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SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FAMILY AS A DETERMINANT OF FAMILY-SCHOOL COOPERATION

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Abstract. Many factors on both the family and the school parts determine family-school cooperation. This paper presents the research results aimed at finding the relationship between family socioeconomic status and teacher cooperation at the primary level of education. The research findings present how parents rate their current cooperation with teachers at the primary level of education. The article also highlights whether there is a statistically significant association between parents' education, occupation, income and their satisfaction with the cooperation with the teacher. The research instrument was a questionnaire addressed to parents of children in primary education. The research findings were evaluated with mathematical-statistical methods: Pearson's chi-squared test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and Kruskal-Wallis' test. The research has shown that indicators of family socioeconomic status (education, income and occupation) do not differentially affect the evaluation of family-school cooperation, which was demonstrated by statistical analysis of research findings. Parents, regardless of their socioeconomic status (SES), expressed a positive attitude towards the class teacher, their satisfaction with cooperation, and perceived teachers' efforts to develop cooperation with the child's parents. Parent-teacher cooperation impacts the child's functioning in the institutional education setting. It is of particular importance at the primary level of education. It influences the process of adaptation of students to the school environment at the beginning and later their learning success and relationship to the school.

Keywords: parents, teacher, primary school students, family socioeconomic status, cooperation, primary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

School-family cooperation is a well-known topic in the professional pedagogical environment. It is an area of pedagogical interest with its history and broad research and literature base. According to J. Majerčíková (2015), the penetration of these qualitatively different environments is possible through the mutual acceptance of their members, building trust and finding appropriate forms of cooperation.

Pedagogical theory uses variable terminology to explain the family and school relationship. In the local literature, we often encounter the concept of family-school collaboration. K. Trnková (2004, p. 53) characterizes the family-school partnership as a „symmetrical, reciprocal and educational-social“ relationship, which means that it focuses on upbringing, education, and the needs of the child however, also on the development of the school as an institution. According to M. Kocór (2018), the term partnership relates to the concepts such as cooperation, collaboration, commitment, cohesion, dialogue, and trust. It implies equal rights and responsibilities, mutual respect and understanding of the other party. In foreign literature, such as S. A. Garbacz et al. (2017), experts often use equivalents to refer to

parent and school collaboration. For example, they use the terms family and parental involvement in school activities or family/parental engagement.

For describing the relationship between family and school, there are consistent terms such as participation, engagement, involvement, and interest. However, the most accurate term is family-school cooperation, which comprehensively includes all these concepts (Orell, M. & Pihlaja, P., 2020).

Family-school cooperation is an essential part of every country's school policy. Therefore, it represents an attractive topic of professional interest whose importance and need for discussion is growing. As evidence, there is an increase in the number of works where authors pay attention to the relationship between parents and teachers in the school environment (Epstein, L. J., et al., 2018; Rabušicová, M., Šedřová, K., Trnková, K. & Čiháček, V., 2004; Jungwirthová, I., 2009; Hornby, G., 2011; Gavora, P. & Majerčíková, J., 2012; Slezáková, T., 2012; Hong, S., 2019).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The family and the school have been crucial units of society since their inception, and their relationship is influenced by the current conditions in society, whether political, economic or socio-cultural. According to V. Kurincová (2001), the periodization of the society's history points to the mutual relations of family and school, which have undergone long-term development, and socio-historical determination has left deep traces in this relationship.

According to recent experience, the partnership between family and school is changing. Before 1989, parents perceived the school primarily as an institution where, under the expert guidance of teachers, the child's education was cultivated and developed. Parents did not interfere with the school's running, nor did the school require them to do so. Průcha (2005, p. 420) aptly characterizes this period, where he points to the cooperation between family and school, based mainly on the authoritarian approach of the school towards parents. Parents were thus placed in a subordinate role and were not entitled to interfere with the educational process.

After 1989, various pedagogical analyses appeared that entered into the dynamics of the school environment. Interest began to centre on the relationships between the members of the teaching process, their democratic nature and the attendant school climate (Kašćák, O. & Pupala, B., 2012). At the same time, there has been a growing interest in building relationships between the family and the school. Various specialized research institutions are emerging to investigate family-school collaboration. The International Centre for Family Research in Bratislava opened in 1994 (Kurincová, V., 2001). M. Rabušicová (2004, p. 10) states that „parents stopped being uninterested in how the school treated their children in the 1990s“.

In contemporary educational practice, as U. Beck (2015) emphasized, we saw a significant turn in the approach to collaboration, as the focus was on the parents and their needs in the context of the child's education. As Z. Škvarková (2010) wrote, family-school relations had shifted towards democratic principles and students' parents were considered the school's main partners, where they were not supposed to be only passive observers but help and cooperate with the school. Majerčíková (2012, p. 51) even stated that teachers' activities towards parents should be natural that parents should feel that they were equal “players” alongside teachers in the joint effort. The traditional model perceived as “a parent is a client” (service taker) is changing into a “parent as partner” model.

It is undeniable that family-school cooperation has its merits and brings many positives for pupils, parents and teachers, and school-parent relations are considered a significant part of school life. Many authors from different perspectives have pointed out its importance. The first and the most crucial importance of cooperation is to have a more direct and efficient impact on children, their education and school satisfaction. According to J. L. Epstein et al. (2002, p. 20), the high-quality cooperation between parents and teachers helps children succeed in school today and in the future. S. M. Sheridan, E. Moorman (2015) also highlight the importance of family-school cooperation. An effective family-school

partnership facilitates the development of specific learning goals for children and promotes the development of desirable behaviour and their social-emotional growth. At the same time, positive parent-teacher partnerships are a chance for problem-solving – the so-called “window of opportunity”.

We also see the importance of cooperation in the positive impact on the teacher. As V. Gulevska (2018) points out, it leads to improved self-esteem, communication, satisfaction with their work, and teacher self-esteem. R. Čapek (2013) adds that family-school cooperation is a reflection of the quality of the school. The common goals of parents and teachers create the ground for mutual understanding and a favourable school climate. Teacher-parent cooperation builds trusting relationships based on tolerance and respect, eliminates fear and prejudice in mutual communication, promoting children's learning and motivation. It also helps children, their parents, and teachers overcome adaptive, personal, family and other problems. The goal of family and school coexistence should go beyond cooperation in the range of concern for the child's benefit or behaviour.

The primary determinants of family-school cooperation include the socioeconomic status of the family (SES) in the local literature (Šeďová, K., 2004; Frýdková, E., 2010; Majerčíková, J., 2011), and more extensively in foreign publications (Hornby, G., 2011; Daniel, G., 2015; Rönkä, A. & Perälä-Littunen, S., 2021). According to Helus (2015, p. 241), “a family's socioeconomic status determines its social class in society based on occupational prestige, income and wealth, not least the parents' education”. K. Šeďová (2004) confirmed that the family's socioeconomic status depends on the parents' educational and professional levels.

The parents' education is the first indicator of a family's socioeconomic status. According to P. Mareš (1999, p. 37), „education is an instrument of inequality because it segregates access to work, to further education, at the same time it indirectly discriminates the individual in the cultural dimension“. The educational attainment of parents determines the value of education in the family environment (Čáp, J., 1999; Lukáč, M., 2015). Concerning the value of education in the family, we distinguish two groups of parents, with the first group attaching great importance to education. According to R. Havlík and J. Kořa (2002), it is related to their professional life. With achieved education, the child maintains the built social status of the family (the family's status, power, influence, and standard of living). In the second group there are parents who do not attach much importance to education, negatively affecting the child's school performance. Research by L. Bomba and J. Zacharová (2013, p. 67) shows that „more than a fifth of parents do not attach importance to education“. In Slovak conditions, parents of Roma ethnicity represent a particular group uninterested in education. This fact stems from the low educational level of parents, in synergy with low school aspirations (Lukáč, M., 2015) and, ultimately, the lower social status of the family (Klein, V., 2008).

Another index of a family's socioeconomic status that may significantly determine education is the parents' profession. R. M. Hauser, J. R. Warren (1997) wrote about occupational socioeconomic status, which comprises an index of prestige and social status resulting from the occupation. Society's requirements for qualifications and occupation also determine parents' expectations of employment. T. Gasparecz (2018) presents the view that today's parents strongly focus on career success, which is associated with a lack of time for the development and upbringing of children, resulting in their emotional deprivation.

Material security and the family community's overall “economic well-being” play a crucial role in the life of every family. L. Azudová (2000, p. 65) mentions that parents' financial income influences the family's everyday life, material security, spending of leisure time, and last but not least, the position of the family in the structure of social relations. Many families do not have the economic means to fulfil children's desires, dreams, and interests. They live in a reality characterized by fear of the future. Similarly, G. J. Duncan, K. M. Ziol-Guesta, A. Kalila (2010) stated that the family's material security influences the parents' investment in the child's development. However, some families are affected by poverty and cannot provide for even the child's basic needs. This situation represents a significant threat to the child's psychological development.

These characteristics of the family's socioeconomic status influence the family's relationship with the school, equally influenced by socio-historical determination. According to G. Hornby, I. Blackwell (2018, p. 113), economic well-being is no guarantee of successful cooperation. With more affluent parents, we experience helicopter parenting, "parents want more interference and want to know everything". A. E. Lewis and T. A. Forman (2002, p. 82) mention that the family's social class (in conjunction with material, social and cultural conditions) determines cooperation with the school. They state that "working class and lower social class parents perceive teachers as a threat to the family, often leading to tensions between parents and teachers".

G. Hornby (2011) developed a comprehensive model of the factors determining family-school collaboration in the context of family involvement in the school environment. The first group consists of individual parental and family factors, including parents' beliefs and attitudes about their activity and involvement in school, the family's current lifestyle, and their gender, education or ethnicity. It is crucial how parents perceive their role and responsibility in their children's education. When parents relinquish their 'claim' to responsibility for their child's development once the child enters the school environment, they will be unwilling to participate in the child's education and upbringing actively. Families face problems of time disproportionality caused by political, economic and historical changes, so parental involvement (especially mothers) is subject to workload. Other factors are on the side of the child or student. These include age, learning difficulties, skills, talent, learning and behavioural disabilities. The following factors are related to the parent-teacher relationship in terms of differences in goals, attitudes, and language used. Differences in the child's educational goals can create conflicts that make it difficult for cooperation to be successful. Each side tries to push its own "agenda" independently of the understanding of the other. The last group is social factors. These include historical, demographic, political and economic issues of today's life. Parents work under pressure and with lower financial rewards, so their workload dissatisfaction may transmit in their school involvement.

It is impossible to see these determinants of family-school cooperation in isolation without interconnection. It is therefore desirable, if not essential, that all the components of cooperation (family, community, school, society) function continuously and thus contribute to the child's success. We agree with J. Majerčíková (2011, p. 21) that "the problems and challenges in cooperation are not few, it is a constant effort to approach the ideal of efficient cooperation, but any effort is of fundamental value and importance in the educational process".

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Background of Research

The research is focused on finding out parents' views on cooperating with the school. In the research, the influence of individual SES indicators of the family (education, occupation, parental income) on the evaluation of cooperation with the class teacher at the primary level of education is investigated. Based on these indicators, it is outlined how parents evaluate selected aspects of cooperation:

- the relationship of the parent to the class teacher;
- the class teacher's activity in the field of cooperation;
- satisfaction with cooperation;
- communication skills of the teacher.

The aim of the research

The research aimed to determine how children's parents rate their cooperation with the class teacher at the primary level of education. We wanted to find whether there is a statistically significant association between family SES indicators and ratings of cooperation with the class teacher at the primary level of education. For the purpose of the research, the following *research question* was set: is there a statistically significant association between educational attainment, occupation, and total monthly income of the parent of a primary school student in the first grade and the evaluation of

cooperation with the classroom teacher?

Research methods

We used a non-standardized questionnaire (a self-designed questionnaire) to collect the research data. We carried out the analysis of the answers and the processing of the results using mathematical-statistical methods and computer programs. Statistical analysis of the research data was carried out using the program R 4.1.3. The statistical analysis aimed to determine whether there is a statistically significant association between the SES indicators of the family and the evaluation of cooperation with the class teacher. The statistical analysis focused on Cronbach's alpha (α) to reveal the questionnaire's reliability and validity (internal consistency). The value of Cronbach's α for the questionnaire is $0.6941 \approx 0.7$, and this decimal value indicates sufficient internal consistency of the questionnaire (or determines its sufficient reliability).

Pearson's chi-squared test was the central method of statistical analysis of the results. This inductive statistical method is based on detecting the difference between observed and expected frequencies. For goodness-of-fit tests, Cochran's Rule, which is essential for the operation of normality of approximation, must be strictly followed, and confidence intervals are the main principle. We used the following methods for statistical analysis: the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S test) and the Kruskal-Wallis' test.

Sample of Research

The research sample consisted of 320 parents ($n = 320$) from different Slovak regions with at least one child of younger school age. The respondents were mostly (62.5%) in middle adulthood (32-42 years), most of the respondents (68.4%) were married, and most of the respondents were mothers (70%).

The research sample was differentiated according to individual indicators of family socioeconomic status (education, occupation and income). Based on respondents' education, respondents with complete secondary education had the highest representation (37.2%), respondents with 2nd-degree university education had a similar representation (31.9%), and parents with incomplete secondary education represented 17.8%. In terms of parents' profession, respondents were equally represented in different occupational areas: education and allied professions (25%), administration and management (19.40%), manual and blue-collar professions (18.43%), professions in services (17.18%), highly-skilled professions (14.68%) and 5.31% were uncategorised professions. Based on the parents' total monthly income, the research sample is dominated by parents with a monthly income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (32.8%) and 1001-1500 EUR (27.2%). The income categories of 501 EUR – 1000 EUR (17.8%) and 2001 EUR and more (20.3%) were also relatively evenly represented.

4. RESULTS OF RESEARCH

In the context of the above research aims and questions, we investigated how parents of younger school-age students rate their collaboration with the class teacher in several aspects. The research were data analyzed differentially concerning the socioeconomic characteristics of the family (parents' education, income, and profession) to identify statistically significant differences in the respondents' responses.

In the first area of investigation, we investigated how parents rate their *relationship with the class teacher* on a five-point scale (1–very positive, 2–rather positive, 3–neutral, 4–rather negative, 5–negative). At the same time, we intended to determine whether parents rate their relationship with the teacher statistically differently based on individual family SES indicators. We present the results in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c.

Tab. 1a

Relationship with the class teacher by education of respondents

education/scale	negative		rather negative		neutral		rather positive		very positive		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
incomplete secondary education	0	0,00	3	0,94	19	5,94	17	5,31	18	5,63	p = 0,5437
complete secondary education	0	0,00	1	0,31	34	10,63	43	13,44	41	12,81	
university education 1st degree	0	0,00	1	0,31	6	1,88	11	3,44	11	3,44	
university education 2nd degree	2	0,63	3	0,94	17	5,31	39	12,19	41	12,81	
university education 3rd degree	0	0,00	1	0,31	1	0,31	4	1,25	4	1,25	
basic education	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,31	2	0,63	
TOTAL	2	0,63	9	2,81	77	24,06	115	35,94	117	36,56	

Source: Own research

Tab. 1b

Relationship with the class teacher by respondents' profession

profession/scale	negative		rather negative		neutral		rather positive		very positive		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration/management	1	0,31	1	0,31	14	4,38	23	7,19	23	7,19	p = 0,242
uncategorised	0	0,00	1	0,31	6	1,88	3	0,94	8	2,50	
blue-collar/manual work	0	0,00	2	0,63	21	6,56	25	7,81	11	3,44	
services	0	0,00	1	0,31	14	4,38	16	5,00	24	7,50	
education and facilities	1	0,31	2	0,63	10	3,13	34	10,63	32	10,00	
high-skilled professions (services)	0	0,00	2	0,63	12	3,75	14	4,38	19	5,94	
TOTAL	2	0,63	9	2,81	77	24,06	115	35,94	117	36,56	

Source: Own research

Tab. 1c

Relationship with the class teacher by income of respondents

income/scale	negative		rather negative		neutral		rather positive		very positive		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
below 500 EUR	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,31	3	0,94	2	0,63	p = 0,9854
501 EUR - 1000 EUR	0	0,00	2	0,63	13	4,06	17	5,31	25	7,81	
1001 EUR - 1500 EUR	1	0,31	1	0,31	22	6,88	34	10,63	29	9,06	
1501 EUR - 2000 EUR	1	0,31	3	0,94	27	8,44	38	11,88	36	11,25	
2001 EUR and more	0	0,00	3	0,94	14	4,38	23	7,19	25	7,81	
TOTAL	2	0,63	9	2,81	77	24,06	115	35,94	117	36,56	

Source: Own research

Based on our findings in Tables 1a, 1b, and 1c, most respondents rate their relationship with their class teacher positively (72.5%: rather positive 35.94%; very positive 36.56%). For all three indicators of family SES, the parents' positive relationship with the teacher was evident. The most positive attitude towards the teacher is seen in parents with complete secondary education (26.25%: rather positive 13,44%; very positive 12.81%), in parents working in education and institutions (20.63%: rather positive 10.63%; very positive 10.00%) and in parents with an income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (23.13%: rather positive 11.88%; very positive 11.25%). However, based on the statistical analysis of the impact of SES indicators on satisfaction with cooperation, it was concluded that Pearson's Chi-square test did not confirm significant differences in respondents' answers based on their education, profession and income.

Regardless of family SES indicators, parents expressed positive attitudes towards the class teacher.

As the previous results showed, parents evaluated their relationship with the class teacher rather positively, regardless of the SES indicators of the family (education, profession, income). In a deeper analysis of parent-teacher cooperation, we found it necessary to explore parents' views on the role of the teacher in creating cooperation. We investigated how the respondents evaluate the activity of the class teacher in cooperation with parents. We ascertained the respondents' opinions through a set of statements (No. 1–3) on a five-point scale from 1 to 5 (1–agree, 2–rather agree, 3–undecided, 4–rather disagree, 5–disagree). The statistical significance of differences in respondents' opinions concerning family SES indicators on the following statements was tested:

- No. 1 Teachers are active, and they motivate parents to cooperate.
- No. 2 Teachers strive for efficient cooperation, but this still needs to change in many areas.

With the first statement, „Teachers are active, and they motivate parents to cooperate“, we intended to determine whether parents perceive teachers as initiators motivating them to cooperate. In the context of the research objectives, we analyzed our findings based on the SES indicators of the family. We present the research data by SES indicators in Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c.

Tab. 2a

Respondents' answers by education to statement No. 1

education/scale	I disagree		I rather disagree		undecided		I rather agree		I agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
incomplete secondary education	2	0,63	6	1,88	10	3,13	18	5,63	21	6,56	p = 0,4489
complete secondary education	3	0,94	8	2,50	21	6,56	41	12,81	46	14,38	
university education 1st degree	2	0,63	0	0,00	2	0,63	14	4,38	11	3,44	
university education 2nd degree	8	2,50	7	2,19	16	5,00	39	12,19	32	10,00	
university education 3rd degree	0	0,00	2	0,63	2	0,63	2	0,63	4	1,25	
basic education	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	3	0,94	
TOTAL	15	4,69	23	7,19	51	15,94	114	35,63	117	36,56	

Source: Own research

Tab. 2b

Respondents' answers by profession to statement No. 1

profession/ scale	I disagree		I rather disagree		undecided		I rather agree		I agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration/ management	3	0,94	4	1,25	8	2,50	25	7,81	22	6,88	p = 0,5606
uncategorised	2	0,63	0	0,00	3	0,94	5	1,56	8	2,50	
blue-collar/manual work	2	0,63	9	2,81	10	3,13	19	5,94	19	5,94	
services	0	0,00	2	0,63	9	2,81	18	5,63	26	8,13	
education and facilities	6	1,88	4	1,25	13	4,06	30	9,38	26	8,13	
high-skilled professions (services)	2	0,63	4	1,25	8	2,50	17	5,31	16	5,00	
TOTAL	15	4,69	23	7,19	51	15,94	114	35,63	117	36,56	

Source: Own research

Tab. 2c

Respondents' answers by income to statement No. 1

Income/scale	I disagree		I rather disagree		undecided		I rather agree		I agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
below 500 EUR	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,31	5	1,56	p = 0,6988
501 EUR - 1000 EUR	2	0,63	2	0,63	7	2,19	22	6,88	24	7,50	
1001 EUR - 1500 EUR	3	0,94	5	1,56	15	4,69	32	10,00	32	10,00	
1501 EUR - 2000 EUR	7	2,19	9	2,81	17	5,31	35	10,94	37	11,56	
2001 EUR and more	3	0,94	7	2,19	12	3,75	24	7,50	19	5,94	
TOTAL	15	4,69	23	7,19	51	15,94	114	35,63	117	36,56	

Source: Own research

The data in Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c show parents' agreement with the statement, „Teachers are active, and they motivate parents to cooperate“. When we analyzed the data by Pearson Chi-Square test, there were no significant differences in responses based on family SES characteristics (concerning education, occupation, income). Respondents perceive the teacher as the initiator of cooperation, which is presented by a higher level of agreement than disagreement with the statement, i.e., the class teacher is evaluated as active and motivates parents to cooperate. The data analysis shows that the strongest level of agreement is among parents with complete secondary education (27.19%: rather agree 12.81%, agree 14.38%), parents working in education and institutions (17.51%: rather agree 9.38%, agree 8.13%) and parents with a household income of 1501 EUR - 2000 EUR (22.50%: rather agree 10.94%, agree 11.56%).

In the second statement, „Teachers strive for efficient cooperation, but this still needs to change in many areas“, it was investigated whether family-school cooperation from the parents' point of view has some shortcomings, despite the activity and efforts of the class teacher to cooperate. In the first part of the analysis of the responses, we identified an association with parents' education (Table 3a).

Tab. 3a

Respondents' answers by education to statement No. 2

education/scale	I disagree		I rather disagree		undecided		I rather agree		I agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
incomplete secondary education	4	1,25	7	2,19	17	5,31	15	4,69	14	4,38	P = 0,01 35
complete secondary education	5	1,56	13	4,06	33	10,31	42	13,13	26	8,13	
university education 1st degree	2	0,63	4	1,25	7	2,19	10	3,13	6	1,88	
university education 2nd degree	9	2,81	19	5,94	29	9,06	34	10,63	11	3,44	
university education 3rd degree	0	0,00	1	0,31	2	0,63	6	1,88	1	0,31	
basic education	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	3	0,94	
TOTAL	20	6,25	44	13,75	88	27,50	107	33,44	61	19,06	

Source: Own research

The results from Table 3a show that more than half of the respondents (52.5%: rather agree 33.44%, agree 19.06%) appreciate the teacher's cooperative efforts but also present a view of the need for change in many areas of cooperation. The highest level of agreement with statement No. 2 is among parents with a complete secondary education (21.26%: rather agree 13.13%, agree 8.13%). Parents with a university education 2nd degree showed the highest disagreement rate with the statement (8.75% rather disagree 5.94%, disagree 2.81%), i.e., they have the most critical attitude towards the teacher. Pearson's Chi-square test confirmed the significant difference in the respondents' answers based on their

educational attainment ($p = 0,0135$; X-squared = 27.01), which implies that parents' education determines the evaluation of the teacher and his/her efforts for efficient cooperation.

As in the analysis of statement No. 1, we also study the respondents' answers to statement No. 2 regarding parents' occupation and income (Tab 3b, 3c).

Tab. 3b

Respondents' answers by profession to statement No. 2

profession/ scale	I disagree		I rather disagree		undecided		I rather agree		I agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration/management	4	1,25	12	3,75	18	5,63	21	6,56	7	2,19	p = 0,3221
uncategorised	1	0,31	1	0,31	5	1,56	3	0,94	8	2,50	
blue-collar/manual work	3	0,94	9	2,81	16	5,00	17	5,31	14	4,38	
services	3	0,94	4	1,25	18	5,63	17	5,31	13	4,06	
education and facilities	7	2,19	10	3,13	18	5,63	34	10,63	10	3,13	
high-skilled professions (services)	2	0,63	8	2,50	13	4,06	15	4,69	9	2,81	
TOTAL	20	6,25	44	13,75	88	27,50	107	33,44	61	19,06	

Source: Own research

Tab. 3c

Respondents' answers by income to statement No. 2

Income/scale	I disagree		I rather disagree		undecided		I rather agree		I agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
below 500 EUR	0	0,00	0	0,00	2	0,63	1	0,31	3	0,94	p = 0,6123
501 EUR – 1000 EUR	2	0,63	7	2,19	14	4,38	19	5,94	15	4,69	
1001 EUR - 1500 EUR	7	2,19	8	2,50	25	7,81	30	9,38	17	5,31	
1501 EUR - 2000 EUR	6	1,88	20	6,25	27	8,44	34	10,63	18	5,63	
2001 EUR and more	5	1,56	9	2,81	20	6,25	23	7,19	8	2,50	
TOTAL	20	6,25	44	13,75	88	27,50	107	33,44	61	19,06	

Source: Own research

The data in Tables 3b and 3c show parental agreement with the statement, „Teachers strive for efficient cooperation, but this still needs to change in many areas“. When the data by Pearson Chi-Square test were analyzed, no significant differences were found in responses based on family SES characteristics (occupation and income). Although respondents perceive teachers as agile in collaborating with parents, they also agree that family-school cooperation needs to change in many ways. This attitude is evident from the higher level of agreement with the statement analyzed. Parents employed in the field of education (13.76%: agree 3.13%, rather agree 10.63%) and parents with an income of 1501 EUR - 2000 EUR (16.26%: agree 5.63%, rather agree 10.63%) agree with the statement.

The cooperation between parents and the class teacher depends on their mutual relationship and the resulting satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the cooperation. For this reason, we surveyed *parents' satisfaction with the cooperation with the class teacher*. Parents rated their satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 – satisfied, 2 – rather satisfied, 3 – undecided, 4 – rather dissatisfied, 5 – dissatisfied). We wanted to find out the level of parents' satisfaction with the level of cooperation with the class teacher or whether the SES indicators of the family determine their opinion about cooperation. We tested the statistical significance of the differences in respondents' opinions on satisfaction with the cooperation concerning their education, profession and income. The results are presented in Tables 4a, 4b and 4c.

Tab. 4a

Satisfaction with cooperation by respondents' education

question/education	dissatisfied		rather dissatisfied		undecided		rather satisfied		satisfied		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
incomplete secondary education	0	0,00	3	0,94	7	2,19	15	4,69	32	10,00	p = 0,2498
complete secondary education	0	0,00	2	0,63	11	3,44	43	13,44	63	19,69	
university education 1st degree	0	0,00	3	0,94	2	0,63	9	2,81	15	4,69	
university education 2nd degree	5	1,56	6	1,88	9	2,81	27	8,44	55	17,19	
university education 3rd degree	0	0,00	1	0,31	2	0,63	4	1,25	3	0,94	
basic education	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	3	0,94	
TOTAL	5	1,56	15	4,69	31	9,69	98	30,63	171	53,44	

Source: Own research

Tab. 4b

Satisfaction with cooperation by respondents' profession

question/profession	dissatisfied		rather dissatisfied		undecided		rather satisfied		satisfied		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration/management	2	0,63	1	0,31	5	1,56	17	5,31	37	11,56	p = 0,9471
uncategorised	0	0,00	1	0,31	2	0,63	6	1,88	9	2,81	
blue-collar/manual work	0	0,00	3	0,94	8	2,50	16	5,00	32	10,00	
services	0	0,00	1	0,31	5	1,56	19	5,94	30	9,38	
education and facilities	2	0,63	6	1,88	6	1,88	26	8,13	39	12,19	
high-skilled professions (services)	1	0,31	3	0,94	5	1,56	14	4,38	24	7,50	
TOTAL	5	1,56	15	4,69	31	9,69	98	30,63	171	53,44	

Source: Own research

Tab. 4c

Satisfaction with cooperation by the income of respondents

question/profession	dissatisfied		rather dissatisfied		undecided		rather satisfied		satisfied		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
below 500 EUR	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	6	1,88	p = 0,624
501 EUR – 1000 EUR	0	0,00	3	0,94	5	1,56	17	5,31	32	10,00	
1001 EUR - 1500 EUR	1	0,31	3	0,94	8	2,50	24	7,50	51	15,94	
1501 EUR - 2000 EUR	3	0,94	4	1,25	8	2,50	42	13,13	48	15,00	
2001 EUR and more	1	0,31	5	1,56	10	3,13	15	4,69	34	10,63	
TOTAL	5	1,56	15	4,69	31	9,69	98	30,63	171	53,44	

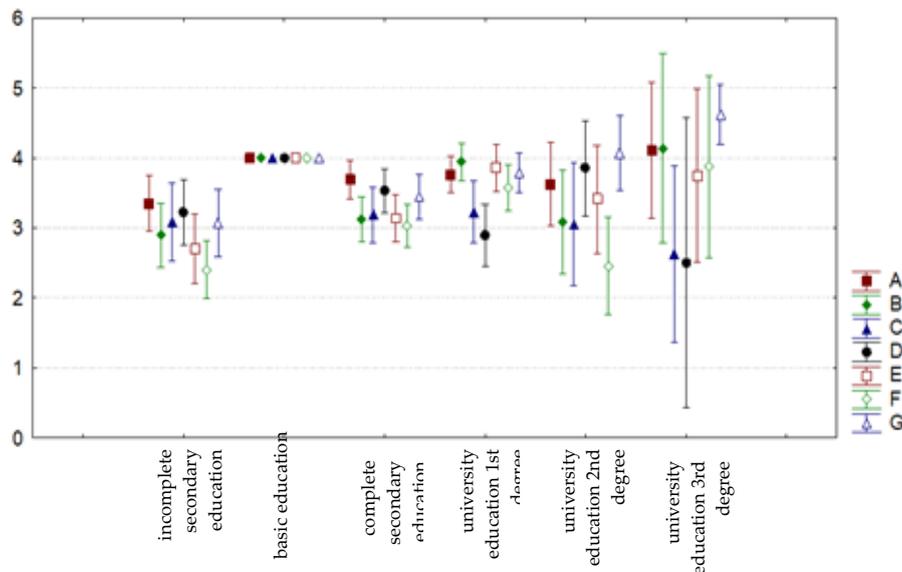
Source: Own research

According to the findings in Tables 4a, 4b and 4c, most respondents are satisfied with their cooperation with the class teacher. For all three indicators of family SES, the parents' satisfaction with the cooperation was shown (84.04%: rather satisfied 30.63%, satisfied 53.44%). Parents with complete secondary education (33.12%: rather satisfied 13.44%, satisfied 19.69%), parents working in education and facilities (20.32%: rather satisfied 8.13%, satisfied 12.19%), parents with income 1501 EUR -2000 EUR (28.13%: rather satisfied 13.13%, satisfied 15.00%) expressed the highest level of satisfaction. However, based on the statistical analysis of the impact of SES indicators on satisfaction with cooperation, we have to conclude that Pearson's Chi-square test did not confirm significant differences in respondents'

answers by their education, profession and income. Regardless of family SES, parents expressed satisfaction with cooperation with their child's classroom teacher.

In another area of research, we investigated through bipolar scales *how* respondents *rated* the classroom teacher in the area of *communication competence*. At the extreme poles, we reported various contrasting expressions concerning communication.

We present the analysis results in conjunction with parent education in Figure 1. Parents expressed a positive attitude towards the teacher and satisfaction with the cooperation, so we further explored how they rate the teacher's communication skills through bipolar scales. The respondents' answers were analyzed concerning family SES indicators to determine whether parents rated the teacher differently based on family SES indicators.



A = active – passive, B = sensitive – not very empathic, C = protective – not fearful, D = strict – spontaneous, E = open – closed, F = communicative – not approachable, G = tolerant – critical

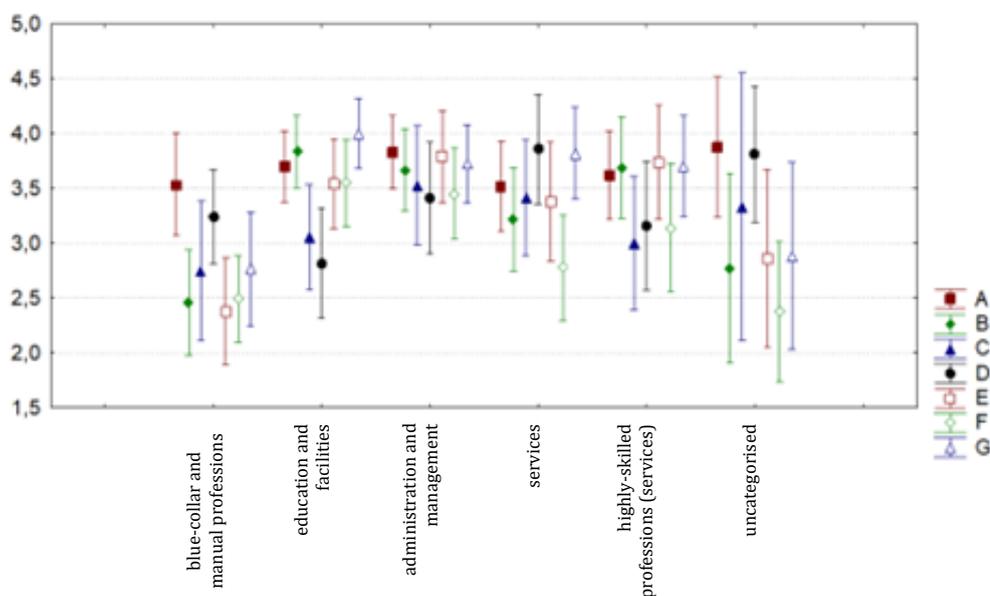
Fig. 1. Assessment of teacher's communication competencies by respondents' education

Source: Own research

As shown in Figure 1, parents with incomplete secondary education evaluate the teacher and his/her communication skills most positively. According to this group of parents, the teacher is characterized as active, sensitive, open, communicative and tolerant. On the contrary, parents with a third level of university education evaluate the teacher most negatively, i.e., they perceive the teacher as passive, not very empathic, closed, inaccessible, and critical.

As the data analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis' test (Figure 1) showed, there was a significant difference in responses based on parents' education for teacher characteristics: sensitive – not very empathic ($p = 0.002096$; chi-squared = 18.798), open – closed ($p = 0.003372$; chi-squared = 17.682), communicative – unapproachable ($p = 0.01017$; chi-squared = 15.046), tolerant – critical ($p = 0.001172$; chi-squared = 20.149). For the above characteristics, parents education determines parents evaluation of the teacher. On the other hand, for the characteristics: active – passive, protective – not fearful, strict – spontaneous, we did not observe a significant difference between the parents responses.

Analyzing the research findings based on parents' occupations, we found the results presented in Figure 2. These show that parents working in education and other related facilities perceive teachers' communication skills positively in all aspects. This group of parents is rated most positively. Consistent with the confidence interval, it can be concluded that parents working in an industry other than education rate the teacher's communication more negatively. Parents working in blue-collar and manual professions expressed the highest dissatisfaction with the class teacher's communication, and they were most negative about the following characteristics: empathic, not fearful, closed, and unapproachable. Parents working in the service category perceived the inaccessibility in communication with the class teacher most negatively. We see the highest inconsistency of opinion among parents in the uncategorized profession group. We assume there is a diverse typology of professions in that group of parents, hence the diversity of opinion.



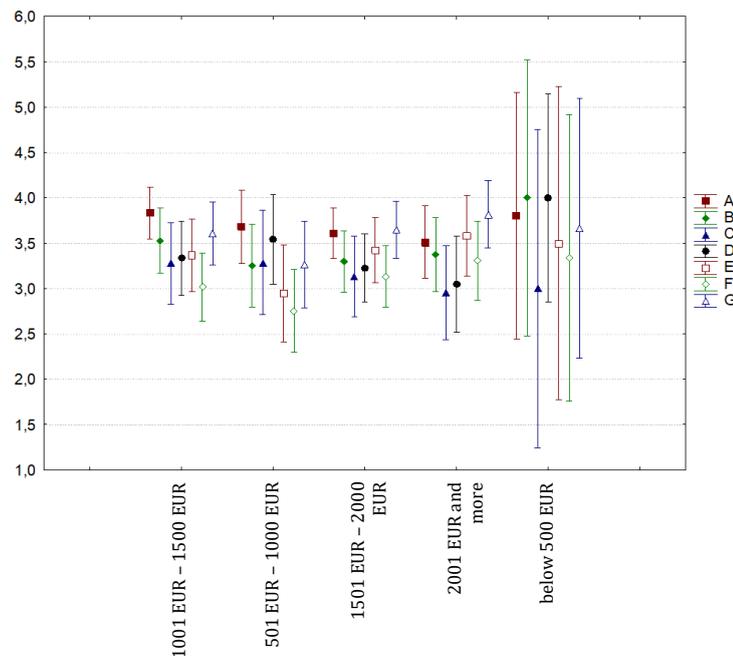
A = active – passive, B = sensitive – not very empathic, C = protective – not fearful, D = strict – spontaneous, E = open – closed, F = communicative – not approachable, G = tolerant – critical

Fig. 2: Assessment of teacher's communication competencies by respondents' profession

Source: Own research

According to the results from the data analysis (Figure 2) using the Kruskal-Wallis' test, there was a significant difference in the respondents' answers, based on their occupation, for the characteristics: sensitive – not very empathic ($p = 0.008028$; chi-squared = 5384.5), communicative – unapproachable ($p = 0.003101$; chi-squared = 5008.5), tolerant – critical ($p = 0.01682$; chi-squared = 4686). For the characteristics: active – passive ($p = 0.6917$; chi-squared = 7585), protective – not fearful ($p = 0.7921$; chi-squared = 3996.5), strict – spontaneous ($p = 0.09597$; chi-squared = 5439), open – closed ($p = 0.2456$; chi-squared = 4816), we did not observe a significant difference between respondents' answers. In the evaluation of teacher communication, similar to parents' education, the influence of profession on teacher evaluation was confirmed, especially for the aspects sensitive – not very empathic, communicative – not approachable, and tolerant – critical.

Parental income's effect on teacher communication evaluation was investigated, and the results are presented in Figure 3.



A = active – passive, B = sensitive – not very empathic, C = protective – not fearful, D = strict – spontaneous, E = open – closed, F = communicative – not approachable, G = tolerant – critical

Fig. 3: Assessment of teacher's communication competencies by respondents' income

Source: Own research

From the results in Figure 3, it is clear that parental income does not affect parents' views on teacher communication. There is a significant disparity of opinion within each income group. Based on respondents' income, there was no significant difference in the evaluation of the characteristics of the teacher, i.e., parents' income (as opposed to education and profession) does not determine the evaluation of the teacher's communication skills. Parents of all income categories most often agree that the classroom teacher is active and tolerant in communication.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Many determinants influence family-school cooperation, but our research interest has focused on the family's socioeconomic status, which is a crucial signifier in parent-teacher cooperation and largely influences its success. For this reason, we considered it necessary to pay attention to the indicators of family socioeconomic status (education, income and profession). From our point of view, they have a differential effect on the evaluation of cooperation, and the statistical analysis of the research findings has confirmed it.

We aimed to find out how parents of primary school children evaluate their cooperation with the class teacher. We also wanted to determine whether a statistically significant association exists between parents' education, profession, income and satisfaction with their cooperation with the teacher. We focused on selected aspects of family-school cooperation, namely the parent's relationship with the class teacher, the teacher's activity and communication skills in cooperation with parents, and parents' satisfaction with this cooperation.

There can be no doubt about the importance of cooperation between parents and teachers because its functioning determines the child's action in the environment of institutional education. It is of particular importance at the primary level of education where, at the beginning of schooling, it influences the process of adaptation of pupils to the school environment and later their school success and relationship to the school. The joint consensus of both components (family and school) ensures a unified acting on the child. As it is possible to see, how parents evaluate their *relationship with the class teacher* at the primary level of education is not influenced by their educational attainment, profession or income. An

undeniably positive finding is that parents expressed a positive relationship with the class teacher regardless of family SES indicators.

Despite the demanding nature of the teaching profession and the increasing demands on its activities, based on our findings, it is possible to speak of teachers' active efforts to cooperate with the child's parents. When ascertaining the parents' views on the teacher's action in creating cooperation, the SES of the family did not prove to be a significant factor influencing the teacher's evaluation. The most vital determinant was the respondents' education in evaluating the teacher's cooperative activity, which parents felt still needed to change in many areas. Similar findings are reported by E. Frýdková (2010); F. Cankar, T. Deutsch, S. Sentocni (2012) and A. Yolanda (2012), according to which it is the parents' education that influences their evaluation of the cooperation with the school and their relationship with the school.

The level of parental satisfaction with the cooperation can vary, either on the teachers' or the parents' side. Nevertheless, any effort to improve the quality of cooperation can significantly impact its functioning and success. According to our findings, indicators of family SES do not determine *parents' satisfaction with cooperation* with the classroom teacher strongly enough to make differences in parents' views statistically significant. Nevertheless, we come to the alarming finding that a high percentage of parents feel that the classroom teacher does not adequately address issues of family-school cooperation. A. Mikler-Chwastek (2020) also points out that most parents are satisfied with the cooperation. However, they identify its „weak points“ mainly because teachers have too high expectations and demands for parental involvement. Teachers do not consider parents' time and opportunities for their involvement in the cooperation.

In general, parents appreciate the high level of communication, consultation and counselling competences of teachers. A teacher's approach, including various communicative competences such as responsiveness, openness, communicativeness or tolerance, can evoke positive feelings in the parent, making the parent feel welcome in the school environment. When *assessing the communicative competence of the teacher*, we identified the parents' education and profession as significant indicators. Based on the confidence interval, parents' education has the most substantial influence on evaluating communicative competence in the classroom teacher in different aspects, such as being sensitive/empathic, open/closed, communicative/non-communicative and tolerant/critical. As it turned out, parents with higher education are more critical in evaluating the communication competence of the teacher. Parents' profession (similar to education) influences the evaluation of the teacher's communicative competence in the aspects of sensitivity/perceptiveness, communicativeness/inaccessibility and tolerance/criticality. According to our findings, parents working in a profession other than education rate teachers more negatively in communication, especially parents working in manual occupations.

Certain supportive elements need to be implemented to improve the quality of family-school cooperation. J. Majerčíková (2011) has in mind mutual communication based on the social skills of the teacher, i.e., the teacher's ability to prevent conflict situations and establish contact with parents. During the cooperation, the teacher observes different parental approaches, manifested in different aspirations for the child's performance, personal experiences with the school environment, and the different SES levels of the family. Also, according to K. Scholzová (2012, p. 7), teacher and family communication unifies the educational action, which ultimately positively affects the child.

We concur with the recommendations of V. Gulevska (2018), which could contribute to more effective cooperation between teachers and parents of children, for example, involving parents in school events, understanding parents as equal partners – allowing parents to have a say in school decisions, tolerating disadvantaged families, knowing the socioeconomic constraints of the family, strengthening the teacher-parent relationship, e.g., through family visits. A. Auziņa (2018) emphasises that the school should respect that the grouping of pupils in classrooms (and their families) is becoming more and more diverse, heterogeneous and multicultural. Therefore, teachers should be competent enough to be able to

not only respect this diversity but also to develop it in mutual cooperation. On the other hand, as T. Slezáková (2012) states, parents should value teachers and speak of them with respect and confidence in their abilities.

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У статті окреслено деякі фактори (зі сторони сім'ї та школи), які є визначальними у забезпеченні співпраці школи з родиною учня. Представлено результати дослідження, які спрямовані на виявлення взаємозв'язку між соціально-економічним статусом сім'ї та співпрацею вчителів на початковому рівні освіти. Результати експерименту дають змогу констатувати, як батьки оцінюють свою поточну співпрацю з вчителями на початковому рівні освіти та чи існує статистично значущий зв'язок між освітою, професією, доходом батьків та їхнім задоволенням від співпраці з педагогом. Інструментом дослідження стала анкета, адресована батькам учнів початкової школи. Результати дослідження оцінено за допомогою математико-статистичних методів: критерію χ^2 -квадрат Пірсона, Колмогорова-Смирнова, Крускала-Уолліса. Дослідження показали, що показники соціально-економічного статусу сім'ї (освіта, дохід і професія) по-різному впливають на оцінку співпраці сім'ї та школи, свідченням чого є статистичний аналіз результатів дослідження. Батьки, незалежно від соціально-економічного статусу (СЕС), висловлювали позитивне ставлення до класного керівника, задоволення від співпраці, сприймали зусилля вчителів розвивати співпрацю з батьками дитини. З'ясовано, що співпраця батьків і вчителів впливає на функціонування дитини в інституційному освітньому середовищі. Така співпраця має особливе значення на початковому рівні освіти, де учні стикаються з проблемами адаптації до шкільного середовища, а згодом впливає на їх успішність у навчанні і ставлення до закладу освіти в цілому.

Ключові слова: батьки, вчитель, соціально-економічний статус сім'ї, співробітництво, початкова школа.