

Barriers to Developing Parent-Teacher Relationships from Parents' Perspectives

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DOI: 10.26907/esd.20.4.02

EDN: HLBCFE

Submitted: 9 January 2024; Accepted: 15 December 2025

Abstract

Cooperation between parents and teachers is a key factor influencing children's school success, yet its development is often hindered by insufficient communication, time constraints, and socioeconomic inequalities. The aim of the study is to identify and analyse potential barriers to developing cooperation between parents and teachers in the Slovak primary education context. The research instrument was a questionnaire of our construction designed for Slovak parents of children at the primary level of education ($n = 320$). We tested the reliability and validity of the questionnaire by Cronbach's α (0.69 ± 0.7), which confirmed the internal consistency of the questionnaire. We statistically analysed the research findings using Pearson's χ^2 Goodness-of-Fit test. The research sample consisted of Slovak parents having a child in primary school, and they differentiated according to family socioeconomic indicators. The research showed that the parents' and teachers' busyness and the absence of motivation for cooperation represent potential barriers to developing collaboration family and school. Also parents' socioeconomic status impacts the perception of barriers to developing family-school relations, with the most decisive significance mainly observed for parents' education and profession. The study highlights the role of socioeconomic factors as key determinants in shaping parents' perceptions of cooperation barriers – an area that has been insufficiently addressed in the broader in international research context.

Keywords: cooperation, parents, teacher, family socioeconomic indicators, primary level of education.

Барьеры на пути развития отношений между родителями и учителями: точка зрения родителей

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DOI: 10.26907/esd.20.4.02

EDN: HLBCFE

Дата поступления: 9 января 2024; Дата принятия в печать: 15 декабря 2025

Аннотация

Отношения между родителями и учителями являются одним из факторов, влияющих на успеваемость детей, однако их благополучному развитию часто препятствуют недостаточная коммуникация, нехватка времени и социально-экономическое неравенство. Цель исследования – выявить и проанализировать барьеры, возникающие между родителями и учителями в учреждениях начального образования Словакии. Инструментом исследования послужил разработанный нами опросник для словацких родителей, чьи дети обучаются в начальной школе ($n = 320$). Надёжность и валидность опросника были проверены с помощью коэффициента α Кронбаха ($0,69 \pm 0,7$), который подтвердил обоснованность данного инструмента. Статистический анализ результатов исследования проводился с использованием критерия согласия Пирсона χ^2 . Выборка исследования состояла из словацких родителей младших школьников и была дифференцирована по социально-экономическим показателям семьи. Исследование показало, что занятость родителей и учителей, а также отсутствие мотивации к сотрудничеству друг с другом представляют собой серьёзные препятствия в развитии отношений между семьей и школой. Ещё одним барьером в этом деле становится социально-экономический статус родителей, прежде всего – их образование и профессия. Исследование подчёркивает, что вопрос о роли социально-экономических факторов в восприятии родителями возможности для сотрудничества со школой недостаточно изучен и требует более глубокого исследования в контексте международного образования.

Ключевые слова: сотрудничество, родители, педагог, социально-экономические показатели семьи, начальный уровень образования.

Introduction

The relationship between family and school represents a key pillar of a child's successful development and educational progress. In recent decades, especially since the 1990s, Slovakia has witnessed significant socioeconomic, political, and cultural changes that have transformed the dynamics between parents and schools. Traditionally, the role of parents was perceived mainly as passive observers or “clients”, but today, parents are increasingly seen as active partners in the educational process. This shift is crucial because effective cooperation between teachers and parents can significantly support not only the academic success of children but also their social and emotional development.

In the international research context, it is strongly pointed out that the quality of cooperation between family and school significantly influences children's educational outcomes, their behavior and overall well-being. Research confirms that the nature and intensity of this cooperation are mainly influenced by communication barriers, teachers' attitudes and parents' socioeconomic background (Bæck, 2015; Hornby & Blackwell,

2018; OECD, 2023; Orell & Pihlaja, 2020). These findings clearly show that the challenges identified in Slovakia correspond to broader global trends, which confirms the importance of this issue for the international scientific community.

Despite the theoretical and policy emphasis on family-school partnerships, practice often reveals various obstacles that hinder the creation of effective and meaningful cooperation. Several studies have pointed out persistent barriers, such as teachers' and parents' busyness, lack of motivation on both sides, and perceptions of unequal power relations, which prevent parents from feeling like equal partners.

Furthermore, differences in parents' socioeconomic status – particularly their education, profession, and income – can shape their attitudes towards school involvement and cooperation with teachers. These factors may lead to disparities in how parents engage with schools and how they perceive teachers' willingness to cooperate. However, there is still limited empirical knowledge about how Slovak parents perceive these barriers and how their socioeconomic background affects their willingness and ability to cooperate with teachers. This research gap inspired our study.

Based on these considerations, the main aim of this research is to identify and analyse barriers to developing teacher-parent relationships at the primary level of education, focusing specifically on the impact of family socioeconomic indicators (parents' education, profession, and income). We explore whether and how these indicators are associated with parents' perceptions of barriers to cooperation with teachers.

To address this aim, we formulated the following research question: Is there a statistically significant association between the education, profession, and monthly income of parents of primary school pupils and their evaluation of barriers to cooperation with the class teacher? At the end of this article, we provide a detailed presentation of our methodology, results, and discussion of the implications for educational practice and policy. The study concludes with recommendations for improving family-school cooperation and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

The digitization of education has required a transformation of relationships between teachers and parents, emphasizing the need for clear communication, shared responsibility, and active parental engagement as essential elements of modern school-family cooperation (Zaichenko et al., 2020).

However, several barriers prevent the implementation of new trends in family-school cooperation. Despite all efforts to improve the family-school relationship, this partnership has several shortcomings. Olechowska (2017) sees the following factors as the cause of the emerging disruptions in cooperation: persistent conservatism, conformism, and stereotyping in the school environment. The cause is rooted in the state's educational system and its politically and ideologically marked goals and values.

The fundamental determinant of cooperation “from the outside” is the specific state, municipality, or local community of parents (Ordon & Gębora, 2017), but especially the specific school (school management, school facilities, economic resources, including pedagogical and non-teaching staff), which creates an atmosphere for family-school cooperation (Kocór, 2018).

However, the relationship between teachers and parents influences their mutual cooperation. Vuorinen (2021) points out that parents define the relationship with teachers as highly asymmetrical because teachers have valuable and expert information about the child. Parents may perceive the superiority of teachers, which may negatively affect the parent's attitude toward cooperation. However, parents in this relationship emphasise

the need to feel secure and equal because they share information about themselves, their privacy and their family.

Teachers' approach inherently includes communicating with parents and building a shared relationship. We agree with Sylaj and Keka-Sylaj (2020, p. 105) that "communication between teachers and parents is a strengthening or weakening factor of cooperation". One determinant is teachers' interest and motivation to cooperate with parents. Ahmed et al. (2021) report that teachers are disappointed and frustrated with this cooperation because parents are demotivated, unwilling, and uninterested. Pulišová (2016) found that teachers think that parents' passivity and disinterest deteriorate mutual interaction.

The increasing demands on teachers' work also affect the current cooperation. Bæck (2015) says collaboration with parents is made more difficult by the new demands of the teaching role. Even though teachers may give collaboration a prominent place, they can devote only limited time to parents and collaboration. However, as the Slovak research shows (Frýdková, 2010), teachers acquire cooperative skills only in teaching practice through their own experiences (75 % of teachers report that they developed these skills only in school reality, and only 39% of teachers say they were prepared for this area during their pre-graduate training). Mendelová et al. (2019) state that the way to improve this cooperation is through early preparation of future teachers for cooperating by developing their communication, consultation and counselling competencies.

On the other hand, according to Ordon and Gębora (2017), the problem is parents' reluctance to cooperate with the school. Dubis (2019) adds that parents' awareness of their rights at school has increased significantly in recent years, but they do not always use the available opportunities. Parents often fear expressing their opinions and lack the courage to engage in dialogue in the parent council.

Active parental involvement in extracurricular activities fosters children's cooperative agency – proactive behavior in adapting to changing conditions – whereas stringent control or low parental engagement can hinder such adaptive capacities (Goshin et al., 2023). Parents' motivation to cooperate also represents an essential determinant. The research by Fishman and Nickerson (2015) suggests that parents' motivating elements for cooperation with the school are their children, parents reported that they are more likely to participate in home and school activities if their children ask them to do that.

The socioeconomic characteristics of the family are also important determinants of the development of family-school relationships. It is the socioeconomic status of the family that is essential, Hauser and Warren (1997, p. 178) explain it as in "shorthand for variables, usually educational attainment, employment status, social class, income or poverty, wealth and material possessions". According to Helus (2015), the socioeconomic status of the family determines its inclusion in the social class of society and is formed by the education, the prestige of the profession and income parents.

Family influence including socioeconomic status, social capital and, critically, parental involvement in education – not only affects the cooperation between family and school but also exerts a significant positive effect on students' academic outcomes, which highlights the need to further explore this issue (Sazhina & Kotomina, 2021).

Research findings by Fishman and Nickerson (2015) note that parents with lower socioeconomic status are harder for schools to engage and tend to participate less. This may stem from their lower emphasis on the importance of education, which reduces their involvement. According to Hornby and Blackwell (2018), parents have to overcome many problems in family functioning, dealing with debt issues, lawsuits, and food shortages, and thus family involvement in their child's schooling is a "less interesting issue".

These determinants of family-school cooperation cannot be seen in isolation, as they overlap in educational reality. We have drawn our attention to the family's socioeconomic characteristics, which suggest a link with building family-school relationships.

The aim of the research is to identify barriers to developing teacher-parent relationships at the primary level of education. We investigated the impact of family socioeconomic indicators (parents' education, profession, and income) on perceptions of barriers to family-school cooperation. The research aimed to determine whether there is a statistically significant association between the family socioeconomic indicators and the evaluation of barriers to cooperation with the class teacher at the primary level of education.

Methodology

The research sample

The research sample consisted of 320 Slovak parents of children attending the first stage of primary education. The sample was dominated by mothers (70 %), respondents in middle adulthood (32–42 years; 62.5 %), and married parents (68.4 %). The sample was mainly composed of parents with completed secondary or second-level university education, working primarily in education, services, and manual professions, with the most common monthly income ranging from 1501 to 2000 EUR.

Research methods

We used quantitative research to investigate the stated issue. The primary data collection tool was an author-designed questionnaire examining parent-teacher cooperation at the primary school level, with an emphasis on family socioeconomic indicators entitled "The influence of the socioeconomic status of the family of the pupil of the first degree of primary school on cooperation with the school".

At the beginning of the questionnaire, we investigated the socioeconomic characteristics of the family, respondents filled in the basic data (gender, age, education, marital status, family structure, current employment, type of profession, working hours). In the second part of the questionnaire, we created the main range of items focusing on the area of barriers to cooperation that negatively affect the development of parent-teacher relationships.

The authors' questionnaire was evaluated as a multidimensional construct, as we implemented different types of scales (dichotomous, nominal, bipolar, and Likert scales) in the questionnaire, which were analysed and interpreted separately. In the present study, we focused more closely on the Likert scale analysis, where we investigated which barriers on parents' and teachers' side are considered by parents to be crucial for the creation of family-school relationships, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement (1 = agree, 5 = disagree), with a neutral midpoint.

We intended to identify whether parents' perceptions of these barriers differed statistically based on individual family socioeconomic indicators.

The submitted questionnaire was anonymous, all respondents' answers were processed with valid ethical principles, all participants expressed their informed consent to participate in the research. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which reached a value of $\alpha = 0.69$, indicating acceptable reliability of the research instrument. Data collection was carried out using a combined approach, including both direct distribution through primary school teachers and online administration. Out of 492 contacted parents, 320 participated in the study, representing a response rate of 65 %.

The collected data were analysed using statistical methods implemented in the R software (version 4.1.3). Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2) was applied as the primary analytical method to examine differences between observed and expected frequencies in accordance with Cochran's rule.

Research results

We investigated what parents of younger school-age pupils perceive as barriers to cooperation that negatively affect the development of parent-teacher relationships. We analysed the research data differentially concerning the socioeconomic indicators of the family (parents' education, income, and profession) to identify statistically significant differences in the questionnaire's items. We tested the statistical significance of differences in respondents' opinions by family socioeconomic indicators on the following statements (Barriers on the parents' side No 1-3; Barriers on the teachers' side No 4-6):

Barriers on the parents' side:

- No 1 Teacher-parent cooperation is currently affected by parents' busyness.
- No 2 Parents perceive cooperation as a necessity.
- No 3 Absence of parents' motivation to cooperate with the teacher.

Barriers on the teachers' side:

- No 4 Teacher-parent cooperation is currently affected by teachers' busyness.
- No 5 Teachers' motivation to cooperate with parents is absent.
- No 6 A barrier to cooperation is the attitude of some teachers who do not see parents as equal partners in their child's education.

Results

The results of the research are evaluated differentially concerning the socioeconomic indicators of the family (parents' education, profession, and income).

Barriers to cooperation on the parents' side

In the first statement (No 1 Teacher-parent cooperation is currently affected by parents' busyness), we intended to determine whether parents perceive their busyness as a barrier to developing family-school relationships. We present the statistical analysis of our findings by socioeconomic indicators in Tables 1a, 1b, and 1c.

Table 1a. Respondents' answers to No 1 by their education

statement/education	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
secondary incomplete	4	1.25	2	0.63	4	1.25	19	5.94	28	8.75	p = 0.75
secondary complete	8	2.50	15	4.69	9	2.81	26	8.13	61	19.06	
university 1st degree	1	0.31	3	0.94	5	1.56	10	3.13	10	3.13	
university 2nd degree	4	1.25	13	4.06	12	3.75	30	9.38	43	13.44	
university 3rd degree	1	0.31	2	0.63	1	0.31	3	0.94	3	0.94	
basic	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.31	2	0.63	
TOTAL	18	5.63	35	10.94	31	9.69	89	27.81	147	45.94	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 1b. Respondents' answers to No 1 by their profession

statement/profession	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration and management	3	0.94	9	2.81	6	1.88	17	5.31	27	8.44	p = 0.68
uncategorised	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.31	7	2.19	10	3.13	
blue-collar and manual professions	4	1.25	7	2.19	4	1.25	13	4.06	31	9.69	
services	2	0.63	1	0.31	7	2.19	16	5.00	29	9.06	
education and facilities	6	1.88	11	3.44	8	2.50	21	6.56	33	10.31	
highly skilled professions	3	0.94	7	2.19	5	1.56	15	4.69	17	5.31	
TOTAL	18	5.63	35	10.94	31	9.69	89	27.81	147	45.94	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 1c. Respondents' answers to No 1 by their income

statement/income	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a) below 500 EUR	1	0.31	0	0.00	2	0.63	1	0.31	2	0.63	p = 0.07
b) 501 – 1000 EUR	7	2.19	5	1.56	7	2.19	15	4.69	23	7.19	
c) 1001 – 1500 EUR	1	0.31	6	1.88	6	1.88	31	9.69	43	13.44	
d) 1501 – 2000 EUR	4	1.25	12	3.75	10	3.13	26	8.13	53	16.56	
e) 2001 EUR and more	5	1.56	12	3.75	6	1.88	16	5.00	26	8.13	
TOTAL	18	5.63	35	10.94	31	9.69	89	27.81	147	45.94	

Note: Source. Own research.

Our findings in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c show that most respondents perceive parents' busyness as a barrier to cooperation with the school (73.75 %: agree 45.94 %; rather agree 27.81 %). The highest agreement was expressed by parents with complete secondary education (19.06 %), parents working in education and related institutions (10.31 %), and those with an income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (16.56 %).

In the statistical analysis of socioeconomic indicators' impact on assessing parents' busyness in cooperation with the school, we noted no significant differences in respondents' answers based on their education, profession, and income. Regardless of these indicators, parents perceived their busyness as one of the barriers to developing parent-teacher relationships.

We investigated whether the parents perceive cooperation with the teacher as a necessary part of the child's school education (No 2 Parents perceive cooperation as a necessity). We present our findings based on family socioeconomic indicators in Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c.

Table 2a. Respondents' answers to No 2 by their education

statement/education	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
secondary incomplete	4	1.25	8	2.50	6	1.88	12	3.75	27	8.44	p = 0.01
secondary complete	21	6.56	17	5.31	23	7.19	21	6.56	37	11.56	
university ed. 1st degree	2	0.63	7	2.19	7	2.19	8	2.50	5	1.56	
university ed. 2nd degree	6	1.88	18	5.63	25	7.81	32	10.00	21	6.56	
university ed. 3rd degree	0	0.00	6	1.88	1	0.31	2	0.63	1	0.31	
basic	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.31	2	0.63	
TOTAL	33	10.31	56	17.50	62	19.38	76	23.75	93	29.06	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 2b. Respondents' answers to No 2 by their profession

statement/profession	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration and management	7	2.19	14	4.38	16	5.00	15	4.69	10	3.13	p = 0.01
uncategorised	2	0.63	0	0.00	0	0.00	7	2.19	9	2.81	
blue-collar and manual professions	9	2.81	10	3.13	7	2.19	9	2.81	24	7.50	
services	2	0.63	9	2.81	11	3.44	9	2.81	24	7.50	
education and facilities	6	1.88	15	4.69	18	5.63	25	7.81	15	4.69	
highly skilled professions	7	2.19	8	2.50	10	3.13	11	3.44	11	3.44	
TOTAL	33	10.31	56	17.50	62	19.38	76	23.75	93	29.06	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 2c. Respondents' answers to No 2 by their income

statement/income	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a) below 500 EUR	1	0.31	0	0.00	1	0.31	1	0.31	3	0.94	p = 0.24
b) 501 – 1000 EUR	6	1.88	9	2.81	10	3.13	8	2.50	24	7.50	
c) 1001 – 1500 EUR	7	2.19	20	6.25	17	5.31	17	5.31	26	8.13	
d) 1501 – 2000 EUR	14	4.38	13	4.06	20	6.25	30	9.38	28	8.75	
e) 2001 EUR and more	5	1.56	14	4.38	14	4.38	20	6.25	12	3.75	
TOTAL	33	10.31	56	17.50	62	19.38	76	23.75	93	29.06	

Note: Source. Own research.

According to Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c results, most respondents perceive cooperation as crucial to a child's education. 52.81 % of the respondents agreed with the statement No 2 (Parents perceive cooperation as a necessity) (29.06 % agree, 23.75 % rather agree). The highest agreement is among parents with complete secondary education (11.56 %), parents working in blue-collar professions and services (7.50 %), and those with an income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (8.75 %).

The statistical analysis proved significant differences in respondents' answers according to parents' education ($p = 0.01$; X-squared = 46.41) and profession ($p = 0.01$; X-squared = 39.88), suggesting that education and profession can influence the perception of cooperation and its necessity in educating the child. These results suggest that it is a significant variable only for parents' perception of necessity.

With statement No 3 (Absence of parents' motivation to cooperate with the teacher), we wanted to determine whether the respondents thought parents' motivation to cooperate with the teacher was absent. We present the statistical analysis by socioeconomic indicators in Tables 3a, 3b, and 3c.

Table 3a. Respondents' answers to No 3 by their education

statement/education	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
secondary incomplete	6	1.88	6	1.88	17	5.31	6	1.88	22	6.88	$p = 0.19$
secondary complete	12	3.75	16	5.00	37	11.56	22	6.88	32	10.00	
university 1st degree	5	1.56	5	1.56	6	1.88	7	2.19	6	1.88	
university 2nd degree	8	2.50	22	6.88	19	5.94	32	10.00	21	6.56	
university 3rd degree	2	0.63	2	0.63	2	0.63	2	0.63	2	0.63	
Basic	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.31	1	0.31	1	0.31	
TOTAL	33	10.31	51	15.94	82	25.63	70	21.88	84	26.25	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 3b. Respondents' answers to No 3 by their profession

statement/profession	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration and management	6	1.88	14	4.38	17	5.31	12	3.75	13	4.06	$p = 0.03$
uncategorised	2	0.63	2	0.63	4	1.25	2	0.63	8	2.50	
blue-collar and manual professions	8	2.50	6	1.88	17	5.31	9	2.81	19	5.94	
services	8	2.50	8	2.50	16	5.00	7	2.19	16	5.00	
education and facilities	3	0.94	13	4.06	16	5.00	32	10.00	15	4.69	
highly skilled professions	6	1.88	8	2.50	12	3.75	8	2.50	13	4.06	
TOTAL	33	10.31	51	15.94	82	25.63	70	21.88	84	26.25	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 3c. Respondents' answers to No 3 by their income

statement/income	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a) below 500 EUR	1	0.31	0	0.00	2	0.63	1	0.31	2	0.63	p = 0.28
b) 501 EUR – 1000 EUR	7	2.19	6	1.88	18	5.63	10	3.13	16	5.00	
c) 1001 – 1500 EUR	8	2.50	12	3.75	29	9.06	15	4.69	23	7.19	
d) 1501 – 2000 EUR	11	3.44	23	7.19	14	4.38	27	8.44	30	9.38	
e) 2001 EUR and more	6	1.88	10	3.13	19	5.94	17	5.31	13	4.06	
TOTAL	33	10.31	51	15.94	82	25.63	70	21.88	84	26.25	

Note: Source. Own research.

According to our findings in Tables 3a, 3b, and 3c, almost half of the respondents (48.13 %) agree (26.25 % agree, 21.88 % rather agree) with the opinion that parents are not motivated to cooperate with teachers. We found the highest agreement among parents with complete secondary education (10 %), parents working in manual and blue-collar professions (5.94 %), and those with an income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (9.38 %). An interesting finding is the relatively high level of agreement (rather agree 10 %, agree 4.46 %) among parents working in education. We think that the answers correspond to the experience of their teaching practice. So these respondents (teachers and, at the same time, parents) are more critical of parents' motivation for cooperation. Their opinions reflect their own experience of teaching practice. The statistical findings confirm a significant difference between the respondents' answers based on their profession ($p = 0.03$; X-squared = 32.96), i.e. profession interferes with evaluating parents' motivation for cooperation.

Barriers to cooperation on the teachers' side

When exploring the barriers to cooperation, we also investigated the reasons on the teachers' side that may cause the lack of cooperation between parents and teachers.

We wanted to know whether teachers' busyness represents a barrier to family-school cooperation (No 4 Teacher-parent cooperation is currently affected by teachers' busyness). We present the statistical analysis of the results according to socioeconomic indicators in Tables 4a, 4b, and 4c.

Table 4a. Respondents' answers to No 4 by their education

statement/education	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
secondary incomplete	5	1.56	13	4.06	10	3.13	7	2.19	22	6.88	p = 0.03
secondary complete	23	7.19	18	5.63	32	10.00	21	6.56	25	7.81	
university 1st degree	3	0.94	9	2.81	8	2.50	4	1.25	5	1.56	
university 2nd degree	7	2.19	26	8.13	19	5.94	28	8.75	22	6.88	
university 3rd degree	0	0.00	3	0.94	1	0.31	4	1.25	2	0.63	
basic	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.31	1	0.31	1	0.31	
TOTAL	38	11.88	69	21.56	71	22.19	65	20.31	77	24.06	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 4b. Respondents' answers to No 4 by their profession

statement/profession	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration and management	7	2.19	18	5.63	14	4.38	14	4.38	9	2.81	p = 0.35
uncategorised	3	0.94	3	0.94	5	1.56	2	0.63	5	1.56	
blue-collar and manual professions	11	3.44	10	3.13	14	4.38	7	2.19	17	5.31	
services	5	1.56	8	2.50	12	3.75	12	3.75	18	5.63	
education and facilities	5	1.56	17	5.31	15	4.69	21	6.56	21	6.56	
highly skilled professions	7	2.19	13	4.06	11	3.44	9	2.81	7	2.19	
TOTAL	38	11.88	69	21.56	71	22.19	65	20.31	77	24.06	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 4c. Respondents' answers to No 4 by their income

statement/income	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a) below 500 EUR	2	0.63	2	0.63	1	0.31	0	0.00	1	0.31	p = 0.12
b) 501 – 1000 EUR	8	2.50	14	4.38	13	4.06	7	2.19	15	4.69	
c) 1001 – 1500 EUR	9	2.81	13	4.06	19	5.94	21	6.56	25	7.81	
d) 1501 – 2000 EUR	15	4.69	23	7.19	19	5.94	19	5.94	29	9.06	
e) 2001 EUR and more	4	1.25	17	5.31	19	5.94	18	5.63	7	2.19	
TOTAL	38	11.88	69	21.56	71	22.19	65	20.31	77	24.06	

Note: Source. Own research.

From the data in Tables 4a, 4b, and 4c, we see that almost half of the parents (44.37 %) rate teachers' busyness as an essential factor in the development of cooperation with pupils' families (agree 24.06 %, rather agree 20.31 %). Teachers' busyness as a barrier to developing family-school relations is mainly perceived by parents with complete secondary education (7.81 %), parents working in education and related facilities (6.56 %), and those with income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (9.06 %). Among all the statements, the highest number of respondents (22.19 %) chose the option "undecided". Thus, we assume that regardless of socioeconomic indicators, the respondents could not define whether the teachers' busyness determines their cooperation.

Pearson's Chi-square analysis of the data confirmed significant differences in responses based on parents' education ($p = 0.03$; X-squared = 32.58), suggesting that education is a factor in the perception of teachers' busyness as a determinant of developing relationships.

Subsequently, we wanted to know whether the respondents think teachers lack motivation to cooperate with them (No 5 Teachers' motivation to cooperate with parents is absent). Tables 5a, 5b, and 5c present the statistical results.

Table 5a. Respondents' answers to No 5 by their education

statement/education	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
secondary incomplete	6	1.88	10	3.13	14	4.38	4	1.25	23	7.19	p = 0.01
secondary complete	16	5.00	21	6.56	39	12.19	15	4.69	28	8.75	
university 1st degree	6	1.88	8	2.50	6	1.88	3	0.94	6	1.88	
university 2nd degree	13	4.06	24	7.50	24	7.50	29	9.06	12	3.75	
university 3rd degree	2	0.63	2	0.63	2	0.63	3	0.94	1	0.31	
basic	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.31	2	0.63	
TOTAL	43	13.44	65	20.31	85	26.56	55	17.19	72	22.50	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 5b. Respondents' answers to No 5 by their profession

statement/profession	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration and management	9	2.81	14	4.38	21	6.56	6	1.88	12	3.75	p = 0.01
uncategorised	3	0.94	4	1.25	4	1.25	1	0.31	6	1.88	
blue-collar and manual professions	4	1.25	11	3.44	16	5.00	6	1.88	22	6.88	
services	10	3.13	11	3.44	14	4.38	5	1.56	15	4.69	
education and facilities	9	2.81	16	5.00	17	5.31	30	9.38	7	2.19	
highly skilled professions	8	2.50	9	2.81	13	4.06	7	2.19	10	3.13	
TOTAL	43	13.44	65	20.31	85	26.56	55	17.19	72	22.50	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 5c. Respondents' answers to No 5 by their income

statement/income	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a) below 500 EUR	1	0.31	2	0.63	1	0.31	0	0.00	2	0.63	p = 0.20
b) 501– 1000 EUR	7	2.19	7	2.19	18	5.63	9	2.81	16	5.00	
c) 1001 – 1500 EUR	9	2.81	16	5.00	30	9.38	13	4.06	19	5.94	
d) 1501 – 2000 EUR	17	5.31	29	9.06	17	5.31	17	5.31	25	7.81	
e) 2001 EUR and more	9	2.81	11	3.44	19	5.94	16	5.00	10	3.13	
TOTAL	43	13.44	65	20.31	85	26.56	55	17.19	72	22.50	

Note: Source. Own research.

Our findings from Tables 5a, 5b, and 5c show that almost half of the parents (39.69 %: agree 22.50 %, rather agree 17.19 %) perceive insufficient motivation of teachers to cooperate, which is one of the reasons for the lack of cooperation. Parents with complete secondary education (8.75 %), parents working in manual and blue-collar professions (6.88 %), and those with an income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (7.81 %) mostly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, we also observe a high level of indecision among parents

(26.56 %), mainly in the answers by respondents with complete secondary education (12.19 %), parents working in the sphere of administration and management (6.56 %), and those with an income of 1001 EUR – 1500 EUR (9.38 %). Using Pearson's Chi-square Test, we confirm the statistical difference between the answers of the respondents based on their education ($p = 0.01$; X-squared = 36.82) and profession ($p = 0, 01$; X-squared = 47.55), suggesting that family socioeconomic indicators are crucial in assessing absent teachers' motivation.

Since the tendency of current institutional education is an educational partnership between parents and teachers, we investigated, using statement No 6 (An barriers to cooperation is the attitude of some teachers who do not see parents as equal partners in the child's education), whether teachers perceive parents as equal partners in this process. The statistical results are in Tables 6a, 6b, and 6c.

Table 6a. Respondents' answers to No 6 by their education

statement/education	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
secondary incomplete	1	0.31	4	1.25	6	1.88	10	3.13	36	11.25	$p = 0.01$
secondary complete	18	5.63	20	6.25	22	6.88	12	3.75	47	14.69	
university 1st degree	4	1.25	8	2.50	8	2.50	2	0.63	7	2.19	
university 2nd degree	17	5.31	24	7.50	12	3.75	24	7.50	25	7.81	
university 3rd degree	1	0.31	5	1.56	1	0.31	1	0.31	2	0.63	
Basic	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	0.63	1	0.31	
TOTAL	41	12.81	61	19.06	49	15.31	51	15.94	118	36.88	

Note: Source. Own research.

Table 6b. Respondents' answers to No 6 by their profession

statement/profession	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
administration and management	12	3.75	8	2.50	12	3.75	12	3.75	18	5.63	$p = 0.01$
uncategorised	1	0.31	3	0.94	2	0.63	2	0.63	10	3.13	
blue-collar and manual professions	3	0.94	6	1.88	7	2.19	7	2.19	36	11.25	
services	8	2.50	8	2.50	7	2.19	10	3.13	22	6.88	
education and facilities	11	3.44	19	5.94	15	4.69	14	4.38	20	6.25	
highly skilled professions	6	1.88	17	5.31	6	1.88	6	1.88	12	3.75	
TOTAL	41	12.81	61	19.06	49	15.31	51	15.94	118	36.88	

Note: Source. Own research.

The data in Tables 6a, 6b, and 6c confirm an alarming finding that more than half of the parents (52.82 %: agree 36.88 %, rather agree 15.94 %) think that teachers do not perceive them as equal partners in their children's education. Thus, parents perceive a disproportion between parents' and teachers' roles in their cooperation. Parents with complete secondary education (14.69 %), parents working in manual and blue-collar professions (11.25 %), and those with an income of 1501 EUR – 2000 EUR (13.75 %) mostly agreed with the statement.

Table 6c. Respondents' answers to No 6 by their income

statement/income	Disagree		Rather disagree		Undecided		Rather agree		Agree		Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a) below 500 EUR	1	0.31	2	0.63	1	0.31	1	0.31	1	0.31	p = 0.20
b) 501 – 1000 EUR	6	1.88	9	2.81	6	1.88	9	2.81	27	8.44	
c) 1001 – 1500 EUR	7	2.19	15	4.69	16	5.00	20	6.25	29	9.06	
d) 1501 – 2000 EUR	13	4.06	20	6.25	13	4.06	15	4.69	44	13.75	
e) 2001 EUR and more	14	4.38	15	4.69	13	4.06	6	1.88	17	5.31	
TOTAL	41	12.81	61	19.06	49	15.31	51	15.94	118	36.88	

Note: Source. Own research.

When we compare the results of parents working in education with those working in other professions, we see the most significant disparity between the answers. On the one hand, 10.63 % of parents agree with the statement; on the other hand, 9.38 % of parents disagree, and 4.69 % of parents are undecided. Their own pedagogical experiences influence the above differences. The statistical analysis of the data confirmed a significant difference in the respondents' answers based on education ($p = 0.01$; X-squared = 56.06) and profession ($p = 0.01$; X-squared = 39.47), so the selected indicators determine the parents' answers in perceiving the partnership with teachers in terms of the equivalence of mutual relations.

Discussion

Our research aimed to determine how respondents (parents) perceive barriers to developing family-school relationships. We examined whether the family's socioeconomic characteristics are statistically linked to how parents evaluate barriers to cooperation with their child's primary school teacher.

An increasingly common indicator of contemporary life is busyness, which naturally interferes with family-school cooperation. Our findings and those of other authors (Kovienė, 2020; Škvarková, 2010) confirm that parents are too busy and do not have enough time to cooperate with the school or the class teacher.

However, the busyness concerns the teachers themselves. Our findings show that many parents perceive teachers' busyness as a barrier to developing parent-teacher relationships.

Parents need more motivation to cooperate. Our findings show that almost half of the parents agree that they are not motivated to cooperate with teachers. Gulevska (2018) says that one of the reasons is the unwillingness to sacrifice their time to improve the mutual partnership. Parents perceive cooperation as a necessity, which is crucial mainly in informative meetings. As Orell and Pihlaja (2020) write, if the purpose of the cooperation is only to support the child, then we can talk about the lack of parents' motivation. Parents must perceive that their active participation in institutional education helps solve school problems and allows the formation of friendly relationships characterised by mutual support.

Our research confirmed parents' opinion that teachers' motivation to cooperate with them is also absent. The results of our research correspond to several research findings. Ahmed et al. (2021) report that teachers are disappointed and frustrated with parents' cooperation. According to teachers, parents are demotivated, unwilling, and uninterested. Research by Hornby and Blackwell (2018) shows that teachers are not interested in working beyond their working hours to comply with parents and build relationships.

Pulišová (2016) writes about similar results. She found that teachers think the lack of interaction stems from parents' passivity and disinterest.

We statistically analysed these barriers to family-school cooperation concerning family socioeconomic indicators (parents' education, profession, and income). We can confirm that the family's socioeconomic status influences the perception of barriers to developing family-school relations, with the most decisive significance observed for the parents' education and profession.

Conclusion

The quality of relationships between the main actors in a child's education (family and school) depends on many factors that determine the cooperation between family and school positively or negatively. Despite all the barriers interfering with the relationship between teachers and parents, it is clear that only the educational continuity of the family-school mutual interaction will positively impact the child's development.

The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how the socioeconomic conditions of families relate to the quality of relationships and cooperation between parents and schools. Its theoretical significance lies in identifying socioeconomic status as an important factor that shapes parental engagement and their relationship with the school environment. By isolating the socioeconomic dimension from other potential determinants, the research clarifies its specific role within the wider context of family-school interactions.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the need for schools to consider the socioeconomic background of families when creating strategies to strengthen cooperation with parents. Tailored communication approaches, targeted support mechanisms, and sensitivity to families' living conditions may help reduce barriers and improve collaboration. Strengthening these relationships can contribute to a more coherent educational environment that benefits children's development.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

The present paper is a partial output of the research project VEGA no. 1/0087/25 Self-efficacy of Teachers and Educators for work with Family and UGA no. V/5/2025 Current Parents and their Relationship to School and Pupils' Educational Outcomes.

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