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CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS’ AND TEACHERS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PUPILS’ ACHIEVEMENTS

This article presents an overview of research of the role of parents’ and teachers’ expectations of children’s academic and occupational future. There is an increasing interest in the relationship between home and family and out-of-home care with respect to influences on children’s development. This is especially important when family and institution follow possibly different child care ideologies (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). Presented examples of research pointed to the significance of cross-cultural differences in child-rearing ideas in terms of the interaction between parents and child care professionals. For example, parental ethnotheories could be reinterpreted by accepting and integrating new information, provided by teachers, in order to allow children an optimal adaptation to their current educational environment. Research also emphasizes the link between teachers’ expectations and long-term educational goals of students (Mistry, White, Benner, & Huynh, 2009), and also the importance of teachers’ beliefs in the equal potential, respect and recognition of all (Cremin & Thomas, 2005).

**Key words:** pupils’, parents’ and teachers’ expectations, cross-cultural differences, anticipation of educational achievements

**INTRODUCTION**

The issue of multicultural education is being increasingly discussed as part of the curriculum and education in general (Zeber – Dzikowska and Buchcic, 2013). Poland’s integration with the members of the European Union has led to that some of social phenomena have gained a special rank. In Poland, today there are approx. 800 000 representatives of various nationalities (Zeber – Dzikowska and Buchcic, 2013). The largest immigrant groups in Poland are Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians (Górný, Kaczmarczyk, Napierała and Toruńczyk – Ruiz, 2013). Although the number of pupils of foreigners in Poland in 2007 was only 0.06 % of the school population (Todorovska – Sokolowska, 2009), each year bring a new group of immigrants, whose children engage in learning in both public schools and private. In the face of diversifying society in our country, it is worth to be aware of the cultural context in which the child is taught and how he or she was raised to make the culture strengthen the student’s developmental potential. What is assessed by the teacher as a lack of engagement to the lesson...
or passive participation in discussion, may be keeping in line with the student’s cultural norms, rather than an expression of low activity. In view of the fact that the school system is largely based on an assessment of progress in learning (Risager, 2000), expectations of students may be the cause of academic and professional achievements. Academic achievement may be the result of many factors. Some researchers emphasize the role of individual characteristics such as cognitive ability, or psychosocial maturity (Mistry et al., 2009). Others, like Rothstein (2004), indicate the role of environmental influences such as family environment. Brooks – Gunn, Guo and Furstenberg (1993) draw attention to the neighborhood, including the security of the area and the availability of basic resources necessary for the development of the child.

The purpose of this review is to provide examples of how culture, defined as a system of norms, values and behaviors characteristic of a particular group, affects the way of learning and its effects (achievements). The relationship between parents’ educational expectations, who are responsible for the primary socialization of their children, and their teachers who are the transmitters of so called ethnotheories of socialization, that is, socially shared beliefs about the relationship between educational interactions taken and their educational effects (Boski, 2009) will be presented. Also taken into account are the expectations of the students themselves.

The article is divided into three parts. In the first and second part of the review in cross-cultural research on the relationship between the expectations of parents (1) and teachers (2) in terms of predicting achievement will be presented. The third part will be a comparison according to the expectations of parents’ and teachers’ achievement (3.1.) and the relationship between the expectations of students and their own achievements (3.2.).

1. EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Parents act as mediators in the processing of socialization. They make a selection of cultural and psychological beliefs before transmitting them to their children (Kazulin, 2003). Different cultures value the education in different ways, and this, in turn, affects the education of children and indirectly, on the approach to school and learning (Salili, Chiu, and Lai, 2001).

Research on the relationship between parents’ education and motivation of students and their achievements sometimes indicate different effects for different cultural and ethnic groups. For example, Dornbusch, Leiderman, Roberts and Fraleigh (1987), in their studies, found that authoritarian parenting styles were associated with lower achievements of Caucasian students, and among Asian students with higher. In studies done by Mau (1997), both Asian immigrants and Asian Americans spent more time on homework and perceived parental educational expectations as higher than Caucasian students. The latter, however, have reported greater involvement of parents in school activities than did Asian Americans, most likely due to immigrant parents difficulties with the English language and their unfamiliarity with the American educational system.

Shek and Chan (1999) pointed out that Hong Kong Chinese parents expectations regarding academic achievement of their children, closely reflected the traditions of Chinese culture, including the crucial importance it attaches to the family and education. In Poland, the success of children from Vietnam is Vietnamese culture, which is linked to the Confucian respect for well-educated people (Rabczuk, 2013). Vietnamese children are seen as hard-working and disciplined, which gives them favor with Polish teachers. Respect for work and discipline is also characterized by Korean students. This approach also has its roots in Confucianism (Rabczuk, 2013). In contrast, families with Western traditions, adhere to the ideology of Socrates (Tweed and Lehman, 2002), which emphasizes independence and individualism as the basis for the education of children (Georgiou, 1999). Parents from Western countries may be more flexible with their expectations and appear to exert less pressure.
on children, in the context of their achievements (Georgiou, 1999).

Urdan, Solek and Schoenfelder (2007) conducted a study involving 158 parents of students from three elementary schools, two Chinese (CS1 and CS2) and one British (BIS) in Hong Kong. Three groups of parents differed in terms of cultural values and socio-economic status. Both Chinese schools pursued the Chinese curriculum, and the children were taught by teachers of Chinese origin. Respondents from schools CS1 and CS2 differed in that the majority of parents of students from CS2 had emigrated to Hong Kong from mainland China. British school children (BIS), with Anglo-Celtic origin, were taught the British curriculum by teachers from the UK and Australia. Parental involvement in the education of the children was tested for involvement at home and school. BIS parents believed that they were much more involved in the school and home, compared with parents of CS1 and CS2. Least involved were the parents from CS2.

The presented results indicate that differences in parental involvement and attitudes towards educational standards, are a function of cultural differences (Georgiou, 1999). High parental educational aspirations do not always have a positive impact on children's academic achievement. On the other hand, low aspirations could not be in any case a predictor of worse performances. Ambitions and expectations of immigrant parents are dependent on the motives of their immigration and their socio-economic status (Rabczuk, 2013). For families of a low status, education is the path of social advancement and improvement of living conditions (Rabczuk, 2013). Parental support is in the mentioned case, the major source of self-esteem and motivation of young people.

2. EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS

Mistry et al (2009) demonstrated that teacher expectations affect not only in academic performance but also on long-term educational goals of students. In a longitudinal study conducted over three years, 426 children between the ages of 6 to 16, were interviewed. The study was designed to test the simultaneous impact of educational expectations of adults (mothers and teachers) on the achievement of young people from families of lower economic status. The results showed that the educational needs of mothers were the result of many factors, including their own educational path, past teachers' expectations and changes in the level of achievement of a child. In contrast, the expectations of teachers, primarily were influenced by the expectations of other teachers and the evaluation of academic achievement of the students (Mistry et al., 2009). Little evidence indicated that the expectations of mothers had an impact on the expectations of teachers. The results of this study indicate a potentially far-reaching influence expectations and evaluations of teachers, not only in the immediate vicinity of the class, but also when the students go beyond the walls of the school and make decisions about their future education (Mistry et al., 2009).

In a study conducted by Pecek, Cuk and Lesar (2008), the researchers compared the perceptions of teachers in Slovenia and their role in the integration of marginalized children, experiencing the greatest social problems. A total of 414 teachers were examined from primary schools. Groups covered by the study were children with special needs, migrants from the former Yugoslavia, Romanies / Gypsies, children from poor families. Studies have shown that children with special needs were compared with all groups of respondents, seen as the most vulnerable. For these children, the teachers were most likely to lower the standards of teaching, while reporting their sense of lack of competence to teach them. Teachers trusted Romany parents the least. Children who were the most excluded in the classroom – in terms of the fact that they could count only on themselves and do not receive support from their parents – were Romanies / Gypsy children (Pecek et al., 2008). Analysis on both the
Romanies / Gypsy children and children of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia, indicates that teachers do not adapt teaching to either the cultural differences or language of the students (Pecek et al., 2008). Instead, as already mentioned, some of the teachers were trying to achieve the same effect by lowering the standards of evaluation.

In studies of teachers who taught Chechen children, on the determination of their own cultural competence, almost half of the respondents declared that the Polish teacher was prepared to work with children from „other” cultures (Dobrowolska, 2010). At the same time, they pointed to language and mental barriers, which was incompatible with their declaration of being competent. In the interviews with the teachers there appeared a strong need to participate in a new forms of professional training in working with children from „other” cultures (Dobrowolska, 2010).

As it is apparent from the cited studies, a key factor in promoting obstruction and / or implementation of integration are the teachers themselves, their values and their ability to take responsibility for the development of students (Dyson, Howes and Roberts, 2004). The answer to the questions: „Who is a good student?”, „What does it mean a polite student’s behavior?” is deeply embedded in culture. Cultural ignorance would be to broadcast it a trait of universality. As mentioned in the introduction, the sensitivity of the so-called teachers as transmitters of ethnotheory of socialization, would be highly desirable.

3. A COMPARISON BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS’, TEACHERS’, THE STUDENTS’ THEMSELVES

3.1. The comparison between the strength of expectations of parents and teachers with students’ achievements

A study done by Sciarra and Ambrosino (2011), consisted of verifying the relationship between the estimation of high schools of the opportunities of their students school’s post-secondary education and achieved educational status a half of a year after high school. In a longitudinal study a total of 5353 students, parents and teachers were involved (ELS; 2002-2006). The study examined what students actually did after graduating from high school and how their status was commensurate with previous expectations of the school (Sciarra, Ambrosino, 2011). The results indicate that students have expectations beyond what they are currently doing. Expectations of teachers had the highest predictive value (Sciarra, Ambrosino, 2011). The least impact in determining the status of post-secondary students had their parents. One explanation is that students can easily minimize or neutralize what they expect from them. Parents may be also more influenced by the expectations of teachers (Sciarra, Ambrosino, 2011). The results of research on educational expectations of teachers show that they were the highest in relation to the children of Asian origin, and the lowest in relation to Blacks and Hispanics (Sciarra and Ambrosino, 2011). Expectations of teachers may be more relevant, compared to expectations of parents and students, due to their better orientation in professional development opportunities after high school.

Lareau (2003) noted that, compared to more affluent parents, parents with lower incomes are more often prone to regard teachers as authorities in the field of education of their children and to accept the assessments and recommendations regarding the performance of teachers and prospects of their children’s progress. This suggests that lower-income parents may be more likely than higher-income parents to adjust their expectations on the basis of subsequent reports of teachers (Lareau, 2003), which only confirms the conclusion of the aforementioned studies done by Sciarra and Ambrosino (2011) of the major importance of teachers’ expectations.

3.2. Expectations of students’ relationship with their achievements

Research on the influence of the family on motivation and achievement of students in the school
generally relate to parental influence and are often limited to one or two variables (e.g. the parental expectations or aspirations, parental involvement in school activities) (Urdan et al., 2007). In a study conducted by Urdan (2004), children from immigrant families in the United States (in particular first and second generation immigrants, inter alia, in Vietnam, China, Latin America and the Philippines) often reported a sense of obligation to their parents for their dedication in securing greater educational professional opportunities for them. The sense of commitment was correlated with higher educational aspirations among students and with longer time spending on doing homework (Urdan, 2005), a sense of duty to the family, is not necessarily related to school achievement. The fact that children wanted to please their parents, could not necessarily be translated into a reality.

The expectations of students themselves, are often based on the results that they achieve at school (Bandura, 1986). If students have a lot of educational failures, their expectations are low or abased. To raise the students’ sense of efficacy, which in turn will increase their expectations, school counselors and psychologists should work with teachers (Lopez, Lent, Brown and Gore, 1997). The first step to achieving this goal is certainly to realize the fact that the school carers can have a huge impact on the future of their charge.

DISCUSSION

The article shows how the dynamics of the interaction of two communities most close to pupils: the school and the family home, predict the achievement of children and young people in education. The results accented the importance of intercultural differences in terms of educational expectations and interactions between parents and teachers. It has shown how the behavior of students and parents, can be explained, depending on the cultural context. Parents by way of raising the children (Socratic or Confucian style), determine their approach to learning. Expectations of children themselves are the result of what is expected by their parents (and / or a sense of obligation to them – Urdan, 2004) and teachers (results that are achieved by them at school – Bandura, 1986). As can be seen from the cited research, educational expectations of teachers have the greatest impact on the future professions of students (Sciarra, Ambrosino, 2011). At the same time, teachers feel culturally incompetent to teach the children of foreigners (Dobrowolska, 2010). In relation to the slowly differentiation of Polish society, mentioned in the introduction, it is worth that teachers be familiarized with the three important elements of cultural competence. They are: adequate knowledge, intercultural skills and an attitude openness to others. Knowledge refers to the knowledge gap about the cultural script, existing in a given culture. Cultural skills include the ability to cope with ambiguous situations and coping with stress during conflict (Boski, 2009), and most important of all the elements, is openness to „otherness”. Although we do not speak a loud about these rules, a student who is „culturally different” feels that acted in accordance with the accepted cultural script, the fear of doing something untoward: ask the wrong questions or behave more rapt, than is commonly accepted, can cause a child from another culture to close in on themselves. Awareness of cultural context, as mentioned in the introduction, is essential to the development potential and development of students, but also for the expectations that teachers formulate.

Cooperation between culturally competent teachers and parents, that are aware of style of raising children could lead to not only higher students achievements, but could also have an effect on their long-term expectations for educational and career opportunities. School and family, even though they are separate systems, thanks to cooperation could improve their impact on the future schooling of the student in a differentiating cultural society. A step to understand the complexity of the problems of multicultural education, would be to conduct in Poland,
a series of studies on the relationship between the expectations of parents and teachers and achievements of students in an intercultural environment.

A significant role in shaping the development-oriented teaching for foreigners are educational projects. Since 1994 the following major programs have been carried out: Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth. Their role is to integrate the young people from many countries, often from different cultures and diverse social and economic systems (Walkiewicz, 2005). Project carried out by the Centre for Continuing Education Teachers from Gdansk with the title: “Building a new approach to adult education foreigners” is also an example of an international project encompassing the issues of education of foreigners (it was a work of the three members of the EU Community: Greece, Italy and Polish) (Walkiewicz, 2005).

In the years 2009-2013 there were organized more than 200 forms of training for 8000 teachers. These included: training on general issues of multiculturalism, including, conferences for teachers, e.g. ‘Multiculturalism as a phenomenon of the 21st century’ and courses, e.g. ‘Openness to diversity’. The website www.ore.edu.pl includes over 90 curricula, which are contained in the content and aims of education, covering the fields of regional, intercultural, multicultural and global education. Similarly, the www.scholaris.pl website provides teachers with multiple choice of educational materials connected with mentioned fields. Before 89° in Poland, the concept of multiculturalism and interculturalism were unknown. Currently, development of social dialogue and multicultural education in schools and educational environments is one of the objectives listed in the program of development of education in Warsaw in the years 2013-2020.

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