences in the assessment of the educational process by parents whose children study in schools of various types from elite to ordinary public schools.

Both groups of parents are united in their assessment of one of the significant not only Russian, but also global trends in school education - a decrease in the schoolchildren's level of motivation for learning activities. More than half of all respondents consider it necessary to develop special mechanisms to increase the level of educational motivation of students, the development of interesting forms of extracurricular activities, etc. (see Table 2).

Table 2. Parents about what needs to be changed in school education to increase its effectiveness (% of the number of respondents)

	1st cluster	2nd cluster	In the whole array
Develop mechanisms to increase the level of educational motivation of students	56,6	56,3	56,5
Develop interesting forms of extracurricular work	50,2	53,1	51,4
Increase the level of students' school training (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 116,769 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,122)	40,9	51,9	45,1
Organize work with students to choose a future profession	43,0	44,9	43,8
Improve the professionalism of teachers (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 137,955 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,229)	34,4	56,8	43,0
Increase the level of material and technical equipment of the school (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 75,172 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,216)	38,0	44,5	40,5
Create conditions for dialogue between teachers, students, parents (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 59,872 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,210)	34,2	42,8	37,5
Reduce the level of bureaucratization of educational activities (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 39,171 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,149)	28,6	33,5	30,5
Increase the level of organization of the educational process (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 35,482 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,117)	23,9	37,1	29,0
Reduce the level of corruption in the education system (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 135,482 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,217)	22,9	33,6	27,0
Reduce barriers to enrollment in a desired school	22,6	25,2	23,6
Limit the introduction of distance learning technologies	14,6	16,6	15,4
Total	409,9	469,3	443,2

Significant differences between the clusters of parents are manifested in the assessment of the most pressing problems of the Russian school. A cluster of “dissatisfied” parents makes serious demands on all aspects of the educational process: the quality of education and the level of students' training; educational process organization; the level of teachers' professional competence; conditions created for an effective dialogue between teachers, students and parents. From 42.8% to 56.8% of respondents are not satisfied with these characteristics of school education. Every third person considers it necessary to reduce the level of bureaucratization and corruption in the school system (see Table 2).

The data obtained indicate a clear heterogeneity of the parents' ideas about the ways of further development of school education and specific practices of educational process management. This fact should be taken into account by the representatives of educational management when developing educational policies at various levels, which becomes impossible without the active participation of the parent community both at the stage of its formation and in the implementation process.

In general, we recorded a high level of parents' readiness to participate in the life of the school, to work on its improvement (87.4%) and on the organization of the cultural and educational environment (cultural events, additional education) - 60.6%; the development of intra-school communication between parents, teachers, students (56.3%); in providing sponsorship (56.4%), etc.

To understand the existing barriers in the implementation of parents' social participation in educational policy, we found out what prevents them from helping the school (see Table 3).

Table 3. Parents about what they lack to implement effective assistance to the school and their child in it (% of the number of respondents)

Parents experience a lack of...	1st cluster	2nd cluster	In the whole array
Information about what is happening at school (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 36,181 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,221)	33,6	44,7	37,9
Confidence in that this activity will not harm the child (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 35,282 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,218)	28,5	38,6	32,4
Understanding of how to solve specific problems	28,6	28,5	28,6
Understanding of what social structures and organizations can help	20,6	20,6	20,6
Personal qualities (activity, sociability, etc.) (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 25,482 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,117)	17,9	13,5	16,3
Legal / economic and other knowledge (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 27,131 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,123)	14,5	19,0	16,3
Practical skills of interaction with management structures	15,9	16,4	16,2
Support from teachers community (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 41,5182 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,179)	7,8	16,2	11,0
Support from parents community (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 31,411 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,122)	7,7	9,4	8,4
Time (Pearson Chi-Square = Value 15,982 ^a , Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0,0; Cramer's V=0,111)	4,9	3,5	4,4
Total	180,0	210,4	192,1

The data revealed significant differences between the clusters of the parent community. The cluster of “dissatisfied” parents experiences obvious restrictions on access to information about school life (44.7%).

They are characterized by a crisis of trust in teachers, fears that their critical attitude to the situation in school education and various forms of activity can harm the child (38.6%). They more than the representatives of the first cluster express the need for legal / economic and other knowledge necessary for the implementation of civic activity. To a greater extent, they need the support of the teaching staff and the parent community.

Representatives of the first cluster of “positive-minded” parents as an obstacle to providing assistance to the school see only a lack of time and personal activity. At the same time, it is necessary to specifically study how their participation practices would change if special incentives were created for this, as well as targeted management of the participation of parents was carried out not only in the life of the school, but also in the implementation of the educational policy as a whole.

4 CONCLUSION

The results of the study provide an opportunity not only to see the differences in the needs, goals and interests of different segments of the parent community, but also to draw a conclusion about the formation of a social order for the public participation of parents in solving problems of school education, determining the ways of its development. The parent community is socially adapted, has a high educational qualification and level of culture, is active, proactive, socially responsible, and child-centered - children are one of the most important life values for them. In order to understand how parents can contribute to the development of school education, it is necessary to analyze the existing management practice at the school and municipal levels in order to understand how it focuses on managing the social participation of parents, what is ineffective and what opportunities it misses.

It is important to understand that the critical potential of the cluster of “dissatisfied” parents must be realized in various forms, just like the undetected potential of social participation of “positively oriented” parents. Given the managerial will and the creation of the necessary conditions, the activity of the parent community will positively affect the development of the entire educational space of the city. Parents of the megalopolis, which has a variety of information and technological resources, the potential of science and culture should become a significant factor in the development of school education.

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