



## A STUDY ON FAMILY-SCHOOL COOPERATION BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL DOCUMENTATION

*Nada Polovina\* and Jelena Stanišić*  
Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade

*Abstract.* Family-school cooperation is a very complex process that can be studied at different levels in a number of different ways. This study has covered only some aspects of cooperation between parents and teachers, based on school documentation of a Belgrade elementary school. The study covered analyses of 60 Attendance Registers pertaining to 60 classes with 1289 students from Grade 1 through Grade 8 during an academic year. The unit of analysis included: parents attendance at PTA meetings and individual meetings between parents and teachers. In addition to the frequency of parents' visits to school, the relationship between such registered parents' visits and overall academic performance, grades in conduct, excused and unexcused absence from classes were also considered. The research findings indicated interference between development factors (attitude change in parent-child relationship and growing-up) and parents' informal "theory of critical grades" i.e. transitional processes in schooling. The findings confirmed that parents' individual visits to school were mainly meant to offer an excuse for the student's absence from school, while attendance at PTA meetings was linked to poor grades in conduct and missed classes (both excused and unexcused). The findings also showed that parents pursued visiting strategies which were pragmatic, less time-consuming and less emotionally draining ones. The closing part refers to discussions on practical use of the study and possible further research.

*Key words:* individual visits, PTA meetings, school documentation, transitions in educational process.

### *Background*

The importance of parents' involvement in academic socialisation of their children has been recognized a long time ago, and during the last three decades it has become a special research focal point (primarily in the most advanced Western countries). Studies have unambiguously confirmed the relationship between various types of parents' cooperation with the school/teachers and the students' overall academic performance, regular attendance of classes

---

\* E-mail: npolovina@rcub.bg.ac.yu

and their well developed academic aspirations (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Henderson & Mapp, 2004; Guskey *et al.*, 2006). In our own local context, during the last quarter of the century, this topic has also been in the focus of attention of many theoreticians and researchers, whose focal point was mainly on the family educational role and school upbringing and educational aspects (Đorđević, 1982, 1985), rather than the characteristics and modes of such a cooperation (Kedžić, 1991; Vojić-Marković, 1996).

Numerous theoretical and research studies elaborating the issues of family-school cooperation emphasize the complexity of the topic resulting from the fact that this cooperation is a confluence of many also complex phenomena and permanently interlinked processes, including: (a) internal academic variables (school attendance, tuition, learning process, academic performance, conduct) and internal family variables (nourishment, emotions, development and growth, learning, knowledge, independence); (b) developmental processes of change and change of the environmental conditions. It is only natural that the perspective of these interwoven changes should vary as a child is growing up (change in the relationship child-adults/parents/teacher), but also in line with possible non-developmental changes in the family or school functioning (crises and/or functional transformations).

Studies indicate that the parent-teacher contacts and teacher's attempts to get the parents involved decrease, as the children reach higher grades (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Datta & De Kanter, 1998). At the same time, transition to higher grades is more demanding and the child/student is faced not only with more complex teaching materials but also with more complex psycho-social environment. The transition to higher grades also coincides with the puberty and early adolescence, and studies show that at this point in time the student's motivation and his/her self-image with respect to learning also decrease (Schumacher, 1998). These three change processes have different sources and more or less uncoordinated directions, while they can be dynamically interlinked in ways that yield in various manifestations, depending on the achieved coherence level among all key participants (parent-child-school). The impact of all three processes is incorporated into a wider concept of *academic transition*, the concept that highlights enveloping and complexity of key transition points during the educational process of (Davis & Lambie, 2005; Petriewskyj *et al.*, 2005). A somewhat narrower approach is focused only on the position of the student, as a key actor in educational process, and the important/key transition points in the academic environment requirements during schooling. When speaking about the elementary education, these key time points in transition are most commonly perceived as (Deemer *et al.*, 2004) starting school (Grade 1) and transition to senior grades (Grade 5).

When students are faced with new academic requirements this, optimally and logically speaking, calls for changes in parent-teacher cooperation, and therefore a more narrow approach of the transitions may be focused on the changes both in features and quality of parent-teacher cooperation. In this respect, a study implemented in our context of schooling (Vojić-Marković, 1996) which covered the first four grades of elementary school, singled out Grade 1 and Grade 4 as benchmarks of high-quality cooperation, while in Grade 2 the cooperation was reduced to minimum.

*Modes of linking/cooperation* between school/teachers and family/parents are numerous and can also be considered from a wider or a narrower framework. A wider cooperation framework carries a prefix of partnership and includes guidelines for parents' after-school activities for enhancing their children' academic performance, offering parents volunteering posts in school, participation in design and planning of school curriculum, and participative decision-making related to school operations (Waden & Westat 2006). A narrower cooperation framework includes elementary and direct cooperation as a result of regular and planned activities (PTA meetings), as well as specific circumstances that may be initiated either by parents or teachers (individual meetings). This narrower framework is also the framework for an immediate and direct cooperation which is a legal requirement and duty of the teacher<sup>1</sup>/class teacher. Namely, as regular duties and responsibilities of the school, the local legislation prescribes (at least) four mandatory PTA meetings during an academic year, as well as individual meetings "as required" (*Law on elementary education*, 2005). The Law also stipulates that teachers should keep *their own pedagogic records/files* ("The National Strategy for the Period from 2005-2015"), and records on meetings with parents (appointments kept and/or cancelled) is only one segment of data and information contained in the regular Attendance Register. As for the parents, their school visits are not obligatory by law, but are anticipated as part of their parental role and essential parental responsibility.

#### *Importance and possibilities of recording data on cooperation between parents and teachers*

Summarizing the outputs of twenty years of school practice research, Ferguson (Ferguson, 2005) put emphasis on a meaningful data collection and analysis. The author summarized the qualities that one school should have so as to enhance high-academic achievements in schools. One, out of five, goals

---

<sup>1</sup> This is the duty of the class teacher. Therefore, in the context of this research "teacher" means "class teacher".

that *provide a high-quality school environment* and practice is *to create a procedure for a meaningful data collection and analysis* on students, curricula, and staff. This kind of follow-up could contribute to better functioning of the school, giving a realistic insight into the problems and opting for strategies to overcome the problems. Follow-up of the cooperation with parents was not explicitly mentioned. Also, going through ERIC<sup>2</sup> database related to educational research in the period 1996-2006, we were not able to identify research papers dealing in this particular topic. Searching the social sciences data base in our country (SocioFakt) also did not produce any scientific paper which would consider issues related to family-school cooperation in this way.

As already mentioned, a teacher is obliged by law to keep a record of parents' visits to school. However, this legal requirement will depend on the teacher's perceived importance of keeping the record and toward this task in general. Therefore, a crucial question here is whether the teacher perceives this task as an important activity (a valuable source of information on collaboration and a documented follow-up of his/her own work) or as just one additional task, in a series of other administrative tasks? The answer to this question will determine the quality of data on parents involvement recorded in the Attendance Register.

#### *Use of pedagogic documentation as a research method*

The method based on the use of documentation had numerous application types dependent of the type of the data sources. This method is used for study of the relevant pedagogic thematic topics (Mužić, 1968), either as a prime method (e.g. for follow-up of multi-generation academic performance), or as an auxiliary research method. When speaking about family-school cooperation, a central position in the research methodology belongs to inquiries, questionnaires and interviews as main research tools, while the data from the documentation can serve for better understanding of the issues in question (e.g. the answers from the questionnaires are correlated to student's academic performance).

So, why has the pedagogic documentation been neglected as a main method in research of family-school issues? In order to answer this question, several assumptions are possible. The first assumption is that this method is rarely used in available professional literature, including literature in our local context (Savović & Jeftić, 2000). The second assumption is about already mentioned issue concerning attitude of teachers toward registration of parental

---

<sup>2</sup> ERIC – Educational Resources Information Center [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)

visits, which gives rise to the question of how systematic the records on parents' visits actually are. Of course, not least important is already mentioned teacher's attitude to the prescribed standards for family-school cooperation and standards for keeping the records. Furthermore, the prevailing legislation and prescribed standards stipulate rather general provisions, leaving it to teachers/lecturers to implement them "with a lot of ambiguity, abstract directions and even to avoid them altogether" (Nikolić, 1992: 427). The third assumption is that, on one hand, this may be a too demanding method, while on the other hand, it requires a great deal of caution if it were to be put into practice. Namely, the difficulties and reasons for caution in applying this method in research in general, and consequently, in research of pedagogic phenomena as well are rooted in questions like: "What is the relationship between the recorded visit and reality?" ("What does the recorded visit actually mean?"), "What is the sample?", or "What is the unit of analysis in the research?". The issue of giving preference to quantity instead of quality is a problem of its own, since the documentation itself is quantitative by nature (Suzić, 2001).

Apart from the appeal for caution, we should also mention the benefits of using this method in research of family-school cooperation. If we compare it to inquiry-questionnaire tools that measure beliefs, attitudes, opinions on conduct, the research based on documented data serves as an illustration of what actually did or did not happen (behavioural level) within a certain period of time. Therefore, a proper analysis of the documentation reveals the reality of events more than attitudes and beliefs concerning the cooperation. Another benefit is a possibility to follow-up the cooperation phenomena at school level, as an institution, as well as to follow-up the teacher's own work. In addition to being able to learn something more about the school-family relationship, this is also a way to find out something more about the attitudes of teachers regarding this task.

### *Method*

*Design and sample.* The objective of our research was to study some of the issues related to school-family cooperation by using the existing school documentation. The main research method used was analysis of the available documentation. Parents' visits to schools (as independent variable), recorded in the Attendance Registers (PTA meetings and individual meetings), were correlated to a series of potentially relevant factors, such as: student's school grade, sex, academic performance, conduct, excused and unexcused absence from classes (as dependent variables).

*Research questions* to which we were hoping to get answers to included: Is there any connectedness between the overall frequency of parents' visits to school and the grade and sex of the student? Is there any connectedness between the attendance at PTA meetings, on one hand, and individual meetings with teachers, on the other hand, and the student's sex and grade? Is the attendance at PTA meetings and individual meetings with teachers linked to the student's academic performance, grade in conduct, excused and unexcused absence from classes? The analysed data were derived from official records (Attendance Registers), and teacher's notes on PTA and individual meetings with parents. In addition to this main *thematic unit of analysis*, the following data were also extracted from the Attendance Registers: student's sex, academic performance (average grade at the end of the first semester and at the end of the academic year), grade in conduct, number of excused and unexcused absence from classes.

*Sample.* The unit of research was an elementary school in Belgrade. The analysis included the data and information for all classes and all students throughout an academic year (2004/2005). The data processed and analysed included 60 classes attended by 1289 students from Grade 1 to Grade 8. The number of students per class in each grade varied from 128 (2<sup>nd</sup>-graders) to 180 (8<sup>th</sup>-graders), while the sample included exactly the same number of male and female students (50%: 50%).

*Data collection procedures and levels of statistical analysis.* The Attendance Registers were studied in the school, in presence of the representatives of school administration. Descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multi-variant analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used for data processing.

## Results

### *Academic Performance and Absence from School*

The first level of measurement included descriptive statistics as the way of identifying sample independent variables status. The median was used as a central tendency measure, while quartile deviation was used as measure of deviation.<sup>3</sup>

Average marks per Grade at the end of academic year are insignificantly higher than at the end of the first semester, and therefore only the final marks are presented here (see Table 1 below). The average mark falls discretely in

---

<sup>3</sup> Choice of the statistics was based on the nature of obtained measures.

higher Grades, with the exception of Grade 8, where the average mark is higher than in the former Grade 7. Female students have constantly higher average marks, and the decrease in their academic performance at higher grades is lower than with male students.

*Table 1: Average marks at the end of academic year: central tendency measures (Mdn)<sup>4</sup>*

Sex	Grade						
	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Female Students	4.95	5.0	5.0	4.95	4.8	4.75	4.9
Male Students	4.86	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.2	4.5

In both male and female students quartile deviation increase from 6<sup>th</sup>-graders to 8<sup>th</sup>-graders, which means that the academic performance differentiation is more distinct than in lower graders. These findings are consistent with general notion and findings of similar studies which confirm that male 6<sup>th</sup>-graders and 7<sup>th</sup>-graders face more learning difficulties and have poorer marks than female students; male students are more focused on avoiding difficulties in school than on their own performance (Deemer et al. 2003).

*Table 2: Male and female students excused absence from school: mean values (Mdn)*

Sex	Grade							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Female Students	25	25	7	15	60	70	80	85
Male Students	30	25	10	50	60	65	110	110

Regarding excused absence from school, based on descriptive analysis, there are two trends that can be distinguished in our study (see Table 2). The first one is a discrete drop in excused absence from 1<sup>st</sup>-graders through 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders, and then a continuous rise through 8<sup>th</sup>-graders. The second trend shows fewer absentees in female than male students, with the most prominent distinctions in the Grade 4, Grade 7 and Grade 8. This finding is more of an illustration than a sound basis for interpretation, in view of some uncontrollable factors which may induce student's absence from school which, however, are not closely linked to psychosocial aspects of school environment (e.g. illness).

<sup>4</sup> Data for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade are missing since there are no marks in these Grades.

Unexcused absence from classes is officially recorded only after the Grade 5, and it is more prominent in male students than in female students. The largest number of unexcused absence from classes is recorded at Grade 7 when, on the average, each male student has 9 unexcused classes or, to be more precise, 50% of male students have between 3 and 17 missed classes (Mdn = 9, percentile 25-75 includes 3-17 missed classes).

At Grade 7 female students, on average, have two unexcused absences (Mdn=2, percentile 25-75 includes 1-6 missed classes), i.e. 50% of them have between one and six unexcused absences. As regards grades in conduct, the final mark is lower only in the group of male 7<sup>th</sup>-graders (percentile 25-75 is between grades 3.9-4.9<sup>5</sup>).

Portrait of our sample, through descriptive statistic indicators, verifies a well-known notion that participation of female and male students in elementary school is different with respect to: outcome (academic performance), attendance (skipping classes) and conduct (grades in conduct, skipping school).

#### *Students' achievements and PTA meetings*

The second level of data analysis includes application of complex statistic procedures. Within this framework, *the first segment of analysis* included study of important differences with respect to *Sex* and *Grade* (independent variable) in relation to *total number of parent-teacher meetings (PTA and individual meetings)* (dependable variable). On the whole, the model which links the mentioned variables is statistically significant ( $R^2=0.344$ ,  $F=46.02$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The results of the univariant analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicate that that the *Grade* that the student is attending has *the main* (statistically significant) *impact* on overall number of parents' visits to school (within one academic year) ( $F=93.35$ ,  $df=7$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). A detailed elaboration of this result is shown in the Graph 1 below.

As illustrated in the Graph 1, the number of PTA meetings and parent's individual visits decrease throughout elementary school which, in broad terms, is in accordance with the results of already mentioned studies (Epstein and Dauber, 1991). However, on this almost linearly decreasing path, there are two distinct discrepancies ("peaks") related to Grade 3 and Grade 7. It is obvious that, in practice, these two discrepancies represent *key transition points* if measured by PTA meetings and individual visits (resulting from parents' perception of child's difficulties). *This* finding is a logical one in view of teaching curricula according to which *the third grade* is, in a way, an actual/serious

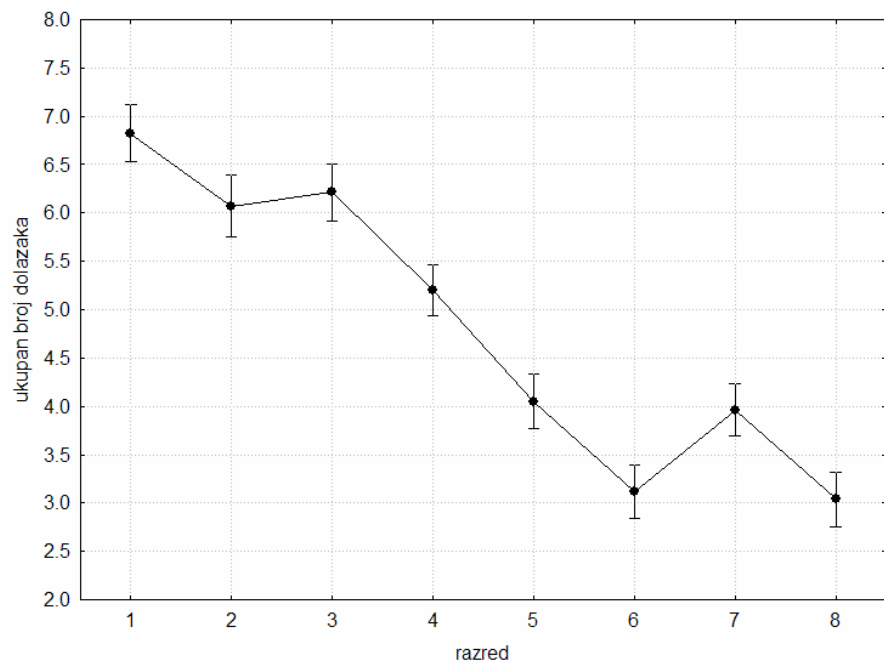
---

<sup>5</sup> Descriptive grades were translated to corresponding numerical values.



beginning of school work and the learning process that is evaluated and expressed in marks. The finding related to Grade 7 and more meetings than in the former Grade 6 can be interpreted in at least two ways. Firstly, one can assume that this has to do with the child's difficulties when faced with actually more serious and more demanding teaching curricula on one hand, and on the other hand, this is the age when the distance between teenagers and their parents is increased due to their age and teenage challenges; therefore, one could assume that parents' more frequent visits to school need not necessarily be linked only to poorer academic performance and difficulties in child's conduct (skipped classes) – it could also mean that at this age, parents do not handle the situation very well/lose contact with their child and therefore try to find answers to new situations and problems in communication with teachers in school. These two assumptions are not at odds with each other.

Graph 1: Frequency of parents' visits in relation to grade



Legend: vertical – total number of visits  
horizontal - Grades

The findings of this study give us grounds to reconceptualise the transition process in parents–teachers cooperation during elementary schooling. In this

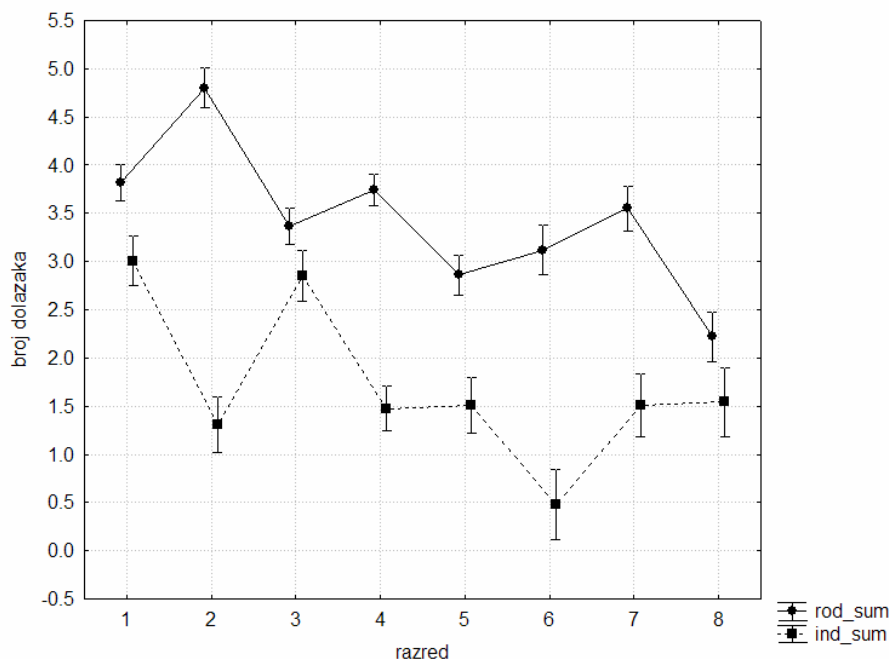
regard, we can distinguish *three key transition points*: *starting school* (the cooperation is focused on child's adaptation to school environment), *Grade 3* (the cooperation is focused on cognitive-behavioural consolidation of child's conduct and development of learning skills), and *Grade 7* (the cooperation is focused on integration of the adolescent cognitive-emotional factors with school higher levels learning requirements and requirements for more mature conduct). It seems that parents' visits to school reflect both developmental changes in child as well as parents' own assessment of "critical Grades" (key transition points and higher demands of school environment).

*The second segment of analysis* refers to the impact of the student's *Sex* and *Grade* (independent variable) on the number of parent's *individual visits and presence at PTA meetings* (dependable variables). On the whole, the model linking these two groups of variables has proved to be statistically significant ( $R^2/pta=0.241$ ,  $p<0.001$ ;  $R^2/indiv.=0.180$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The results of the multi-variance analysis (MANOVA) show statistically significant impact of the student's Grade ( $F=39.67$ ,  $df_{effect}=14$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) both with respect to the number of parent's individual visits and attendance at PTA meetings. The impact of Sex does not reach statistical significance level, but comes close to it ( $F=2.66$ ,  $df_{effect}=2$ ,  $p<0.06$ ). Graphic highlights of survey findings will help us illustrate a few regularities (Graph 2). The first regularity is that the reduced visits in higher Grades are almost equally distributed between PTA meetings and individual meetings with class teacher. The second regularity concerns *parents' changing "strategies" regarding reasons for their coming to school in different Grades of their child's schooling*. Thus, in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade parents attend both PTA and individual meetings equally, although with relatively high frequency in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and relatively low frequency in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

This finding could be interpreted by the importance of student's individual adjustment to the key transition points (to which we could now also "add" Grade 8), and the need for exchange of information between the parent and teacher on general school issues, as well as on some rather specific issues. The third regularity is connected to a certain amount of *complementarities in pattern of relationship* between attendance at individual meetings and PTA meetings. This pattern of complementarities is particularly evident in so called "non-turbulent" ("uneventful") Grades (plateaus between transition Grades), such as *the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade*. According to attendance frequency at PTA meetings – individual meetings, the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> grade are "something-in-between" the frequency encountered at non-turbulent/plateau periods and the periods which, at this level of analysis, can be regarded as key transition points (the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade where attendance is equally distributed and

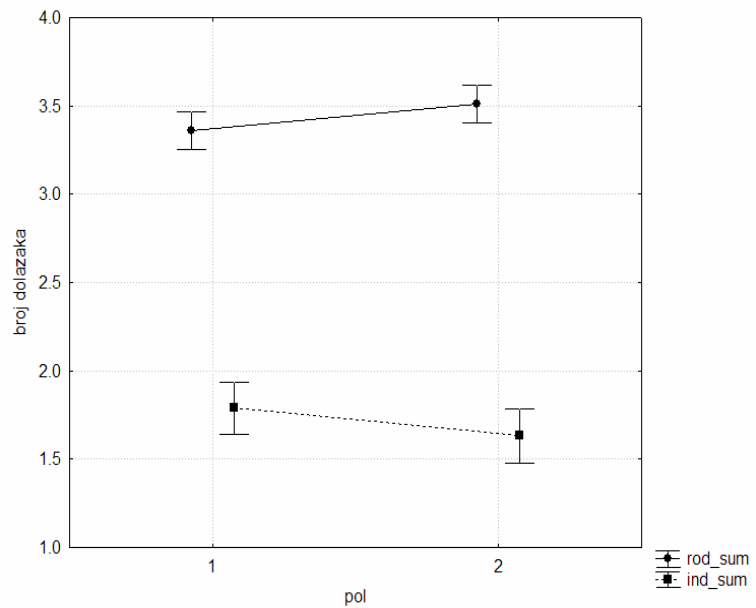
between individual meetings and PTA meetings). As the 5th grade is, by standard, regarded as the key transition point (introducing one lecturer per subject i.e. multi-tuition classes), and since according to our own findings the 7<sup>th</sup> grade represents a specific transition point, the indicated frequency of parents' visits to school can be interpreted by good, respectively bad timing for problem identification and parents' and teacher's adjustments to changes during the 5th and the 7th Grade.

Graph 2: Attendance at individual meetings and PTA meetings per grades



As regards the impact of student's Sex on parent's presence at PTA meetings and individual meetings with teacher, we encountered a very symptomatic finding (Graph 3). The finding indicates that parents of female students, more often than those of male students, attend PTA meetings while parents of male students, more often than those of female students, attend individual meetings with class teacher. This finding could be linked to the results of descriptive analysis which has shown that male students miss classes more often (both excused and unexcused absence), have poorer academic performance and more problematic conduct than female students, all of which make individual meetings with teacher a more appropriate framework to discuss these issues.

Graph 3: Student's sex and parental attendance at PTA and individual meetings



Male Students = 1; Female Students = 2

The third segment of analysis included calculation of partial correlations between the overall number of individual meetings, respectively PTA meetings on one hand, and academic performance at the end of the first semester (excluding Grade 1), academic performance at the end of the second semester (excluding Grade 1), grades in conduct, number of excused and unexcused absence from classes, on the other hand.

Table 3: Parental individual visits to school and academic performance, grades in conduct, absence from classes

	Individual Meetings	
	Partial Correlation Coefficient	p
Mark I	.0684	.071
Mark II	.0132	.727
Grade in conduct	-.0492	.194
Excused absence	-.1311	.001*
Unexcused absence	-.0339	.371

The results indicate (Table 3 and Table 4) that individual meetings with class teacher are mainly indented to offer excuse for absence from classes, while attendance at PTA meetings is linked to poor grades in conduct and unexcused absence.

The negative correlation prefix indicates that the lower the grade in conduct, and the more unexcused absence from class, the more frequent parents' attendance at PTA meetings was.

*Table 4: Parental attendance at PTA meetings and academic performance, grades in conduct, absence from classes*

	Attendance at PTA Meetings	
	Partial Correlation Coefficient	p
Grade I	0.321	.397
Grade II	-.0338	.373
Conduct	-.0733	.053*
Excused Absence	-.0895	.018
Unexcused Absence	-.1695	0.00**

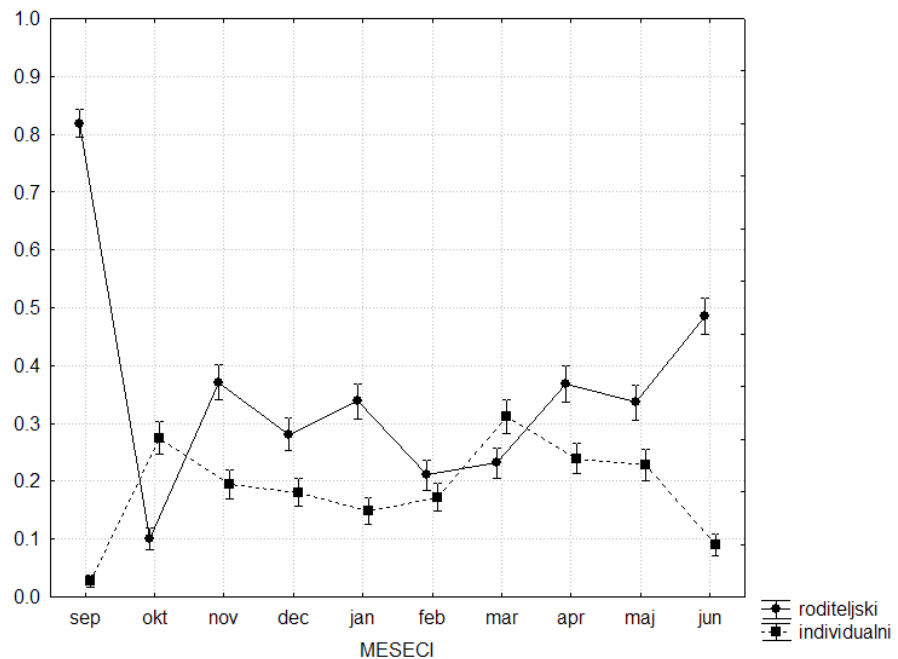
This interpretation specifies the previous finding in the sense that male-student parent's larger number of individual meetings is primarily linked to a large number of excused absences from class. Generally speaking (valid for both male and female students), the parents learn about unexcused absence and poor grades in conduct only when they attend the PTA meetings. Since poor grades in conduct and unexcused absence from class start at higher Grades (mainly valid for male students), the interpretation of this finding could be based on the lack of communication both between parents and children, as well as between parents and class teacher (untimely exchange of information between class teacher and parent). Therefore, the PTA meeting is the place where parents learn about "the actual state of affairs" regarding student's poor conduct. However, in view of the way the PTA meetings are organised and characteristics of communication during these meetings (Kedžić, 1991), it is questionable whether under such circumstances it is possible to investigate issues like missing classes and poor conduct.

*The fourth segment of analysis included* study of teacher's frequent complaints that parents come to school only (immediately) before a semester/tri-semester ends, thus exerting some kind of pressure on evaluation of student's performance.

Since in the existing format of Attendance Registers, parents' visits are recorded in columns divided per months, it was possible to search for general

statistical answers to these questions. The findings illustrated in Graph 4 mainly confirm that parents do come to school before a trimester ends, primarily for PTA meetings which are obligatory by law at this time of the academic year. Parents' individual meetings in school (one peak in October, and the second one in March) are more prominent in periods preceding the end of trimesters which emphasizes the issue of student's marks as the main topic in these discussions, but also parent's interest and concern for academic achievements of their children. These assumptions would have to be confirmed by additional qualitative research.

*Graph 4: Attendance trends of individual and PTA meetings per months*



Legend: Months (Meseци); PTA meetings (Roditeljski), Individual visits (Individualni)

### *Final considerations*

The findings of our research confirm in an empirical and documented way validity of the designed model which assumes that parent-teacher cooperation depends on student's key transition points during schooling, but also on parents' informal "Theory of critical Grade", reflecting the changed reality in school requirements (reflected in poor performance, respectively conduct-re-

lated issues), and reality of developmental changes in parent-child relationship (communication quality). In this regard, the findings of our study served as a basis for reconstruction of the transition process during elementary schooling and definition of the key transition points at the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. The anticipated 5<sup>th</sup> Grade is missing from this reconstruction as a key turning point (transition to multi-tuition classes), which could be interpreted by the fact that today it is not rare that multi-tuition classes are practised even at lower Grades; therefore, the change in the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade is not regarded as a key transition point either from the student's or parent's perspective. The findings are also indicative of differences with respect to Sex, as far as involvement of female and male students' in school is concerned, as well as regarding the male and female student's parents orientation toward cooperation with school staff (attendance at PTA meetings and individual meetings in school). The data on Sex differences in higher Grades of elementary school, especially in the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade are in accordance with existing studies (Deemer *et al.*, 2003) indicating that male students have more learning difficulties and lower marks than female students. Our findings offer scope for a more elaborate and more specific differentiation between meaningful framework of collaboration that supersedes and could constitute an integral part of the very concept of PTA meetings, and individual parent-teacher meetings, giving a new impetus to formalizing this cooperation in a new way, which would include a changed dynamics between the "figure" (academic performance and conduct in school), and the "background" (child's development, socialization, integration) during schooling.

Use of pedagogic documentation analysis method for study of family-school cooperation has also been confirmed. This type of analysis has proved to be a good indicator of the practice of parent-school cooperation at the level of one school, as well as an impetus for creation of real-life solutions at the level of school entity. Based on analysis of its own documentation, each school could organise planned developmental models of cooperation (giving more impetus for cooperation at key transition points, preparing both parents and teaching staff for new modes of cooperation, inviting parents of male students to visit school more frequently, etc.), as well as providing a better structure for the PTA meetings and individual meetings with parents. Shortly, by studying its own documentation for the purpose of getting an insight into family involvement, the school could explore both its own practices and possible innovative actions. To this aim, an optimal solution for studying these issues, in our view, would be to combine the school documentation analysis method (as initial and basic method) with qualitative methods that would explore in more depth already mapped issues, ambiguities and understatements, but would also differentiate the students in transition delay in order to offer

them concrete assistance. School documentation as an indicator of school practices on family-school cooperation is also indicative of individual approaches to this issue both by parents (visits to school), and teachers, respectively (coverage, accuracy and completeness of written comments), which gives scope to introducing corrective actions accordingly.

Finally, one should mention the *shortcomings* of this type of survey. Reality of findings in any research (this one included), depends on characteristics of the sample and the research method applied. In this regard, the findings of this research must take into account the fact that the unit of analysis was an elementary school, namely behaviour of parents and teachers in cooperation with each other within an inner-city elementary school. Such a choice of the unit of analysis certainly limits the possibilities for generalisation of the findings. The next limiting factor reflects upon already discussed difficulties relating to the issue of the written notes in the Attendance Register and reality of parents' visits, with respect both to systematic follow-up of these visits and the actual meaning of the comments on individual meetings, taking into account numerous informal, ceremonial and sporadic meetings between parents and teachers (What has actually been recorded? What kinds of discussions were held?). Also, one may ask a question regarding the time-frame of analysis: Does simulating a longitudinal design (inclusion of different age and Grade groups) give a valid basis for understanding the changes occurring during schooling cycle? Although this is a legitimate methodological approach, we are of the opinion that it could only serve for outlining the elements of the change process and should be supported by a standard longitudinal follow-up of another generation of students during their elementary schooling. Still, one of the merits of the said simulation of longitudinal process is the fact that it gives one a possibility to generate new hypotheses on the process, in addition to representing a useful way of exploring the validity of the assumed model on key transition points and relevant processes occurring during schooling.

*Note.* This article is the result of the project »Education for knowledge-based society« No. 149001 (2006-2010), financially supported by the Ministry for Science and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia.

### References

- Datta, R. & A. De Kanter (1998): *Family involvement in education: a national portrait highlight*. Numerical/Quantitative Data; Report-Descriptive (ED457990).  
www.eric.ed.gov
- Davis, K.M. & G.W. Lambie (2005): Family engagement: a collaborative, systemic approach for middle school counsellors, *Profesional School Counseling*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 144-151.



- Deemer, S., S. McCotter & N. Smith (2003): *Sharing the responsibility: a university-school district investigation of middle school transition*. Presented at the Annual meeting of the American educational research association, Chicago, IL, April 2003.
- Dorđević, B. (1982): Vaspitna uloga porodice danas, *Zbornik 15 Instituta za pedagoška istraživanja* (9–18). Beograd: Institut za pedagoška istraživanja i Prosveta.
- Dorđević, B. (1985): *Savremena porodica i njena vaspitna uloga*. Beograd: Institut za pedagoška istraživanja.
- Epstein, J. & S. L. Dauber (1991): School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools, *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 91, No. 3, 289–305.
- Epstein, J.L. & N.R. Jansorn (2004): School, family and community partnerships link the plan, *Educational Digest: Essential Readings Condensated for Quick Review*, Vol. 69, No. 6, 19–23.
- Ferguson, C. (2005): *Organising family and community connections with schools: how do school staff build meaningful relationships with all stakeholders?* Austin: Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory. <http://www.sedl.org/connections/>
- Guskey, T., C. Ellender & S. Wang (2006): *Evaluating a community-wide parent/family involvement program*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Association. San Francisco: College of Education, University of Kentucky.
- Henderson, A. & K. Mapp (2002): *A new wave of evidence: the impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Annual synthesis/ National center for family and community connections with school, Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory. [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov).
- Kedžić, G. (1991): Komunikacija nastavnika i roditelja; u J. Šefer (prir.): *Učitelj u praksi* (198–206). Beograd: Republički zavod za unapređenje vaspitanja i obrazovanja.
- Mužić, V. (1968): *Metodologija pedagoškog istraživanja*. Sarajevo: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika.
- Nikolić, R. (1992): Prosvetni radnik i strepnja od konkretnih zadataka, *Nastava i vaspitanje*, br. 4–5, 427–436.
- Petrieuskij, A., K. Thorpe & C. Tayler (2005): Trends in construction of transition to school in three western regions, 1990-2004, *International Journal of Early Years Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 55–69.
- Savović, B. i O. Jeftić (2000): Teorijsko-metodološki pristupi u pedagoškim istraživanjima, *Zbornik Instituta za pedagoška istraživanja*, br. 32 (23–40). Beograd: Institut za pedagoška istraživanja.
- Schumacher, D. (1998): *The transition to middle school*. ERIC Digest (icentifier: ED422119). [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)
- Suzić, N. (2001): *Sociologija obrazovanja*. Srpsko Sarajevo: Zavod za udžbenike Republike Srpske.
- Swift, D. F. (1975): Social class as achievement motivation; in J. Whitehead (ed.): *Personality and learning* (142–158). London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Vojić-Marković, M. (1997): Saradnja škole i porodice kao faktor socijalizacije ličnosti deteta, *Škola i porodica kao agensi socijalizacije ličnosti* (183–189). Valjevo: Đačka za drugu OŠ »Nada Purić«.
- Waden, N. & K. Westat (2006): Parent's reports of school practices to provide information to families: 1996 and 2003. Statistic in brief / December 2005, National Center for Educational Statistic / US Department of Education – Institut for Educational Sciences.
- Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja, *Službeni glasnik RS*, br. 62/03, 64/03.

Примљено 16.06.2006; прихваћено за штампу 11.10.2006.

Нада Половина и Јелена Станишић  
 САРАДЊА ШКОЛЕ И ПОРОДИЦЕ ЗАСНОВАНА  
 НА АНАЛИЗИ ШКОЛСКЕ ДОКУМЕНТАЦИЈЕ  
*Анстракт*

Сарадња школе и породице је сложен процес и тема коју је могуће сагледати на различитим нивоима и на различите начине. У овом раду истражили смо неке аспекте сарадње родитеља и учитеља/наставника користећи школску документацију једне београдске основне школе. Узорак за анализу обухватио је 60 школских дневника који су садржали податке за период једне школске године за 60 одељења са 1.289 ученика од првог до осмог разреда. Јединице анализираних садржаја били су: присуство родитељским састанцима и индивидуални сусрети родитеља и наставника. Поред учесталости долазака родитеља, у раду је разматран и однос између овако регистрованих долазака родитеља и школског успеха, оцена из владања, оправданих и неоправданих изостанака ученика. Резултати истраживања указују да постоји интерференција развојних фактора (промена природе односа родитеља и деце и процес осамостаљивања) и родитељске неформалне »теорије кризних разреда«, односно транзиционих периода у процесу школовања. Резултати документују да су индивидуални доласци родитеља пре свега у функцији оправдавања изостанака, а доласци на родитељске састанке повезани са оценом из владања и бројем изостанака (оправданих и неоправданих). Такође, резултати показују да родитељи праве стратегије долазака које су прагматичне и временски и емоционално економичне. У завршном делу рада добијени резултати су продискутовани у светлу могућности њихове примене и даљих истраживања.

*Кључне речи:* индивидуални доласци, родитељски састанци, школска документација, транзиције процеса школовања.

Нада Половина и Јелена Станишић  
 IZU^ENIE SOTRUDNI^ESTVA SEMXI I {KOLW  
 NA OSNOVE ANALIZA {KOLXNOJ DOKUMENTACII  
*Резюме*

Sotrudni-estvo [kolw i semxi ]v]ets] kompleksnoj problemu, kotoruy mo`no rassmatrivatx na raznwh urovn]h i v raznwh napravleni]h. V dannoj rabote rassmatrivayts] nekotore aspektw sotrudni-estva roditelej i u-itelej na osnovanii [kolxnoj dokumentacii, polu-ennoj v odnoj belgradskoj osnovnoj [kole. Analiz proveden na primere 60 klassnwh `urnalov, soder`av[ih dannwe, sobrannwe v te-enie odnogo u-ebnogo goda, vsego 60 klassov, 1289 u-enikov, s prvogo po vosxmoj klass. Rassmatrivalisx dannwe, kasay\ies] prisutstvi] roditelej na roditelxskih sobrani]h, a tak`e i individualxnwe vstre-i roditelej s u-itel]mi. Proveden analiz otno[eni] ~astotnosti pose\eni] [kolw roditel]mi i [kolxnoj uspevaemosti u-enikov, povedeni] u-enikov v [kole, otsutstvi] u-enikov so zan]tij po uva`itelxnoj i neuva`itelxnoj pri-ine. Rezulxtatw issledovani] obnaru`ili nali-ie interferencii faktorov raz-

viti] (izmenenie ka-estva otno[enij roditel'ej i detej v processe stanovleni] samosto]tel'nosti) i roditel'skoj neformal'noj ``teorii krizisnyh klassov'', t.e. tranzicionnyh periodov v processe obučeni]. Utver`daets], ~to individual'nye pose]eni] [kolw roditel'mi sv]zanw s otsutstvii]mi u-čenikov s urokov, a prisutstvie na roditel'skih sobranii]h sv]zanw s povedeniem u-čenika, koli-estvom propu]ennw urokov (po uva`itel'noj ili neuva`itel'noj pri-ine). Rezul'tatw tak`e ukazvayt na to, ~to roditeli imeyt svoi pragmatične strategii pose]eni] [kolw. V konce rabotw rassmatrivaets] vozmo`nostx primeneni] polu-ennw v issledovanii rezul'tatov, name~ayts] napravleni] budu]ih issledovanij.

*Ключевые слова:* individual'na] rabota, roditel'skie sobranii], [kol'na] dokumentaci], tranzicii] processa obučeni].