

THE EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND SCHOOL

Cristina BORTO^a

^a Kindergarten “Raza de Soare”, Costache Negri Street, 1, Bacău, Romania

Abstract

The communication and the public relations field has always represented an interest for many specialists in this field, and not only, because it represents, debates and brings solutions to the problems we face every day. The research aims to highlight the communication style adopted by parents in the relationship with the kindergarten, the methods they are using and the changes they want for the future. The research was done using the tools of the questionnaire, in an attempt to identify the strategic areas of communication existing in this institution. Knowing the current situation from the direct wishes of the beneficiaries and their proposals for improving the communication process, it remains the task of specialists to choose the most appropriate strategies for quality in communication, obtaining thereby also quality in education. The results of this research are interpreted and presented with percentages for each response version. One reason for choosing this theme is that the educational system is based on human formation and we believe that investing in this field is very important.

Key words: communication, educational system, family, quality

Introduction

Communication is the key concept of all areas of activity. Whether we are talking about the communication between partners at a managerial level, or about the communication between those who implement certain strategies and the audiences, communication is what makes an activity reach its goal. Inside the educational system, the communication activity is the component of public relations without (which) nothing can be done.

“The kindergarten is the educational institution which is in charge of the education and instruction of preschoolers (children between 3-6 years). It aims to create the necessary

conditions to build and support the optimal and continuous multilateral development of children.” (Margareta Bernitchi – Turcas, 1974, p. 25).

The relation of communication, which is present in the educational process, but also in its management, is based on trust, respect and a desire to improve relationships among people. From this perspective, the purpose of public relations is to manage the relationships between school and community, but also to channel the efforts of the teachers by presenting educational activities, promoting achievements and attracting the public attention towards the role and importance of the educational system.

The educational system means more than education, knowledge and instruction. It implies relatedness, knowing the partners, involvement and dedication from those who love children. Communication and public relations are essential activities for the good development of every field of activity. Education and communication are concepts that cannot be separated. Communication is an essential component of the educational process and the educational system. Through the process of communication we are persuading others to act in a certain way, developing thinking skills, emotion and the personality, we are acknowledging the reactions and the attitudes of the persons with whom we are in contact.

Research methodology

Methods, tools and participants

To evaluate the educational system from the point of view of the family communication with the school, we have applied, as a research method, the questionnaire (Annex 1), on a representative sample of 50 persons, parents, grandparents or babysitters of children from the kindergarten “Raza de Soare” Bacău. In terms of gender distribution of the sample group, 80% of the respondents were women and 20% were men. The age categories to which the respondents belonged are as follows: 55% of the interviewees are between 35 – 50 years, 35% between 24- 34 years, 5% between 18 -23 years and only 5% are over 50. Regarding the level of the respondents’ studies, 55% of those interviewed have affirmed that the last level of education they have completed was high-school, followed by university studies with a percentage of 25% and 20% the doctoral studies, however none of them having completed their doctoral studies yet.

The questionnaire consisted of a set of 14 questions formulated around certain evaluation items regarding the communication style adopted by parents in the relationship with the kindergarten.

Data analysis

We shall further present and discuss the questions included in the questionnaire, as well as the as well as the answers provided by the parents.

Question no. 1: In your opinion, what is the role of the kindergarten in the training of the child?

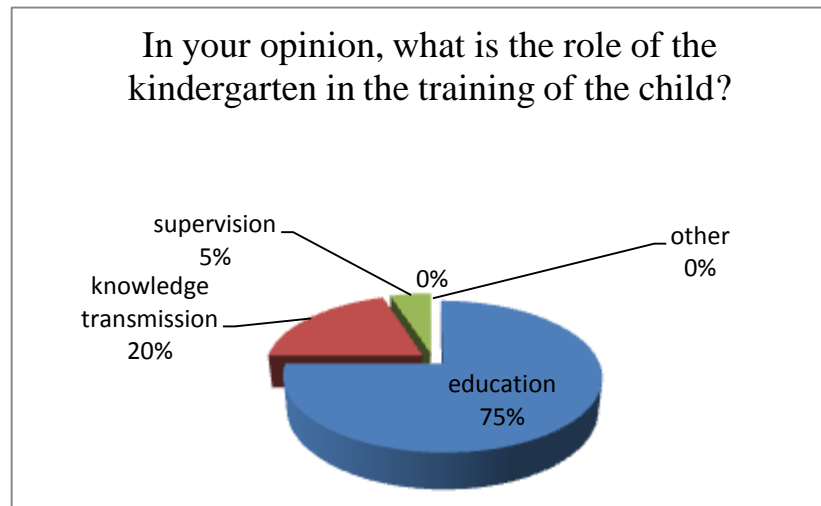


Diagram 1. *The graphic representation of the role of the kindergarten in the training of the child*

As we notice from Diagram 1, 75% of the interviewees answered that the kindergarten's role is to educate, 20% said that the focus is on the transmission of knowledge, and only 5% highlighted the role of supervising children. None of the interviewees exemplified, through other terms, the kindergarten's role in the children's training and development.

Question no. 2: What means of communication do you use most often?

At this question, the majority of 75% responded that the main method of communication with the kindergarten is the direct discussion with the teacher, and 25% responded that an efficient method used by them is also the one of the meetings organized by the teachers and involving the presence of (preferably) all the parents of the children in a certain group. None of the interviewees made reference to other possible alternatives, namely, communication in writing or other means of communication (phone, e-mail).

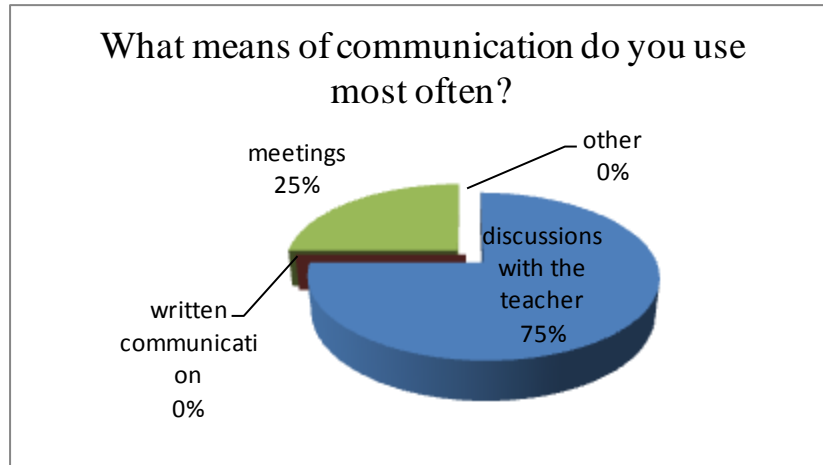


Diagram 2. *The graphic representation of means of communication most often used in the parents-teachers communication*

Question no. 3 asked parents to describe the quality of the communication between teachers, as representatives of the school, and parents.

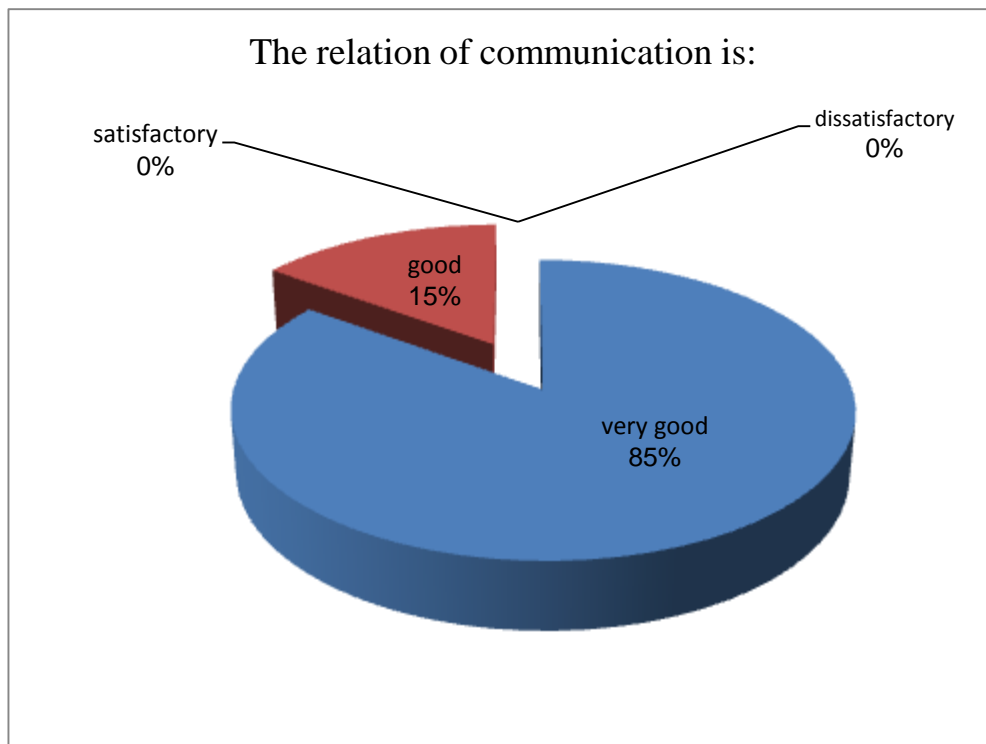


Diagram 3. *The graphic representation of the parents' perspective upon the quality of the parents-teachers communication*

At this question, as we may see from the graph, 85% of the responses described the relationship of communication as being very good, and a percent of 15% have described it as good. We don't have any percentage indication for the answer alternatives satisfactory, respectively unsatisfactory.

At question no. 4, parents were asked to say whether they believed that their opinions/suggestions/complaints related to the school, the children and the educational process were taken into consideration by the school staff and given due attention.

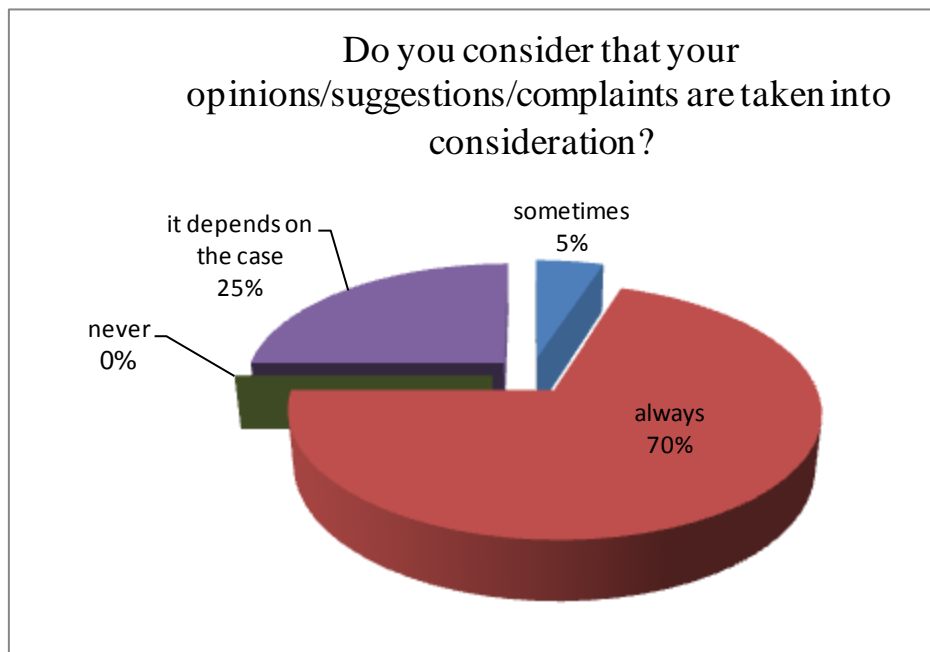


Diagram 4. *The graphic representation of the extent to which the school staff takes into account the parents' opinions/suggestions/complaints*

Regarding the kindergarten's opening to take into consideration the opinions/suggestions or complaints of the educational partners (parents, grandparents, babysitters), the respondents answered that this happens always (70%), 25% of the respondents said that it depended on the situation, 5% of the respondents said that this happens only sometimes, whereas none of them said that this never happens.

Question no. 5 asked parents about the kind of activities that they would you like to be developed in the kindergarten.

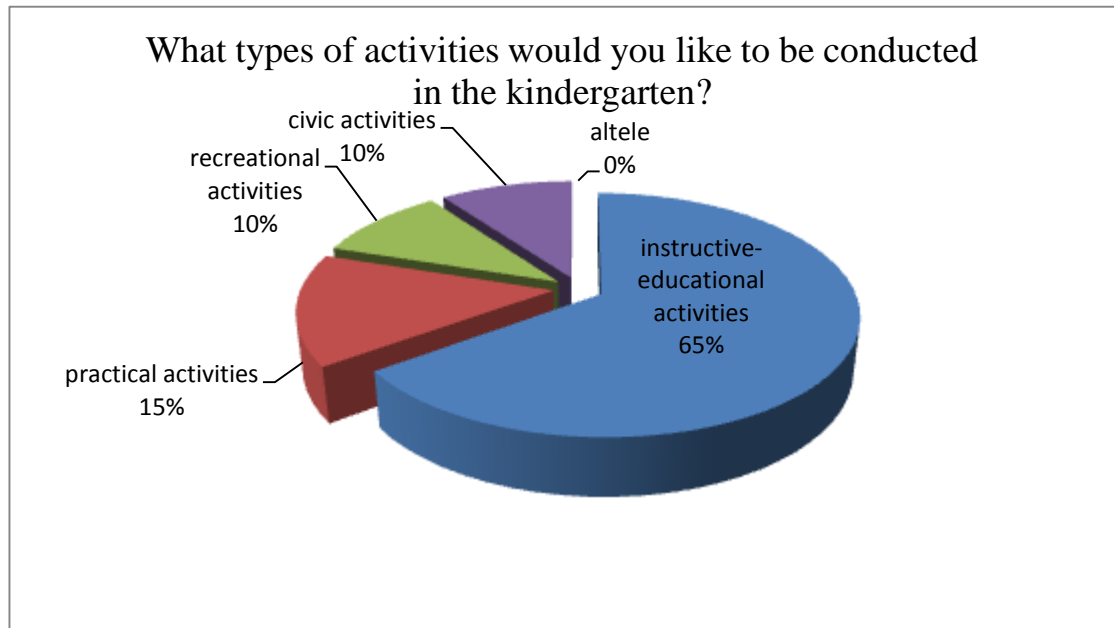


Diagram 5. *The graphic representation of the types of activities parents would like to see implemented in the kindergarten*

The kindergarten's educational partners declared that they would like instructive – educational activities to be conducted in the kindergarten (65%), others opted for practical activities (15%), only 10% would like recreational activities and 10% civic activities.

At question no. 6, the parents had to answer how often they discussed with their children about what was going on at the kindergarten.

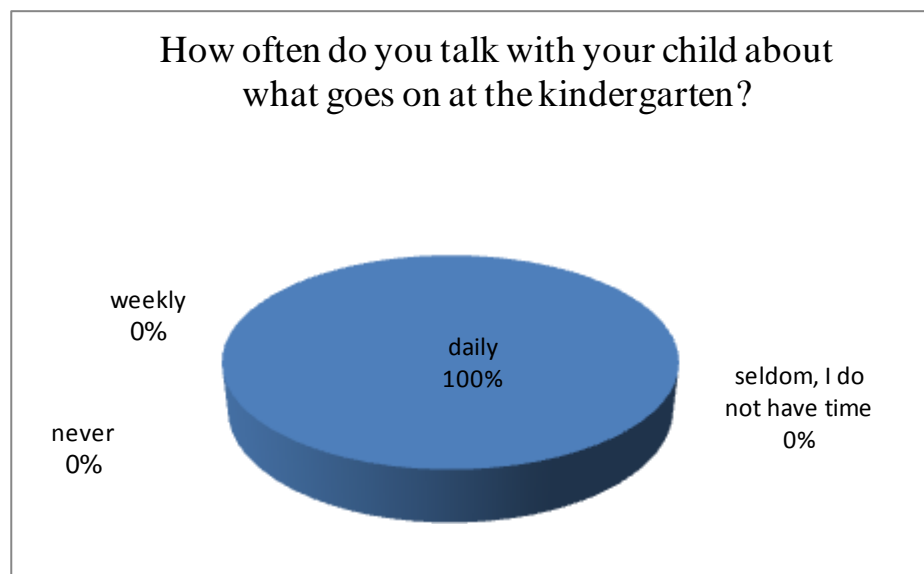


Diagram 6. *The graphic representation of the time parents spend discussing with their children about what goes on at the kindergarten*

As it can be noticed, all the interviewees (100%) responded that they held daily discussions with their children about what is going on over the day at the kindergarten.

For question no. 7, parents were asked to rate the quality of the managerial function of the unit (the head teacher's involvement).

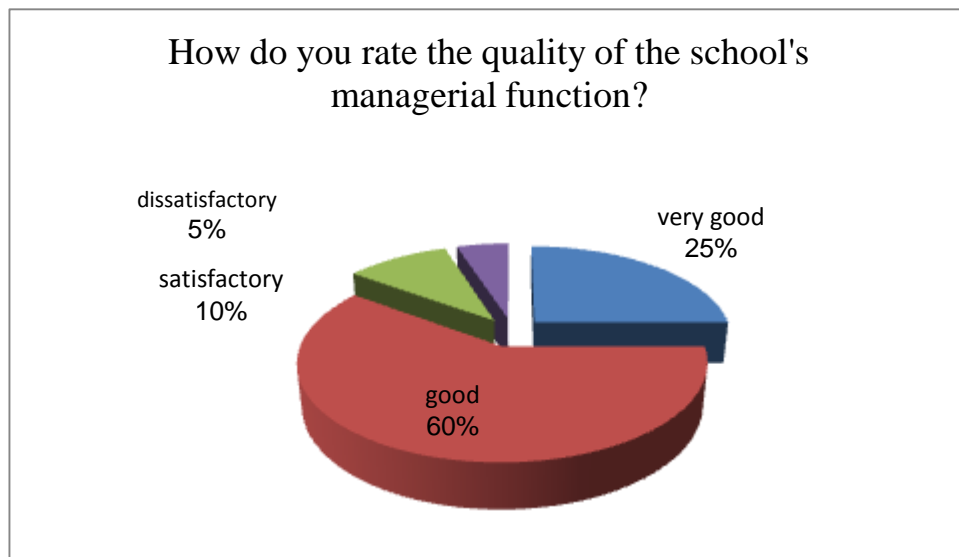


Diagram 7. *The graphic representation of rating of the quality of the school's managerial function*

Only a percentage of 25 of the interviewees answered that they appreciate the quality of the managerial function of the education unit as being very good, 60% consider it to be good, a percent of 10% appreciate it only as being satisfactory, and a small percent of 5% as unsatisfactory.

Question no. 8 asked parents to suggest measures for the improvement of the quality of the unit's entire activity. The majority of the respondents did not suggest any improvement measures for the quality of the educational activity from the kindergarten, claiming that they are satisfied with the activities currently carried out. Those who have proposed possible measures, to improve the quality of the educational activity conducted in the kindergarten mentioned the need for additional teaching materials, as well as the need to support a greater number of outdoor trips involving the group of children.

Conclusions and discussions

After the completion of the questionnaire, used for receiving information regarding the communication style of the parents with the kindergarten's representatives, we have noticed that the children's parents adopt a direct style of communication with the representatives and the employees of the kindergarten "Raza de Soare" Bacău. Parents recognize the kindergarten's fundamental role in training and education, but do not neglect the dimension of supervision, which is essential for the children's safety. Also, the parents declare that they prefer direct discussions with the teachers for receiving information about their children's evolution and comply with the format of organized meetings (teacher-parents), but show no interest in the written communication of any type, whatsoever. This may be accounted for by the fact that written communication is more time consuming, does not happen in real time and may allow for a certain degree of omissions or wrong interpretations. Regarding the communication relationship, parents claim that this is a very strong relationship. This indicates the constant concern of the institution's teachers in building and maintaining efficient communication, as well as the parents' will to cooperate.

Moreover, the research highlights the fact that the two communicators are educational partners, since a relevant number of interviewees claim that the dialogue with the kindergarten is constructive and useful for the educational process. The parents have also expressed their opinions about the type of activities carried out in the kindergarten. Parents acknowledge the importance of the instructive – educational activities and appreciate the role of practical activities, but would also like civic activities to a smaller extent (voluntary work, ecological education), as well as recreational activities. However, the small number of parents who have mentioned the importance of recreational activities (only 10%) reveals the fact that parents neglect the main activity characteristic of the age of preschoolers: the game. All the activities through which children/preschoolers acquire knowledge and skills are developed through games: "the child's happiness is the game, the old man's –wisdom, the young man's –love" (Lucian Blaga). An important detail for the quality of the educational process, as well as for the communication between the public of the educational system and the specialists in public relationships, is the fact that the communication relationship is not restricted only to the dialogue between parents and teachers but also to the discussions between parents and children about kindergarten, accomplishing therefore a real feedback of the activity. The managerial activities were appreciated evenly, highlighting the decentralization of the educational system, simultaneously with the approval of the National Education Law –Law no. 1/2011.

Therefore, the research aspects demonstrate that the communication style between kindergarten and the target-audience is one that promotes dialogue and shared efforts for achieving the mutually established goals.

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Annex 1. Questionnaire for the evaluation of the quality of the educational system from the perspective of the communication between family and school

- In your opinion, what is the role of the kindergarten in the training of the child?
 - education
 - knowledge transmission
 - supervision
 - others (mention_____)

- What means of communication do you use most often?
 - discussions with the teacher
 - written communication
 - meetings
 - others (mention_____)

- The relation of communication is:
 - very good
 - good
 - satisfactory
 - unsatisfactory

- Do you consider that your opinions/suggestions/complaints are taken into consideration?
 - sometimes
 - always
 - never
 - depending on the situation

- What kind of activities would you like to be conducted in the kindergarten?
 - instructive – educational (development of the basis abilities)
 - practical (development of artistic skills)
 - recreational
 - civic activities (accountability, ecology, environment etc.)
 - others (mention_____)

- How often do you discuss with your children about what is going on at the kindergarten?
 - daily
 - weekly
 - sometimes, I don't have time
 - never

- How would you rate the quality of the managerial function of the unit (the head teacher's involvement)?
 - very good
 - good
 - satisfactory
 - unsatisfactory

- Give suggestions for the improvement of the quality of the unit's overall activity.