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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

This research has to give an answer to the questions that have a causality relation with the better educational achievements of the people from other ethnic groups. I have chiefly considered the parents' social status which means that I will mostly look into the parents' level of education, although this status encompasses much more. The basic aim of the research is to examine the differences of students' educational achievements based on ethnicity in the Primary Schools in Macedonia. The research is realized through determination of the connection between the educational achievements of the students from other ethnic groups in Macedonian primary schools and their parents' education. The analysis of the results has shown that there are differences in the students' achievements, and those differences are answer to the questions concerning the level of parents' education as one of the reasons for students' underachievement. The method used for the research is a hybrid, and quantity and quality approaches have been used.

INTRODUCTION

There are various ethnic groups in Macedonia. The census in 2002¹ showed that from the total number of 2.022.547 citizens, there are 1.297.981 Macedonians (64,8%), 509.083 Albanians (25,17%), 77.959 Turks (3,85%), 53.879 Romani people (2,66%), 35.939 Serbians (1,78%), 17.018 Bosniaks (0,84%), 9.695 Vlachs (0,48%) and 20.993 people that belong to other ethnic groups (1,04%). Ethnic groups or ethnicity are those people that believe in common origin according to outside looks, traditions or both, also according to a memory of colonization or migration. Their belief becomes important in the fight for formation of a new community.² Republic of Macedonia as a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious country, takes care of the individual's rights as well as the collective rights of all ethnic groups through its legislation system.

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In that corpus of ethnic rights is the right for an education of the ethnic groups. The Republic of Macedonia has incorporated the right to education in an article concerning the economic, social and cultural rights in its Constitution. It is Article 44 that states that: "Everyone has the right to education". Education is available to anyone under the same conditions. Primary Education is obligatory and free³. The ethnicity and the problems that it causes have reflected into education. Although the legislation offers normal preconditions for education of the ethnic groups, their inclusion has not been satisfactory and even when there is an inclusion, it is on a very low level.

The bad educational results are one of the factors that contributed to the unsatisfactory economic development and the high unemployment rate, which is a proof that we must improve the investment in educational quality through identifying the reasons for the weak educational results. These differences are also present because of the different ethnicity. Different ways for eradication have been applied on European level concerning the differences in the educational achievements caused by ethnicity and the fight against educational inequality has been especially emphasized, as well as the promotion for indiscrimination and the integration of the subgroups such as ethnic groups or migrants. These activities

¹Census of population and houses in the Republic of Macedonia in 2002; final data, State Statistical Office, may 2005. <http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=2>

² Вебер, М., 1976, Привреда и друштво, I, Београд: Просвета, 327

³Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 2001

include linguistic, cultural and bilingual support in schools, initiatives for including the parents and a special support for studying. When it's a question of the reasons for the differences in the educational achievements, we face a network of many factors that determine the student's success. The atmosphere in the family and the circumstances are of a major importance for the development and the advancement of the children. Hence appeared the inspiration and the idea to determine if there is a difference in the educational achievement among children from different ethnic groups and if it is under the influence of their parents' level of education. The term 'educational achievements' has been used in this research as a marker for the size of the changes that appeared during the development of the student as an individual under the influence of the educational system⁴. Having in mind the aim of the research, the educational achievements have been determined through the achieved grades.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The method for the research is combined which means that both quantity and quality approaches have been used. The quantity approach was used for carrying out a survey among the students at seventh and eighth grade in the Primary Schools in Stip, Kocani and Radovish, and for processing the used questionnaire. The quality approach was applied for the analysis of the data received from the parents' interviews from the above mentioned towns. From a methodological standpoint, this research is aimed to an evaluation of the influence of the ethnic factor upon the educational achievements of the students at the Primary Schools. The following techniques were used in the research:

- Quantitative – students in seventh or eighth grade from different ethnicity in six Primary Schools on the territory of Stip, Kocani and Radovis. The total amount was 300 students, 50 from each schools. There were 100 Macedonians, 100 Turks, 70 Romani and 30 Vlachs.
- Qualitative – 30 randomly chosen parents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the parents' level of education and their influence over the educational achievements, we can note the relation among the results, the student's achievements and the fathers' level of education. It is interesting that in the graph that says "No Education" there isn't any father of a Macedonian or Vlach student, and these students are the most successful at school (Table No.1). The largest percent of non-educated fathers are from Romani ethnicity (12,1%) and the fathers of Turkish students have also large percent (8,8%). The parents that have only Secondary Education are also from this ethnic groups. The largest percent have the Romani with 47,1%, then the Turkish with 8,9 and at the end are the Vlachs with 3,3%. Most of the Vlachs have Secondary education (60%), then come the Macedonian fathers with 56,4%, the Romani with 39,4% and at the end are the Turkish with 32,4%. The Vlach fathers are the most high educated with 36,7%, then the Macedonian with 34,7% and the Turkish with 11,8%, while there isn't any Romani father with a High Education (0%). The largest percent of non-educated mothers are from the Turkish ethnic group with 20,6%, then the Romani with 19,4%, The Macedonian with the smallest 1% and the Vlachs with 0% (Table No.2). Concerning Primary Education, the percentage is just a little different. The Vlach mothers are the most educated with 70%, then the Macedonian with 53,5% and the Romani with only 17,9%. The most highly educated are the Macedonian mothers with 37,6% that is larger percentage than the Macedonian fathers, and the Vlach mothers with 26,7%. Unlike the Romani fathers do not have High Education, 4,5% of the Romani mothers do have.

Table 1. Nationality * Father's level of Education

Nationality	Father's level of Education			
	No Education	Primary Education	Secondary Education	High Education
Macedonians	0%	8.9%	56.4%	34.7%
Turks	8.8%	47.1%	32.4%	11.8%
Romani	12.1%	48.5%	39.4%	0%
Vlachs	0%	3.3%	60.0%	36.7%

Table 2. Nationality* Mother's level of Education

Nationality	Mother's level of Education			
	No Education	Primary Education	Secondary Education	High Education
Macedonians	1.0%	7.9%	53.5%	37.6%
Turks	20.6%	50.0%	26.5%	2.9%
Romani	19.4%	58.2%	17.9%	4.5%
Vlachs	0%	3.3%	70.0%	26.7%

- The questionnaire technique – used for surveying seventh or eighth grade students from different ethnicity. The questionnaire contained open and closed type of questions.
- A sample from the research:

The smallest percent is of the Turkish mothers which is 2,9%.

The influence of parents' education on the students' educational achievements

From the third table, we can analyse the influence of father's education on the student's success according to the ethnic

⁴ С.Петровска, Семејството и воспитанието на децата, АЛФА 94 МА, Скопје, 2009, стр.83

group. It can be noted the 8,9% of Macedonian fathers are with Primary Education, and 33,3% of the children are A students, 11,1% are C students and 55,6 are D students. This means that the students whose fathers have only Primary Education are mostly D students. If we look at the 56,4% of Macedonian fathers that have Secondary Education, we can see that 63,2% of their children are A students, 28,1% are B students, 8,8% are C students and non are D students. This means that as the father's level of education increases, the percentage of A students increases as well. High Education have 34,7% of the Macedonian fathers, and their children are 80% A students, 14,3% B students and only 5,7% are C students. The conclusion based on the received data about Macedonians is that the higher father's level of education, the better the student's results.

Primary Education are C students. Turkish fathers with Secondary Education are 32,4%, and their children are 21,2% A students, 24,2% B students, 36,4% C students and only 18,2% D students. It can be noted that as the level of father's education increases, the number of D students decreases. The Turkish fathers with the highest education are 11,8% and only 8,3% of their children are D students.

The Turkish students whose fathers have high education are 50% B students, 25% are C students and only 16,7% are A students. This means that the highest percent of Turkish A students (21,2%) are those whose fathers' have only Secondary Education. On the other hand, the highest percentage of D students (33,3%) are those whose fathers haven't got any education.

Table 3. Nationality*Father's level of education*Students' marks

Nationality	Father's level of Education		Students' marks			
			A	B	C	D
Macedonian	No Education	0%				
	Primary	8,9%	33,3%	0%	11,1%	55,6%
	Secondary	56,4%	63,2%	28,1%	8,8%	.0%
	High	34,7%	80%	14,3%	0%	5,7%
Turkish	No Education	8,8%	0%	55,6%	11,1%	33,3%
	Primary	47,1%	16,7%	22,9%	39,6%	20,8%
	Secondary	32,4%	21,2%	24,2%	36,4%	18,2%
	High	11,8%	16,7%	50,0%	25,0%	8,3%
Romani	No Education	12,1%	0%	12,5%	37,5%	50,0%
	Primary	48,5%	3,1%	15,6%	43,8%	37,5%
	Secondary	39,4%	11,5%	26,9%	42,3%	19,2%
	High	0%				
Vlach	No Education	0%				
	Primary	3,3%	0%	0%	100,0%	
	Secondary	60,0%	50,0%	27,8%	22,2%	
	High	36,7%	81,8%	18,2%	0%	

Table 4. Nationality*Mother's level of education*Student's marks

Nationality	Mother's level of Education		Students' marks			
			A	B	C	D
Macedonian	No Education	1%				
	Primary	7,9%	62,5%	12,5%	.0%	25,0%
	Secondary	53,5%	61,1%	25,9%	9,3%	3,7%
	High	37,6%	76,3%	15,8%	2,6%	5,3%
Turkish	No Education	20,6%	14,3%	33,3%	23,8%	28,6%
	Primary	50%	13,7%	35,3%	29,4%	21,6%
	Sesondary	26,5%	22,2%	14,8%	55,6%	7,4%
	High	2,9%	33,3%	33,3%	0%	33,3%
Romani	No Education	19,4%	0%	0%	23,1%	76,9%
	Primary	58,2%	5,1%	23,1%	48,7%	23,1%
	Secondary	17,9%	8,3%	33,3%	50,0%	8,3%
	High	4,5%	33,3%	0%	0%	66,7%
Vlach	No Education	0%				
	Primary	3,3%	0%	0%	100,0%	
	Secondary	70%	52,4%	28,6%	19,0%	
	High	26,7%	87,5%	12,5%	.0%	

The fathers from the Turkish ethnic group are 8,8% uneducated, and 55,6% of their children are B students, 11,1% are C students and 33,3% are D students. It is notable that most of the students (55,6%) are B students despite their fathers' lack of education. The Turkish fathers with Primary education are 47,1% and their children are 16,7% A students, 22,9 are B students, 39,6% are C students and 20,8% are D students. According to the data, most of the students whose parents have

The notable thing is that the number of A students that is 16,7% is the same whether the fathers' level of education is Primary or High. Most of the Romani fathers are with Primary Education which is 48,5%, then 39,4% have Secondary Education, 12,1% are uneducated and none of them have Higher Education. Half of the children (50%) whose father is uneducated Romani are D students, 37,5% are C students, 12,5% are B students and none of them is an A student. Those

whose father has Primary Education are mostly C students with 43,8%, then 37,5% are D students, 15,6% are B students and only 3,1% are A students. Although the percentage of D students is bigger, it is quite smaller compared to the students with uneducated father. On the other hand the number of A students whose father has Secondary Education (39,4% of the fathers) is the highest compared to others. The children of those fathers that have Primary Education or are uneducated are 11,5% A students, 26,9% are B students, 42,3% are C students and D students are just 19,2%. It can be concluded that with the increase of the Romani father's level of education, the number of Romani D students decreases while the number of Romani A and B students increases. This means that the High Education has a positive effect on the student's success.

The curious thing about Vlach students is that they aren't D students in any of the above mentioned cases and also none of the fathers is without an education. The highest percentage is for the fathers with Secondary Education which is 60%, then 36,7% are fathers with High Education and the smallest percentage of 3,3% are those with Primary Education. Most of the students whose fathers have Primary Education are C students, those whose fathers have Secondary Education are 50% A students, 27,8% B students and 22,2% C students. There is an increase of 81,8% of A students with Vlach fathers with higher education, while 18,2% are B students and there aren't any C or D students. Clearly, the as the father's level of education increases so does the percentage of A students, while the percentage of C students decreases.

It can be determined according to table no.4 if the mother's level of education influences the student's educational achievements based on the different ethnic group. I will do the same analysis here as with table 3, so that it can be determined if there is any relation between the mother's level of education and student's educational achievements. One percent of the Macedonian mothers are uneducated and their children are always D students (100%). The mothers with Primary Education are 7,9% and their children are mostly A students with 62,5%, then 12,5% are B students, none are C students and 25% are D students. The highest percentage is of mothers who have Secondary Education (53,5%) and their children are 61,1% A students, 25,9% B students, 9,3% C students and only 3,7% D students. Also a large number of Macedonian mothers have higher education (37,6%). Their children are mostly A students (76,3%), then 15,8% are B students, 2,6% are C students and 5,3% are D students. It is obvious from this graph on table 4 that with the increase of the parents' level of education, especially the mother, the percentage of A students also increases.

Half of the Turkish mothers or 50% have Primary Education, and 20,6% are uneducated. The students of the first are 13,7% A students, 35,3% are B students, 29,4% are C students and there are 21,6% D students. The students with an uneducated mother are mostly B students (33,3%), 28,6% are D students, 23,8% are C students and 14,3% are A students. Only 26,5% of the Turkish mothers have Secondary Education. Their children are 22,2% A students, 14,8% are B students, 55,6% are C students which is the biggest percentage, while the percentage of D students is considerably decreased and is 7,4. Very small

number of Turkish mothers have Higher Education (2,9%), but their children hold the highest percentage as A students (33,3%) and there are as many B and C students. The influence of the mother's level of education on the student's achievements can be also noted with the Romani mothers. Although the percentage show that most Romani students are C and D students and very little are A and B students, the percentage of A students increases proportionally as the level of mother's education increases. The characteristic for the Vlach students on the other hand is that there aren't any D students regardless of the mother's level of education. Only 3,3% of the Vlach mothers have Primary Education, but their children are good students. Most of the mothers are with Secondary Education (70%) and the students are 52,4% A students, 28,6% B students and 19% C students. The percentage of A students increases on 87,5% for the students with highly educated mothers, and 12,5% of them are C students.

Conclusion

The received results have shown that there is an influence of the parents' level of education over the educational achievements of the students. It is interesting that in the graph "No education" there isn't a Macedonian nor a Vlach father, and at the same time those students have shown highest achievements at school. The largest percent of uneducated fathers are Romani with 12,1%. Turkish fathers also have low percent of 8,8. Most highly educated are the Vlach fathers with 36,7%, then the Macedonian fathers with 34,7% and the Turkish with 11,8%, while none of the Romani have higher education. The largest percentage of uneducated mothers were the Turkish with 20,6% and then the Romani mothers with 19,4 and the Macedonian mothers with only 1%. There aren't any uneducated Vlach mothers. Only with Primary Education are the Romani mothers (58,2%) and the Turkish mothers (50%). Secondary Education have finished 70% of the Vlach mothers and 53,5% of the Macedonian mothers. Higher education have mostly Macedonian mothers with 37,6% which is higher than the Macedonian fathers, and also Vlach mothers with 26,7%. Unlike the Romani fathers that have no higher education, 4,5% of the Romani mothers do have higher education. The lowest percentage of 2,9 have the Turkish mothers.

The results have shown that as the parents' level of education increases, so does the student's success regardless of their ethnic group. According to the research and the received data it can be concluded that the level of education does affect students' success at school. Concerning the reasons for the differences in the educational achievements, we face a network i.e. a number of related factors that determine the student's success. Investigating the relation of the socio-economic status of the family and the student's educational achievements is just a first step in determining the interdependence of many other factors of the family environment and the students' achievements. These factors will be a base for a further and larger research with the aim to create effective policies and programmes that will improve the educational and consequently the social and economic status of the ethnic groups in Republic of Macedonia.

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