

Relations between ethnic minority parents and schools

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Background & Research questions

The City of Rotterdam, the Netherlands hosts some 150 different nationalities; about 50% of the primary school students are ethnic minorities. The City seeks to set up a high quality education system for all ethnic minorities. To this end the City has developed a policy of community-empowered schools in which the schools' pedagogical task is supported by other activities in the community. The goal of the present research project is to get a better understanding of the relationships between the parents of ethnic minority children and the schools and supporting institutions in the local community.

The study consists of two parts: a theoretical study and an empirical investigation. It seeks to answer two main questions:

- What are the different visions on the relations between schools, parents of ethnic minorities and communities?
- What are successful policies (structures, capacities, systems) that support schools in creating partnerships with parents of ethnic minorities and communities?

Sample & Design

In the empirical part of this research project a Delphi survey is conducted among 50 experts from various European countries, Canada and the USA. The sample includes a panel of experts and policymakers in the field of parent participation consisting of:

- European Research Network About Parents and Education (ERNAPE);
- Roundtable on School, Family and Community Partnerships
- Association of Moral Education;
- Developing Intercultural Education through Comparison (DIECEC).

These experts were asked to answer the following questions:

- How can teachers and administrators be prepared to create partnerships with families of ethnic minorities and communities?
- What information do educators need to build positive relationships with families so as to keep them involved in their children's education all across the school years?
- What are successful policies and procedures that support schools and community partnerships?

Main results

In the paper presentation the results of the study will be discussed in terms of administrative and organisational theories (the changes in the daily practices, policy making, decision making), participation theories (minority ethnic groups in parent-school community relations, civic engagement and social connectedness, social trust), collaboration, networking/social capital theories (students educational achievement) and theories of market forces and quality theories (school choice, parents as consumers, responsibilities of socialization agents, community empowerment/local democracy).

Major implications

Discussion of the results in terms of practical implications for all members of the community (administrators, teachers, school staff, students, parents, and members of the local community at large) participating in efforts to achieve the school's goals of improving student performance.