

An Educational Approach of School Failure



Education

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Helena Maria SABO

Associate Professor, Faculty of Psychology and Science of Education, Babes-Bolyai University, Sindicatelor Street, No. 7, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

ABSTRACT

The rapid changes on Romanian population and, implicitly, Romanian students have started to cause some social and psych-social issues that materialize in different forms of lack of adaptation to school level and that discrepancy between school requirements, possibility, and school records. School failure is an ongoing process in many phases. Starting from these considerations, we have tried to point out the factors determining school failure among 150 students, 150 parents and 50 teachers.

The research was carried out using a 19 item questionnaire for the teachers, an 11 for the parents, and 11 for the students at a University from Cluj Napoca.

Preventing school failure is an extremely complex activity. To carry it out, we need to coordinate all educational factors among which, as expected, school and family come first.

The responses uncovered the failure of pedagogical factors and the relationship between pedagogical factor and social and family factors.

INTRODUCTION

According the UNICEF documents, institutionalized children are children facing different types of difficulties (impossibility of being raised by their own families because of the loss of one or both parents, separation from one's family because of an armed conflict, because of abandonment, of rejection, of child abuse etc.).

Education is largely responsible for the stage that defines the morality of the educated, of the communities, of the society, and training should take into consideration a careful analysis of the ethical and professional implication in the educational act. Identity and culture are two of the basic building blocks of ethnicity (Nagel, 1994)

The changes from the past years on Romanian population happened fast and have started to cause some social and psych-social issues and these materialized in different forms of lack of adaptation to school level. Pedagogically school failure can take the form from of low school results (episodic, semester, or persistent) students' failure to get his/ her remove, school abandonment, illiteracy, and mediocrity.

School failure is an ongoing process in four phases:

- in the first phase, the student is discontent with his/her school because he/ she does not understand what he/she is taught and therefore he/ she cannot do his/her homework, which results in the first lack of knowledge, abilities, and skills, as well as in a complex of inferiority;
- the second phase, is characterized by serious lacks of knowledge and by the students inability of fulfilling independently school tasks;
- in the third phase, the student gets unsatisfactory grades and even second examination after a non-pass;
- the fourth phase is students failure to get his/ her remove as a result of the failure of school or family in their attempts to avoid school failure.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Identity and culture are two of the basic building blocks of ethnicity (Nagel, 1994). Starting from these considerations, we have tried to point out the factors determining school failure among 150 students, 150 parents and 50 teachers.

The hypothesis of the research was that a student and his/ her concrete, success, he/ she need to benefit from a successful school. The objectives of the present research were as follows:

- knowing the parents opinions concerning education in the family and at school;
- knowing the students opinions concerning their own activity;

- knowing the teachers opinions concerning the causes of school failure;
- seizing the concordance between the parents, students, and teachers opinions concerning school activity and school failure;
- determining the objective and subjective causes of school failure both primary and secondary school and developing, on the ground of the conclusions thus reached, of concrete programme for the prevention and diminution of school failure in school.

The research was carried out using a 19 item questionnaire for the teachers, an 11 item questionnaire for the parents, and an 11 item questionnaire for the students from Cluj-Napoca, Babes-Bolyai University.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire addressed to the students aimed at pointing out the factors determining school failure among 150 students. Most of the students in this sample were aware of the necessity of being educated.

A number of questions aimed at pointing out, in most cases, a proper attitude of the family towards education, the existence of a good cooperative relationship with the educators, and normal relationship between brothers.

Another set of questions aimed at pointing out the pedagogical and psychological factors involved in school failure. The former ones play decisive preferences.

A particularly significant thing is that students mention among their preferred subjects even the subjects in which they usually get lower grades. Eliminating some subjective options, we could identify a set of causes of school failure.

Analyzing the causes of school failure, we found out that pedagogical factors come first (50% of the students do not understand the explanation they get in school and, therefore, dislike studying), that psychological factors come second (35% of the students have limited intellectual abilities or they lack the will to learn), and that social and family factors come third (15% of the students pay games too much, or watch TV too much, etc.).

Results show that what we need is to better know the students family situations and to identify, in due time, the family causes that can result in school failure.

The questionnaire addressed to the parents whose children face school failure supplied responses that allowed us to identify part of school failure causes. Numerous parents do not realize the importance of school education for their children. Thus, 35% rank first pedagogical factors, 20% rank first psychological

factors, and 45% rank first social and family factors.

In other families, there is a favorable social climate, and there are normal relationship between parents and children with the former being interested in guiding and controlling the latter. Most of the families have a good material situation, which contributes to the harmonious development of the children. These parents are interested in their children's school situation and their future; they often talk to the class master and to the class teachers.

The parents we have questioned have no difficulties at educational level and few of them need to get more involved in the school life of their children.

As for the **questionnaire addressed to the teachers**, we have questioned 50 teachers. The questionnaire contained 19 questions aiming at finding out the factors determining school success and concrete solutions for the prevention and/or diminution of school failure.

The affective motivation of being a teacher proved decisive. Of the four coordinates of school failure, teachers have chosen the inability of fulfilling independently school tasks, while the other causes (school abandonment) were ignored.

The responses to some of the questions pointed out the pedagogical factors rank first (40%) among the causes of school failure, and not social and family factors (29%) or psychological factors (31%).

The following responses uncovered the failure of pedagogical factors and the relationship between pedagogical factor and social and family factors. Thus, the relationship between teachers and students has a low affective charge, less than half of the respondents consider there is no need for unity among the teachers a considerable number of teachers know nothing about extra-school and extra-family activities; numerous teachers call school failure prevention "solution" activities that are part of the everyday teaching activity.

It is rejoicing to find out that teachers very rarely notice anxiety in students (because of family reason); teachers are well aware of the damaging effects of improper assessment; they use ways

to enhance students and to bring order to the class; most teachers think the class unity is the key to school success; they know social and family and inner habitat conditions; they consider that pedagogical consultancy for parents is welcome.

Several suggestions for the prevention and/or diminution of school failure have been uttered, among which: careful surveillance of the students to identify in due time unfavorable family or group conditions, modern teaching methods, the presence of a counselor in the school, the increase of the efficiency of school and professional activities, interdisciplinary, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Preventing school failure is an extremely complex activity. To carry it out, we need to coordinate all educational factors among which, as expected, school and family come first.

If we want school to do what it is supposed to do, we need it to be served by people that are well-trained scientifically and psycho-pedagogically and that are willing to apply in practice their professional knowledge. To do so we need the following:

- students need more self-confidence and they can get it by improving one's self image from different classes that share their view on the ways of learning in the family (once every semester); through consultancy for the students with lacks of knowledge (once a week); and through debates on the topic of school success/ failure (once every semester);
- parents need be more careful about their relationship with the school and increasing civic standards through initiating educational classes for the parents of problem-students (once every semester); supplying more psychological and pedagogical competence through permanent counseling within the psycho-pedagogical assistance office of the school (on permanent basis); and through debates with the parents on the topic of the role of the family in a student's life;
- teachers need to know a pre-teenage psychic behavior through psycho-behavioral modalities; through cooperation with the Teaching Staff House (once every semester); through exchanges of experience between teachers from different schools; and through debates on the causes favoring school failure.

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