

Family-School Communication: How Conflict between Family and School Expectation Influences Children's Development

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Abstract. Effective family-school communication has a positive impact on children's education and learning, as well as the educational process in schools, according to research done in the area of family-school communication and the opinions of parents and teachers. Especially for families in kindergartens and primary schools, schools need parents to participate more in children's education and development, and family-school communication is an important factor that can promote parental involvement and help children develop in different fields. An effective home-school communication mode is conducive to the mutual expression of family and school expectations. Through communication, the expectations of both groups can modify and reach the same level, which will encourage the healthy growth of the relationship between family and school and increase cooperation between the two. This paper introduces the literature on family-school communication and makes a systematic review. At the same time, from the perspective of the school, some specific strategies for family-school communication are proposed.

Keywords: family-school communication; parent involvement; children's education and development; family and school expectations.

1. Introduction

Most of the research and literature on family-school communication have affirmed that effective family-school communication can improve children's learning interest and efficiency, and promote children's development in other non-learning-related fields. Through timely and effective communication, children's learning experiences in two different environments can be similar, which allows them to easily switch between the two environments without affecting their learning outcomes. Family-school communication enables teachers and parents to better understand children in another environment. It synergizes with teachers' professionalism and parents' understanding of children and can make children obtain a comfortable learning experience, which in turn provides positive feedback for family-school communication.

However, it should be noted that many works of literature usually explain the benefits and advantages of good home-school communication, or explain the obstacles and difficulties in improving the efficiency of family-school communication, while they did not discuss the harm and disadvantage of ineffective or useless family-school communication. For the discussion of family-school communication, people should not only evaluate the advantages of the desirable model, but also point out the disadvantages of the negative model. In the process of actively studying family-school communication, many countries have recognized that high-quality communication between schools and families will positively affect the educational process of schools and the learning behavior of children at home [1]. Parents put the methods learned through family-school communication into practice, which is also divided into direct participation and indirect participation in children's learning. Additionally, parents can take part in various school activities to demonstrate their understanding of communication between the home and the school [2]. However, uncertain expectations from both the family and the school will make communication difficult, which will make teachers take a negative view of their parents' comments and suggestions caused by poor family-school communication [3]. It will also make the expectations of the family and the school unable to reach an agreement, resulting in greater differences and contradictions in educating children. School is a more professional environment, and family is a more life-oriented environment. There are

essential differences in communication between them. In that case, this requires teachers to reduce the difficulties of family-school communication caused by these differences through professional means. At the same time, parents should also actively get close to the school and jointly create a healthy communication mode.

Through the review of existing relevant literature, this paper aims to explore how dissonance between family and school expectations influences children's development in family-school communication. In this study, the role of family-school communication in education is first discussed. Following a discussion of the differences between family and school expectations and an analysis of the detrimental effects of inappropriate family-school communication, the study then identifies the components of an effective family-school communication mode and proposes some specific strategies that can improve the effectiveness of family-school communication.

2. The role of family-school communication in the process of education

In the last few decades, there has been a lot of research done on family-school communication. Positive family-school relations result in increased parental involvement in their children's education, which boosts students' academic success and influences the development of classroom manners in young children [4]. Besides, high parental involvement caused by effective family-school communication can help children to construct self-esteem, raise interest in education, affect the teaching process positively, and create an environment where parents and children can understand mutually [1,5]. Parents' involvement in the educational process can take many different forms, as long as it is directly or indirectly related to their children's education. Through communicating with the school, parents can involve in the educational process at home by listening to children's reading aloud or observing how they do their homework. In school, parents' involvement is usually demonstrated by joining parent training courses and meetings between parents and teachers [2]. Family-school communication is significant for school and family, and it is called a bridge to facilitate the better development of children [6].

At the same time, the communication between family and school is the information transmitter and influencer for parental involvement and students' development. Some researchers investigated the link between family engagement and student outcomes using longitudinal techniques. For example, Cheuang focused on exploring teacher-student relationships, parental involvement and school adjustment and analyzing the longitudinal relationship between them [7]. It was found that after a period of time, parental involvement can lead the teacher-student relationship to be positive [7]. In the previous school, the low parental involvement leads to a negative teacher-student relationship, which may breed students' problematic behavior in school; when students change to a new school, the low parental involvement can make it difficult to rebuild a new and positive teacher-student relationship, which will directly affect students' adjustment to the new school [7]. The close relationship between teachers and students further affects students' acquisition in learning and psychological development in school, which is significantly higher than their development level with low parental involvement and bad teacher-student relationship in the previous school [7]. In certain ways, the relationship between teachers and students can represent the connection between parental participation and children' learning. Moreover, the teacher-student relationship can affect students' evaluation and cognition of school life. The closer the relationship between family and school is, the easier it is for parents to understand the methods and strategies used by schools in the process of education [8]. When communicating with parents, the school can seek some suggestions or comments from parents to gain the trust of the family and let parents know that the school, which is similar to how parents themselves will do its best to help children grow up healthily. In that case, the family's recognition of the school will also change from a very arrogant authority to a friend who can communicate friendly [8]. Parents' specific cognition of the school and their trust in the school will make the school give parents some effective suggestions more smoothly [8]. This finding actually

shows that family-school communication is related to the teacher-student relationship and the family's recognition of the school.

3. Incongruence between family expectation and school expectation

It is difficult for school and family to mutually understand each other's expectations in the process of communication [8,9]. Expressing their expectations unclearly may create divides in the education for children. Communication may add tension to the relationship between parents and teachers because teachers are anxious about parental evaluation as they want to retain their autonomy in professional teaching while they lack time or support from the leadership [3]. In family-school communication, immoderate and paradoxical requirements, and ambiguous and insufficient approval towards teachers can cause much pressure suffered by teachers [9]. Even though the family has given schools and teachers a lot of rights to educate children, it also makes tensions between the family and the school worse, especially when the family has a strong and prosperous background. Their demands as school patrons will have an impact on teachers' autonomy in the classroom [10]. In some researches, teachers believed that the influence of parents and the intrusion on their professional work were increasing [9]. Although teachers agreed with parental involvement, excessive involvement made them feel discouraged [10].

Schools and parents have different requirements for family-school communication. Schools focus on providing different communication channels to get parents access to all information including children's life, while parents pay more attention to direct communication with teachers [11]. Parents believe that the most effective way to get in touch with the school is to call or send emails [6]. Other communication channels, such as school websites, electronic school journals, class meetings, and class work logs, are more suitable for transmitting official information [6]. In fact, parents are more concerned with their children's lives and education, they may not frequently visit these channels or give them much attention. Phone calls and emails are direct communication means which let parents can directly get in touch with teachers, but school websites, class meetings and work logs are indirect communications which cannot let teachers access parents directly. Whether teachers are willing to conduct phone calls and emails is highly valued by parents [12]. Therefore, parents do not find the school's range of contact channels to be particularly appealing. Parents only care about whether their communication with their children's teachers is convenient and whether they receive responses from teachers, rather than consider the communication efficiency with the whole school [12]. If a child has a problem, the teacher is the first discoverer and reporter, which also makes parents more inclined to turn to the teacher, and parents generally do not talk and negotiate with the principal, because the teacher knows the specific expectations of parents, but the principal only understands them macroscopically. If there are problems and difficulties in the process of educating, many parents will use the fastest and most traditional way such as calling to get in touch with teachers, with which they not only take the initiative, but also can obtain the desired information in time [6].

4. Problematic Family-school communication influences students' development

Ineffective family-school communication causes a lower level of parent involvement [6]. The higher occurrence rate of students' problematic behavior in school, the lower social interaction ability, and the lower academic performance are all related to the lower level of parental participation in education [13]. Parents have an important influence on children's learning behavior and learning habits, which happened imperceptibly and enduringly [14]. Poor family-school communication results in a decline in parental education involvement, which not only has a direct impact on kids' academic performance by changing their learning attitudes and practices, but also has an indirect impact [14].

Due to insufficient family-school communication, children tend to have more negative long-term outcomes without interventions from parents and teachers such as the abuse of drugs and alcohol,

higher rates of suspension and increased risk of dropout [15]. By reviewing previous literature, it was found that when children cannot receive enough support from parents about learning and development, their competencies in social skills, emotional response and learning would be restricted. For example, they might gain little in reading acquisition.

Improving children's social and behavioral skills is one of the primary objectives of early childhood education [16]. Children's interactions at home and at school are especially crucial for the development of their social and behavioral skills [17,18]. School-related skills such as learning and communicating are affected by the interaction experienced in these two environments. This interaction is defined as the connection between family and school. What is more, the feedback on this connection is delayed to each other through poor family-school communication. Poor family-school communication will cause children to be unable to obtain valuable communication or engage in beneficial socialization practices which promote their adaptability and preparation for school [16].

5. Positive family-school communication model & its strengths in children's education

There are two aims that positive "Family-School Communication" models need to include: In addition to helping parents become more capable, devoted, and effective in supporting student learning, schools should concentrate on making themselves more hospitable, prepared, and equipped to facilitate robust family-school communication and family involvement in students' education [19]. With the development of science and technology, good family-school communication needs to be highly effective, which means that information is transmitted faster [19]. For example, when a child gets injured or experiences other unexpected accidents at school, the teacher can inform the parents of the specific situation at first time and lead the parents to actively cooperate with the school to comfort the child. Effective family-school communication means that families and schools are willing to take the initiative to uncover the daily status of children [8]. Once children have some changes in some aspects, whether they are positive or negative, both sides can make timely responses in their own responsible environment. All communication happened enables children to develop their abilities with the help of families and schools. The school's positive attitude toward seeking cooperation with the family will also increase parents' trust and enthusiasm for family-school communication, which will further strengthen the efficiency of family-school communication in turn.

6. Detailed strategies enhancing family-school communication

With the analysis of the impact of family-school communication and the conflicts between family and school, this review paper suggests some specific strategies to help improve family-school communication:

6.1. Family-school communication needs school prepared for communication

The school can summarize the forms of family involvement and student achievement. The school can add accessible information about family-school communication and literature related to it in teacher training and should encourage teachers to have active communication with parents.

6.2. Family-school communication needs leadership prepared for communication

Leadership should maintain a positive attitude toward parents' opinions. Leadership is supposed to demonstrate education policies with explanations to families in a timely manner and can supervise teacher interactions with parents.

6.3. Family-school communication needs teachers prepared for communication

Teachers can seek parents for appropriate times and patterns of communication; on weekends, teachers can regularly send parents children's personal information, such as learning outcomes,

activity participation and emotional fluctuation. Teachers should provide all access to contact and the best time to reach them.

7. Conclusion

It is believed that there are difficulties in family-school communication. This is because parents and teachers have contradictory opinions and positions on children's education. The reasons behind the conflicts are related to differences in professionalism, experience, educational philosophy and environment, etc. If the family confronts the school, the conflicts may appear more severe. More and more young people are changing their roles from children to parents, and the education level of the new generation of parents is constantly improving. In the past, schools were regarded as experts in childcare and education, but with the emergence of a new generation of parents, the authority of schools has been challenged and questioned. Parents pay attention to education-related news and policies, and use the Internet to find the education model that is suitable for the family background, and select it as a reference for their own educational style. Through the analysis of the reference model, parents can construct their own expectations, which tend to exert pressure on family-school communication if projected into school education. The expectations of schools and teachers come from more macro and objective information, such as policy and financial support. It is worth finding an appropriate family-school communication mode to alleviate the pressure on education caused by the difference between family expectations and school expectations. Similarly, the analysis of the basis, causes and differences between the two expectations is conducive to the mutual understanding between families and schools so as to build a comfortable atmosphere for communication.

This review conducted in this paper is based on a limited amount of research and it is a reflection on studies of other researchers. Promoting the efficiency of family-school communication requires continuous exploration by scientists, and further research into that field. This paper only analyzes the problems in family-school communication from the perspective of the school and puts forward suggestions directly, while the impact of family on family-school communication has not been considered. In addition, the role of children in family-school communication has not been mentioned. Although children will not participate directly in the communication, the result of communication will ultimately put an effect on them. Therefore, when analyzing family-school communication problems, children's perspectives should be taken into account. Although the specific impact of children is unclearly researched, it is a direction that can be explored in depth. In addition to the analysis at the educational level, psychology, economy, politics, culture, race, religion, etc can be the direction of discussing the family-school communication mode in the future. Even children and parents with different conditions may adapt to different home-school communication modes. The perspective not considered in this paper can be the topic of future research

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