Effective dual capacity building strategies for family and school integration in the Republic of Kazakhstan

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Abstract
The article is devoted to the study of theoretical and practical issues on effective strategies of double capacity building for family and school unification in the Republic of Kazakhstan. This study is based on the idea of expanding opportunities for family involvement in education as a basis for dual capacity building of students. The aim is to study effective strategies for double capacity building for family and school integration in Kazakhstan. This focuses on understanding why and how parents can participate in their children's education and how their participation affects student outcomes. The methods of theoretical research are the conceptual foundations of scientific knowledge these include: methods of developing ideas: targeted discussions; "brainstorming"; inventory of "weak points", with 200 to 300 respondents. The results of the study are social, economic, environmental, scientific and technical effects. The study recommends exploring the educational and developmental capabilities of parenting potential in order to involve them in the activities of the school

Keywords: parental motivation, school achievements, family resources, knowledge fund, building strategies

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1. Introduction

Currently, world events have become the reason for change in the Kazakhstani education system, aimed at its effectiveness. They are the coronavirus pandemic, the results of the international PISA exam and the implementation of the Kazakhstan children’s well-being index. Thus, Murat Abenov (2020), a member of the National Council of Public Trust, noted: ‘I think that the pandemic has become a great equaliser when many countries are simultaneously faced with problems in the field of education. What we noticed is that in many countries where secondary education is at a high level, in these countries, the fight against the pandemic has also shown a high result. According to the same PISA results, which today such countries called China, Singapore, South Korea, Finland, Estonia, are in the first places and in the fight against coronavirus they were also among the first, that is, it turns out not where they spend more on health care, but there were more attention is paid to education – these countries cope with difficulties faster’.

Kazakhstan for the fourth time took part in the international programme to assess the educational achievements of students’ PISA. The results were lower than those of previous years. The research indicates the relationship between funding and the quality of education. Students from 79 countries and economic zones participated in this study. 15-year-old Kazakhs took the 69th place. One of the reasons is the socio-economic status of schoolchildren. PISA examines an index of economic, social and cultural status, which is determined by several variables: parental education and activities, certain assets in the home and the number of books and other educational resources available at home.

According to the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Aimagambetov (2020), the child welfare index will be introduced by 2022: ‘This will be an integral indicator for assessing the well-being and improving the situation of children in all vital areas: health, education, socialisation, family and society. On its basis, an assessment of cities, districts, villages for the protection of children’s rights will be drawn up’.

In Kazakhstan, there are a number of laws governing family activities. These include the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan ‘On Education’; ‘Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 8 August 2002 No. 345-II, On the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Kazakhstan’; ‘Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan’ On Marriage (matrimony) and Family’, Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 26 December 2011 No. 518-IV’; the concept on moral and sexual education in the Republic of Kazakhstan; the concept of legal education of student youth in the Republic of Kazakhstan (approved by the decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 21 June 1995 No. 2347) and others. Also, in educational institutions, Parents’ ‘Committees, Boards of Trustees, Parents’ Clubs, Councils of Fathers and Mothers are being created and cooperation programmes are being developed and approved. The activities of such communities are educational, morally oriented and morally ethical (Zakon, 2020).

In the period April–October 2019, the National Academy of Education named after I. I. Altyntsarin of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan conducted a monitoring study ‘Republican methodology of family education’, taking into account national traditions and mentality of the people. The research results showed the following:

• a certain proportion of students are distant from their parents;
• families celebrate mainly public holidays and to a lesser extent reproduce national traditions;
• teachers have problems in determining the methods of family education and the most effective techniques,
• parents declared their readiness to develop children on the basis of national rituals and customs.

The above data served as the choice of the topic of pedagogical research (National Academy of Education named after I. Altyntsarin of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019).
The above problems aroused scientific interest in studying the issue of effective practices in Kazakhstani education for uniting family and school, which determined the topic of research.

The objective is the participants in the pedagogical process (students, parents and teachers), non-governmental and public organisations dealing with the social problems of the family. For successful implementation of the pedagogical experiment, research methods were chosen: the study of literary sources, observation, conversation, ‘pedagogical council’, the essay method, study and generalisation of experience, study of the products of children’s activities, study of documentation and sociological and psychological research methods.

The theoretical basis of the study was the work of foreign and domestic scientists in the following areas: the theory of family education (Ilminskii, 1891; Kunanbaev, 2006; Makarenko, 1983; Sukhomlinsky, 1981; Volkov, 1997), characteristics of the modern family (Markova, 2006), interaction of the school with parents (Bekenova, 2019; Zvereva, 2000) and issues of family education (Myratkyzy et al., 2019; Zagik, 1985).

2. Experimental results

The analysis of information data on the application of effective strategies for uniting family and school made it possible to highlight the following practices carried out in the world.

In 2002, the results of the American study ‘New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Society on Schoolchildren Achievement’ were published. This study was conducted for 20 years and commissioned by the Education Research and Improvement Board of the US Department of Education. The results of this study are constantly growing arguments, which are as follows:

- Recognise that all parents – regardless of income, education or cultural background – are involved in their children’s education and want their children to be well.
- Develop programmes to help families navigate their children’s education from preschool and throughout high school.
- To develop the ability of school staff to work with families.
- Link efforts to involve families, whether in school or in the community, in student learning.
- Create social and political ties of families.
- Focus on engaging families and community members in developing trust and respectful relationships.
- Adopt a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power with families. Make sure parents, school staff and community members understand that the responsibility for developing children’s education is a joint venture.
- Create strong links between schools and community organisations (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Among foreign studies, one should highlight such forms of education with a greater share of parental involvement, such as homeschooling in the USA (3% of all schoolchildren, or about 1.5 million people), Canada and Great Britain. In Russia, there are from 70 to 100 thousand children. In Kazakhstan, the topic is actively discussed, and it has opponents and supporters – the latter offer various forms from absolute ‘unschooling’ and ‘unschooling’ to distance learning, including in online schools and taking exams as an external student, e.g., via Skype (Smirnova, 2020).

The American Association Boston Basics’ partners and advisors operate primarily on charitable donations from the public and the state. The main role of the association is to educate black parents in raising children from the moment of birth. The activity is based on five evidence-based principles of parenting and caring for children, which cover most of what experts consider important for children from birth to three years of age. Every child from all backgrounds can benefit from a day-to-day basic learning experience. This is a manifestation of maximum love for the child and stress management;
Speak—sing—speak; count—group—compare; explore movement and play; and read and discuss stories.

In this way, the Boston Fundamentals Campaign works across a wide range of institutions to ensure that every parent and guardian is fully supported by family and friends to use fundamental practices in their daily lives. Founding partners are Black Philanthropy Foundation, Harvard Gap Initiative, Boston Medical Centre Department of Paediatrics, Boston Mayor’s Office of Education, WGBH Public Broadcasting and Boston Children’s Museum (Boston Basics, 2016).

The US Department of Education and Science’s Early Childhood Longitudinal Education (ECLS) programme includes four longitudinal studies that examine child development, school readiness and early school experience. The ECLS-B birth cohort is a sample of children born in 2001 and later developed from kindergarten to eighth grade (Early Childhood Longitudinal Research [ECLS] Program, 2002).

Flamboyan Foundation was created for effective family interaction (Washington, USA). Families can share their hopes and goals for their child’s education. Educators have the opportunity to help families understand how best to support their students’ learning at home. And learners are surrounded by the support they need to excel socially, emotionally and academically in the long run. Pupils do better when families and teachers work together as equal partners. The foundation operates under the following programmes: school partnerships, innovation in family life, trainings for teachers and school leaders, and the national family involvement fellowship. The partners are the Horning Family Foundation (HFF), the Howard Family Foundation and Geraldine Paulinger.

The HFF is a Washington, DC-based family foundation that helps build communities where families thrive and raise children to fulfil their greatest potential and has been working with the Flamboyan Foundation since 2014.

The Paulinger Howard and Geraldine Family Foundation are dedicated to improving the quality of life for families and communities by supporting innovative projects and successful ongoing programmes. They have partnered with Flamboyan since 2011, when they first launched with Flamboyan, a school-wide model of family participation in a select group of DC public schools (Flamboyan Foundation, 2018).

In Russia, in 2015, MSPU employees conducted a study on the involvement of parents in the activities of educational organisations for the development of a basic educational programme (BEP) in 80 regions of Russia (17,790 people took part in the study). The study found that at the level of educational organisations, in about half of the cases, there are no legal activities and in the structure of the organisation of schemes and procedures for the participation of parents and members of the public in educational management, especially in the formation of the content of education. This is due to the fact that, despite the declared readiness, parents do not have the necessary qualifications in matters of educational content. It also became known that the overwhelming majority of parents do not see the need to make changes in the content of education and teaching methods (unlike school leaders). However, the data presented in the study show that the wishes of parents (legal representatives) and the public are taken into account in correcting the content of the BEP, probably because there are, in principle, very few of them.

It can be assumed that parents from families with different socio-economic characteristics, with different educational and cultural levels, give preference to certain types of participation in education.

Modern researchers observe a significant division of parents in terms of their involvement in the educational process: there are groups of parents who take the most active part in the school life of their children, and there are groups of parents who do not want to take on the responsibility and burden associated with the education of their own child (Khomenko, 2007).
Numerous studies also support the importance of family involvement in student achievement. In this case, it implies the expansion of its capabilities: family culture, life context of parents, their socio-economic status, role-based construction, parents’ motivational beliefs and higher education. However, from a scientific point of view, in-depth research to determine the possibilities for involving the family in education in Kazakhstani pedagogy has not been considered. In this case, in our opinion, we mean such activities as the collection of family ‘knowledge funds’, ‘family resources’, family and academic partnership, ‘family literacy calendar’ etc.

Teachers of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology of Baishev University in Aktobe became interested in this problem, which is based on the idea of expanding opportunities for family involvement in education as a basis for double capacity building of students, which served as the topic of the study. Within the framework of this study, the forms of effective strategies for uniting the family and the school will be studied: the development of special programmes of school support for families in teaching children (e.g., a calendar of family literacy); development of support programmes for teaching staff working with families; completing the ‘knowledge funds’ of the family and ‘family resources’; approbation of family and academic partnerships. The situation with the global pandemic has shown that in Kazakhstan the issue of expanding opportunities for involving families in education has not been fully investigated, which requires its strengthening and updating.

Currently, in the practice of foreign education, much is being done in order to create the so-called ‘points of intervention’, i.e., those areas of work in which would allow the most effective creation and use of the potential of parent-pedagogical communities.

In this article, we present the results of the primary diagnosis of the parental community in the Aktobe region. This diagnosis was carried out at the time of the definition of the research problem, and it is for informational purposes. Also, its results served as confirmation of the selected problem, subject and object of research, which started in September 2020. The diagnostic study was carried out according to the methods of Mertsalova and Goshin (2019) by the level of manifestation of activity and by its types. The authors cite several levels of parental initiative: (a) expectation of a direct request, (b) participation in solving tasks set by someone, (c) proposal of ideas, and (d) proposal of ideas and their implementation.

Types of activity are as follows: (a) financial assistance, (b) material assistance, (c) moral support, (d) organisational participation, and (e) participation in strategic management.

For this analysis of the overall picture in terms of the level of manifestation of parental practices, a letter was sent to the Department of Education of the Aktobe region with the aim of attracting secondary schools in this region. In total, 20 educational organisations of the city of Aktobe were involved in the survey, and three organisations from each rural district of Aktobe region. In total, 27 secondary schools in rural areas and 50 schools in the city of Aktobe took part in the sociological survey. These were 29,765 students and 44,223 parents. Of the total number of urban parents, 29,760 people were urban and 14,453 were rural ones. Let us consider the results obtained in Figures 1 and 2.
The results of the diagnostics show that there is no proper cooperation between the school and the family. 90% of urban and 98% of rural parents expect a direct request from the school for help or cooperation. 27% of urban and 31% of rural parents respond to the request of the school and fulfil its requirements. It should also be noted that the low level of parental initiative is 37% of urban and 12% of rural. As part of determining the level of activity, it follows that it is easier for a parent to participate financially than to be an active member of the school himself. However, this is observed in urban schools (76%), which cannot be said about rural (30%). The reason is the different level of employment of parents. However, in organisational and strategic issues of the school, parents do not show open activity, which indicates their disinterest, on the one hand, and the low level of the school’s desire to attract parents, on the other.

The data obtained serve as the basis for enhancing interaction between the school and the parental community, strengthening effective parenting practices in the life of schoolchildren. This is also a
positive example during a pandemic, when the actions of schools and parents must be built in the same direction of joint activity.

3. Discussion

Let’s highlight the areas that parents and other social partners of the school can influence:

- the content of education (participation in the development of the educational programme, the child’s performance, homework, additional education circles etc.);
- forms and methods of education (participation in events, charity events, organisation of excursions, educational trips etc.);
- conditions for the implementation of education (participation in replenishing the material and technical base, improving conditions, including at home when doing homework, interacting with other children, certificates, documents etc.).

The participants of the working group of the conducted research highlighted the fundamental differences, which they plan to focus on the research work in Table 1.

| Table 1. Advantages of scientific ideas of the conducted research |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Existing strategies** | **Benefits of the conducted research** |
| Special purpose | Strengthening work on involving parents in the educational practice of students (diagnostics of the desires of parents, ‘knowledge funds’ of families, family resources and family literacy). |
| It is mainly educational in nature. Communication with parents is maintained only in special cases, not constantly. This is either educational or preventive activities with students. | |
| Activity aspect | School–family partnership |
| Parents’ meetings | Academic partnership |
| Parent lecture halls, Parent conferences, Educational activities, School Board of Trustees, Advice from fathers and mothers | Family literacy calendar to support basic reading and math literacy |
| Social factor | Evidence-based practice |
| Many children and parents with low socio-economic income keep their distance from school, experience psychological discomfort; children are embarrassed to participate in social events because of the condemnation of their classmates. | Effective strategies close the gap between vulnerable families and the school by considering parenting potential. |
| Economic factor | The developed strategies will allow considering forms such as public donations; – highlight the allowed free tier and private parenting requests (paid) |
| Only within the framework of private educational organisations. The activity is mainly educational in nature. | Psychological and pedagogical factor |
| Teacher readiness: Almost all teachers have a classroom leadership. However, many of them do not feel ready to work with their parents. The big workload of the taught subject also affects. | Continuous development of teacher skills: pre- and post-training for family involvement in school life |
| Coronavirus pandemic and force majeure | |
| Parents faced difficulties in distance learning, great psychological stress | Academic partnership and the Calendar of family literacy, ‘knowledge funds’ of families will allow you to be prepared for distance and home learning |
In the Aktobe region, for the implementation of these strategies, this study covers educational organisations such as the International School ‘Akbobek’, New secondary school, secondary school No. 63 in Aktobe, secondary school in Akkemir village of Mugalzhar district, Khromtau school gymnasium No. 2; Khromtau mining and processing college, private school ‘Mugalim’.

At the organisational stage of the research, special work is planned, which includes theoretical, experimental and generalising stages. The main result is the planned functioning of the Association of Parents of Aktobe region, which unites parent communities of educational organisations participating in the experiment. The activities of this association will be of a social and educational nature. The directions of her work will be effective strategies and parenting practices that allow closing the distance between families and schools: diagnostics of parents’ desires, ‘knowledge funds’ of families, family resources, family literacy and others that arose in the course of research work. It is planned to develop a special information site. The work of this study is planned for the period September 2020–December 2023.

4. Conclusion

Thus, the planned experimental study is aimed at expanding the possibilities of modern Kazakhstani education, both in the usual mode and in conditions of force majeure (for example, a viral revolution). This form of work will allow one to take a fresh look at the education system and establish close contact with parents as important and active participants in the pedagogical process.

The analysis of world and domestic effective parenting practices made it possible to draw preliminary conclusions:

From the side of teachers:
1. An ambiguous attitude towards parental involvement.
2. Using negative communication about the student’s school success.
3. Using stereotypes about families, the habit of explaining academic failure by family problems.
4. Doubts about the ability of families to deal with pedagogical problems.
5. Lack of time and money to implement the family work programme.
6. Fear of conflict with families.
7. Limited understanding of the role that the family can play.
8. Lack of professional knowledge and training among educators on how to maintain cooperation with families.

From the side of the family:
1. Feeling of inadequacy.
2. Taking a passive role, leaving education to schools.
3. Linguistic and cultural differences, leading to ignorance about how schools function and their role.
4. Lack of role models, information and resources to gain knowledge.
5. Lack of responsiveness to parental needs.
6. Lack of enabling environment and resources (e.g., poverty and limited access to services).
7. Economic, emotional and time constraints.

On the part of organising the cooperation process:
1. Limited time for communication and effective dialogue.
2. Communication only predominantly during crises.
3. Failure to understand the differences in perspectives from the point of view of the parent and the teacher about the child’s learning process.
4. Insufficient contact to build trust with the family.
5. Lack of skills and knowledge on how to cooperate.
6. Psychological and cultural differences that lead to incorrect assumptions.
7. Limiting the impressions of the child by observation in only one environment.
8. Lack of a conventional communication system.

According to the analysis of information data, the experience of interaction with parents, realised in schools, can be conditionally divided into three more groups:

1. Community and family community programmes. This type of programme summarises efforts to engage community members (including families, local residents and community organisations) in improving student academic achievement.
2. Programmes to involve parents and other family members. This group of programmes is designed, first of all, for the mechanisms of ensuring the participation of the family in the processes of schooling of their child.
3. Comprehensive social and community service programmes are programmes that provide social and healthcare services to strengthen and support families and children.

5. Recommendations

As part of the study, the following recommendations were developed for educational organisations:

1. Explore the educational and developmental capabilities of parenting potential in order to involve them in the activities of the school.
2. Strengthen the work on the development of school–family partnership as a necessary and important form of cooperation. In this aspect, initiative is more dependent on the school as the initiator.
3. In light of the world events related to the pandemic, organisations of education recommended to use modern forms of cooperation with the parent community in the field of education. Alternatively, it is possible to develop a family literacy calendar to support basic reading and mathematical literacy.

References


