



Parent-Child Communication: A Case Study of Teachers from a Romanian Life-Sciences University

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to explore and present a specific point of view of university teacher parents about communication with their children, using focus group interviews. The focus group was conducted with tenured teachers (N = 12) from a Life Science university from western Romania. The parents' ages varied from 34 to 48 years old (M age = 39.83 years) and relating to gender, there were 7 females and 5 males. Data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analyses methods. Most of the parents have considered that parent-child communication represents an essential element in child development and in a positive family environment. Time, stress and overuse of technology are considered, by questioned parents, to be the main barriers to positive and efficient communication with their children. School is not perceived as a catalyst in developing a positive parent-child communication. Even if the parents are tenured university teachers, with knowledge in effective communication, and high expectations from society to be especially good at parent-child communication, they face the same difficulties as any other parents. This aspect could lead to a conclusion that the problems of parent-child communication could be a general one. The implications for families with school-age children are discussed.

Keywords: parent-child communication, school-age children, teacher parents, university, focus group

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Introduction

The study of family communication, due to its importance, has a very long tradition, going back to the period of World War II (Pariera & Turner, 2020; Braithwaite et al., 2017; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Ritchie, 1991; Newcomer & Udry, 1985; Gilbert, 1976; Bossard & Boll, 1950; Bossard, 1945). It is known that parents are the first social model of communication of influence with children (Weiss & Theodore, 2011). In relationship with their parents, children develop mental representations of their relationships with them and with other significant relationships (Bowlby, 1979).

Experiences lived within the family are very important and shape our whole life. Different individuals build different families, which determines different typologies, with different family interactions (Segrin & Flora, 2011). It is important for parents to be able to talk openly and effectively with their children, to gain benefits for both parties. A positive parent-child communication develops a similar parent-child relationship, based on respect. The relationship between parents and their child/children can be improved if parents really do their best to communicate effectively with their children, because this way they feel that they are listened to and understood (Zolten & Long, 2006).

Family, Communication, and School-age Children

Quality of the family climate depends very much on the quality of family communication (Olson, 1991). Researchers suggest that discussing problems with parents is positively associated with children's life satisfaction (e.g., Elgar et al., 2013) and preventing children's health risk behaviour (e.g., Litrownik et al., 2000). In the case of adolescents, Moreno et al. (2009) reported that a positive family communication is associated with the absence of psychological complaints. Family relationships, especially communication processes, help adolescents in developing a strong sense of identity (Bhushan & Shirali, 1992). Numerous studies and real life situations help us to understand why teenagers, in other cases, request and like peer support – when they fail in communicating with their parents. This argument is also sustained by Ackard et al. (2006).

In their research, Bumpus and Hill (2008) reported that during elementary school, there is a correlation between lower parent-child communication and increased children's secrecy over time. Laursen and Collins (2004) also reported that, as children grow older, parent-child communication becomes more conflicted, less warm, and thus children spend less time with their parents and communicate less about their problems. Fortunately, Keijsers and Poulin (2013) concluded that, after a conflictual stage in early adolescence, in late adolescence, parent-child communication becomes more efficient because adolescents and parents strive together for better relationships.

Parent-child open and positive communication gives children the opportunity to develop constructive coping strategies (Levin & Currie, 2010). A first argument is that parents who are able to talk about emotions become role models for their children. The second argument is that children, who talk openly with their parents about their negative emotions and unpleasant experiences, have the chance to receive advice about coping. The third argument is that parents, who accept their children's negative emotions, help them show more support-seeking behaviours (Gentzler et al., 2005). Caughlin (2003) reported that some family relationship communication standards, such as open communication, talking about emotions or emotional support, were positively associated with family satisfaction.

Problems can occur in families where busy parents no longer practice the daily routine of communicating with their child/children (Redding, 2000) and a difficult parent-child communication generates a low level of life satisfaction (Levin et al., 2012). Sometimes difficulties in parent-child communication can lead to problematic situations, such as *alcohol consumption* (e.g., Pettigrew et al., 2017), *suicidal ideation* (e.g., Mark et al., 2013), *substance abuse* (e.g., Kelly et al., 2002), or *unhealthy weight control* (e.g., Mogul et al., 2014). Because children do not communicate with their parents the issues they have and do not value their parents' viewpoints for important decisions, parents cannot be aware of their children's needs and cannot provide them with support (Gardner & Cutrona, 2004).

Researches of internet use have concluded that spending too much time on technology is correlated with a decline in family communication (Kraut et al., 1998). Pierce (2009) reported that, face-to-face communication is affected by technology, sometimes technology being a substitution for teen girls with social anxiety. However, some of the conflicting discussions are generated by the time allocated to technology (around 2 hours), which most children are dissatisfied with (Evans et al., 2011). Even if parents cannot manage and control students' online activity, positive results emerge from open discussions about the nature, content, and potential risk of websites (Meeus et al., 2018). An interesting idea is sustained by Yee Pattie (2005), who claims that parents are often ambivalent about their parental role, being caught between the modern idea of being equal and the traditional idea of respecting the authoritarian figure. This oscillation can create confusion for children and possible communication difficulties.

Analyzing the existing research literature, numerous articles about parents' perceptions of family communication were identified (e.g., Nelson & Colaner, 2020; Xiao et al., 2011). However, during the process of documentation, no research on teacher parents' perceptions of communication between them and their child/children, using the focus-groups method, has been identified.

A focus group with university teachers was selected because during teacher preparation programs (Level I), every candidate has learnt about effective communication strategies with pre-teens and teens (11 to 16/17 years old) to understand students' difficulties and to provide help. In addition, during practicum, pre-service teachers are mentored to develop good communication skills with school-age children. In Level II, they learn to teach teens, young adults, and adults (over 17/18 years old).

Teaching means communication, but compared to secondary school teachers who communicate with school-aged children on a daily basis and can "learn" new ways of communication, for university teachers it could be more challenging to communicate with school-aged children rather than with adults, as their students are. Teaching at university, they are required to be sensitive to the individual's feelings and to be careful in offering assistance.

We consider that university teacher parents' view of communication with their children could add valuable information because first, they represent a category of parents that are prepared to communicate with students of all ages, and second, our society has higher expectations for this category of parents, related to communication with their child/children.

Research Questions

The present study will investigate the parental perceptions, as university teachers, about their communication with their child/children, using qualitative methods (focus-group method). For this, four research questions will be addressed:

RQ1: What are university teacher parents' perceptions of parent-child communication?

RQ2: What are the benefits, but also the barriers in communicating with their child/children?

RQ3: What do university teacher parents propose to improve parent-child communication and what would be the benefits of their proposals?

RQ4: Do university teacher parents have a positive perception on the role of school in the development of parent-child communication: if not, what proposals do they have for the school principal?

Method

Design

One focus group interview was conducted with 12 participants. The number of participants was established by consulting the literature, which suggests that in a focus group there should be between 6 and 12 participants (Krueger, 2014).

To stimulate parents' discussion about communication with their child/children we opted for open-ended questions. One researcher was present in this focus group interview. A qualitative methodology was chosen to collect data from the university teacher parents. The main reason for choosing the focus group method was that it has been used since 1926 in social psychological research, and is still used successfully in the field of psychology and educational sciences (Vaughn 1996).

In addition, there are other several reasons: 1) because, as Wilkinson (1998) sustained, we have the opportunity to collect not only people's experiences but also their attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs; 2) because we considered it very useful in the reflection of a social reality (parent-child communication) by a specific cultural group (Hughes & DuMont, 1993), parents as university teachers, and 3) because, as Folch-Lyon and Trost (1981) sustained, by identifying the beliefs and common traits of a social class, we have the opportunity to understand the social character of that group, "developed as an adaptation to the economic, social, and cultural conditions common to most members of groups or classes within a society" (p. 445).

Recruitment and Participants

A number of 15 university teachers with school-aged children were asked to participate in this research, but only 12 participants responded. Participants were recruited from a Life Science University from West Romania via telephone and by word of mouth. Parents were told beforehand that the focus group was about communication with their child/children. The age of the persons participating in the focus group interview varied from 34 to 48 years old (M age = 39.83 years). Relating to gender, there were 7 females and 5 males, and relating to the number of children, there were 6 participants with 2 children, and 6 participants with a single child. The children's age, varied from 6 to 16 years old. No single parent participated in this focus group. All participants are tenured teachers. In Romanian cultural context, university teachers

have a high status, are highly regarded, and society has high expectations regarding family communication in general, and parent-child/children communication in particular.

Procedure

Before starting the focus group, an informed consent was obtained from the parents. They were informed that the interviews would be tape recorded, and will only be used for research purposes, and to which no one will have access, except for the researcher. It was highlighted that their opinions, as university teacher parents, were very important for us, and there were no right or wrong answers to the questions asked, so they should not be stressed. Before the focus group interview started, the participants filled out a short questionnaire about their gender, number of children, and their children's age. Being university teachers, their educational level was not necessary, all of them having a PhD diploma. Only after this organizational moment, we started the focus group interview.

The questions were selected to obtain knowledge on parent-child communication. The focus group interview was audio-recorded (around 80 min.) and transcribed verbatim by the author. We have chosen the audio-recording method because the participants sustained that they feel uncomfortable in front of a camera. Before the end of the focus group session, the participants were presented with a summary of the main aspects that were identified during the interview. Participants agreed that no essential answers were omitted.

Focus Group Interview

The interview guide, following a strong documentation about adults' attitudes, was designed to answer the research questions. All the questions were established before the interview, and the participants were informed about their content, prior to participating in the focus group. The main reason was for the researcher to identify if changes are needed or if certain themes are repeated. It was also an advantage for the participants, because they had time to reflect on the questions. The entire interview was created to stimulate communication between all the participants. The focus group interview took place in agreement with the participants, within the university, in an open and non-threatening manner, as Liamputtong (2011) recommended.

Role of the Moderator

Lunt and Livingstone (1996) describe the role of the moderator as to "ensure that the discussion remains focused on the issue while eliciting a wide range of opinions on that issue" (p. 4). The researcher was directly involved, following the Millward (1995) recommendation, to respect the methodological rigor.

Data Analysis

The audio recording focus group interview was transcribed by the facilitator, as a researcher, and analyzed line by line. Data from this focus group was analyzed using thematic

analyses methods, proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). Every participant's response was read five times in order to become familiar with their responses (step 1). Then, the data was analyzed to identify similarities for coding qualitative data (step 2) (e.g., development of child, child emotional development). Next, the codes were combined into themes (step 3). The themes were reviewed (step 4), and defined (step 5). Finally, the themes were written up (step 6).

Results

The following theme was identified to answer RQ1:

1. Development and Challenge

Five of the twelve parents answered that for them PCC represents “the essential element in the education and development of a child”, four parents stated that PCC represents “developing a positive family climate”, two others said that it was “a real challenge for them as parents”. The last answer was that PCC means “offering a model for relationship development, to know how to communicate with other people.”

The following themes were identified to answer RQ2:

2. Positive Family Environment

All twelve parents pointed out that there were many benefits. Five of the parents have replied that mainly, for them, the great benefit is that they know where the child is, they know the social environment of their child and the concerns he/she has. For children, the main benefit is that they develop much better. Two parents answered that “the main benefit, for both, me and my child, is family wellbeing”. Two of the parents sustained that the main benefit of a positive PCC would be a positive emotional climate, which could develop children's emotionality and morality. Moreover, a positive PCC can teach children how to relate to other individuals. For them, as parents, the main benefits are that they know a lot about their children and they feel that they are going in the right direction. Another parent stated that “the main benefit for me is that I have learned to quit and listen when he wants to communicate with me, and for the child the main benefit is that he knows that if he has a problem, I leave things and listen to him”. The last parent stated that “for both me and the child, the benefits would be that we learn to listen, to negotiate, to give up”.

3. Poor Management Skills

Related to this theme, all twelve parents considered the main barrier to be “time pressure”. Next, six of the parents added that “there is too much stress”. Three parents added that the media influences them a lot, and two others claimed that they do not have much patience with their children. The last parent sustained that “I don't know how to communicate in certain situations”.

The following themes were identified to answer RQ3:

4. Personal Development

Regarding the improvement of the PCC, everyone responded that it would help them to attend courses organized on this topic. First, they recommended that other sessions should be organized on this topic, because they could learn new strategies from other parents' experiences, parents who had the same problems.

Second, all the parents recommended "less technology" for both parents and children. Additionally, three parents added that "some rules for the time allotted to technology might be good". Three other parents proposed fewer homework and other three proposed that group counselling for parents would be beneficial. Two parents proposed "more sport in schools, because it improves communication with both, colleagues and adults - parents and teachers", and another parent proposed "educational games to understand the situations they will face."

5. Living a Positive Life

Regarding the benefits of their proposals, some responses referred to both communication partners (e.g., "we could walk in nature or do other communication activities, without time stress"; "the communication quality would increase, not just the quantity"), while other responses aimed only children (e.g., "would understand real life situations"; "would be more attentive to what was going on around them"; "it is a gain for their future, to know how to communicate"; "by following the rules at sports classes, children can get used to following the rules in other situations, as well"), or parents (e.g. "parents would understand that it is important to learn to listen to the child, not just to hear what he says"; "parents would be a role model for good behaviors").

The following themes were identified to answer RQ4:

6. Differences in the School Model

Nine of the parents were quite dissatisfied with the school's involvement, from the perspective of a communication model. They considered that the school represents an institution, which only sends them information, and does not communicate with them about the child/children. Therefore, in parents' opinions, school could not represent a guide of good practices for family communication. Three of the participants responded positively, claiming that "the school is a good mediator in the development of PCC."

7. Community Engagement

The proposals suggested by the parents were: "more meetings between parents and children", "trips with children and some parents"; "organizing picnics with the whole family, at least once a month", and "watching documentaries in order to propose different debates for all, parents and children."

Discussion

This current paper intends to share a new contextual consideration (Life Science University teacher parents) that intersect with family communication, as Child (2018) suggested. What this article brings new is a focus group organized with parents on parent-child communication, parents being tenured university teachers. Through the nature of their profession, all parents have the highest level of education, all having a PhD degree. No other studies have been identified to meet these criteria.

1. Development and Challenge

Analyzing the answers regarding their first thoughts associated with parent-child communication, five of the parents referred to the education and development of their children. The result is supported by other studies, which highlights different educational aspects for children: *sexual education* (e.g., Flores & Barroso, 2017), *health education* (e.g., Canary et al., 2019), *drug education* (e.g., Choi et al., 2017), *school performance* (e.g., Caro, 2011), *religious education* (e.g., Fife et al., 2014), and *healthy internet use* (e.g., Liu et al., 2012).

The responses from the four parents who associated the effectiveness of parent-child communication with developing a positive climate in the family are supported by other researches (e.g., Barbato et al., 2003), communication problems within the family being associated with various negative consequences: *depression* (e.g., Chiariello & Orvaschel, 1995), *drug use* (e.g., Kelly et al., 2002), *alcohol use* (e.g., Martyn et al., 2009), and *bullying/cyberbullying* (e.g., Rad et al., 2019; Ledwell & King, 2015; Larrañaga et al., 2016).

The statement of parents who consider parent-child communication a real challenge is supported by other studies, especially in relationships with adolescents (e.g., Branje et al., 2013). The cited authors sustain that for families with adolescents, communication is a real challenge, for both children and parents. The main reason would be the changes that occur in the network of the adolescents' relationships and not due to the lack of their skills to engage in effective communication.

The response of parents, who claimed that parent-child communication represents a pattern of behavior for a child to interact with others, is also supported by other studies (e.g., Riesch et al., 2006; Barbato et al., 2003). Moreover, researchers concluded that in the family, parents teach their children communication skills (Zolten & Long, 2006), the intergenerational transmission being an important aspect (Rauscher et al., 2020). That is why parents should know that family has an important role in the development of different behaviors (e.g., Cascio et al., 2013).

2. Positive Family Environment

All parents considered that the PCC has multiple benefits, for both parents and children. This idea is supported by other studies (e.g., Park, 2008). One benefit mentioned by five of the parents is monitoring the child through an open communication. This response is supported by other studies (e.g., Keijsers & Poulin, 2013). If there is for children, a habit of talking to parents about friends and places they attend, the parents can find many important aspects of their child's life. Experts recommend parents to give their children a lot of support, trust, safety and less criticism (Branje et al., 2013).

The response of the parents who sustained the child's development as a main benefit of parent-child communication provide support for Branje et al. (2013) research. The idea of security is also supported by other studies, sustained by international organizations such as *UNICEF* (e.g., Petrovska et al., 2018) and *Save the Children* (e.g., Durrant, 2012).

Two of the responses joined the feelings of security offered by positive parent-child communication, with a state of well-being. The answer is supported by other studies, which concluded that indeed, for a positive functioning of the family, parent-child communication is an important aspect; and a positive parent-child relationship generates psychological well-being for both parents and children (Shin et al., 2013).

Other relevant responses were that the parent-child communication helps the child's emotional and moral development. The statement is supported by other studies, which sustain that the emotional climate within the family directly influences the development of children's *emotional abilities* and *communication with others* (e.g., Leibowitz et al., 2002). In addition, the children and adolescents' *moral development* within the family is supported by other studies (e.g., White & Matawie, 2004).

The last benefit of parent-child communication was the development of active listening, a very important skill in communication. This answer is supported by other researches too (e.g., Duncan et al., 2009). However, as a technique, active listening was first developed in the parent-child relationship by Gordon (1975), being later extrapolated to all types of human relationships (Smith & Fitt, 1982).

3. Poor Management Skills

The first barrier to family communication, stated by all twelve parents, was "time" as the main enemy. The answer is not a surprising one, because as university teachers they have many responsibilities: teaching, researching, counselling, supervising, academic administration (Fry et al., 2008). The second barrier, stated by six of the parents, was "stress". The answer is sustained by other studies, which reported an increasing and alarming occupational stress for university teachers (Dua, 1994; Păduraru, 2014). In the same line, Boyd and Wylie (1994, cited by Gillespie et al., 2001) sustained that stress has a negative impact on the university teachers' family relationships, leisure activities, physical and emotional health.

Next, three of the parents sustained that "the media has a negative influence", both they and their child/children being tempted to spend too many hours on technology, TV, phone, laptop, etc. The negative consequences of television on the parent-child relationship was noticed even 60 years ago (e.g., Katz & Foulkes, 1962), and is still problematic (e.g., An & Lee, 2010). However, there are studies that sustain a positive influence of the media on young people and on the parent-child relationship (e.g., Davis et al., 2013).

Two other parents highlighted, as a barrier, a key element of any communication, "patience", stating that "I do not have any patience". Their response is sustained by other studies, which highlight the role of patience in developing and sustaining an effective interpersonal interaction (e.g., Schrodtt et al., 2009), developing patience being one of parents' tasks (Tartakovsky, 2018).

Another parent highlighted the importance of parents' communication skills with their child/children, stating that "I don't know how to communicate in certain situations". This response emphasizes the positive aspects of attending communication and/or parenting courses, where parents learn how to cope with specific situations (Clucas et al., 2014; Edwards et al., 2010).

4. Personal Development

The proposal to establish some rules related to the time allocated to technology is supported by other researchers who reported that a positive parent-child communication regarding the use of the Internet, prevents teenage/child from developing compulsive internet use (e.g., Liu et al., 2012).

Three other parents proposed less homework to improve communication with their child, because in Romania children spend too much time doing their homework. But the amount of homework issue is more about the teacher than the syllabus or the subject, some teachers being “homework teachers” (Westlund, 2004, as cited in Wingard & Forsber, 2009). As we observe, the problem of homework and parental involvement in helping children is an international one, being supported by numerous studies, going back to the First World War (e.g., Brooks, 1916; Harniss et al., 2001). However, some studies sustain the contrary, that there are also positive effects of parent-child communication and parental involvement in student homework, such as higher grades, a higher number of completed homework, and homework motivation (e.g., Cooper et al., 2000).

The answers of two parents who proposed more sport in school, due to the positive effects on communication with others, is sustained by other studies (e.g., Eichenauer, 2008) and by a report of the Council of Europe, conducted by Bailey (2006), which states that sports activities: “provide opportunities to meet and communicate with other people” (p. 397).

The responses of parents who proposed group counselling for parents and educational games are closely related to the parenting sessions, previously discussed.

5. Living a Positive Life

The benefits of the parents' proposals were presented according to their experiences. But “time”, presented as a barrier to effective communication with the child, is a limited resource. Therefore, a strong recommendation is a better time management, which could help the parent who stated that if he had more free time “we could walk in nature”. His statement is supported by other studies, which reported that walking in nature improves parent-child communication (e.g., Cameron-Faulkner et al., 2018).

Another benefit of the time spent in parent-child communication would be that “it would increase the quality of communication not just the quantity”. The parent's statement is sustained by another research, which reported that those children who do not spend quality time with their parents have difficulties in building relationships and coping with life's challenges. Even a few minutes that parents spend with their child before bedtime could be a good time for communication (Riesch et al., 2006).

One of the consequences of limiting the child's use of technology would be, in one parent's opinion, a better focus on what is happening around him and a greater involvement in what he does. The negative consequences of using technology, more and more frequently, could be observed every day, both in children and adults. This answer is also supported by other researchers who have concluded that the negative consequences that arise due to excessive use of technology would be missing out on opportunities to get involved in real-world activities and learning to be entertained (e.g., Yienger, 2016), and attention problems in children (e.g., Christakis et al., 2004).

Another parent has sustained the important benefit of sports classes, following the school rules, which would continue at home. This response may reflect problems with their child in

terms of following the rules and the intention to be helped indirectly by teachers. This response is supported by studies that claim that rules are seen as guides for behaviors and assessments, in terms of good and bad, right or wrong, being an essential part of developing morality in school (e.g., Laker, 2002). However, there are researchers who claim that some teachers believe that learning rules by children is parents' responsibility (e.g., Kearney et al., 1985). Often, important adults in the student's life, parents and teachers, "pass" the rules' responsibility from one to the other, waiting for the effort of learning the rules to be made by someone else.

6. Differences in the School Model

Regarding this theme, nine of the parents were dissatisfied with the school's involvement in developing a positive family communication. They claimed that the school only provides information and does not communicate with them. This answer provide support for Kraft & Rogers' (2015) research. Unfortunately, school is not a guide or a support in parent-child communication. In order to promote parent-child communication, the school should also know the parents' opinions, to discuss their possible problems with the child. Some studies sustain that teacher-parent communication on students' learning abilities is a challenge for both parties (e.g., Nichols & Read, 2002), while other studies sustain that teacher-parent communication help parents find information about their child/children' academic progress and concerns (e.g., Freytag, 2001). In the present case, with parents as university teachers, problems with teachers could also be generated by differences in their level of education or that they are seen only as parents, when they are accustomed to a certain status at the university.

In the case of the three parents who sustained the role of school as a mediator in developing a positive parent-child communication, they understand that the teacher is an important person in the life of their child. Indeed, the teacher, as Evans (1959) states, is the most important and influential adult in a child's life, being the person who can exert an enormous influence on the child's character and mind. But any form of communication between teachers and parents is welcome, if it aims to meet the child's needs (Graham-Clay, 2005).

7. Community Engagement

The recommendations offered by the parents were largely the same, for the school to organize various events, in which children and parents could participate. The reaction of one parent who stated that his seven-year-old child did not "accept" him in the trip organized with the class, could reflect that through such events teachers can identify possible problems in parent-child communication or relationship.

A unique contribution of this research was the component of the focus group only tenure university teachers. This category of teachers was especially selected for family communication research, because in the Romanian social context, they have a high and respected status, and they are supposed to be especially good at parent-child communication. Yet, despite their teaching preparation program and society expectations, the parents from this focus group have the same difficulties in communication with their children as any other parents, as was concluded in a plethora of studies.

Conclusions

The article highlights the importance of parent-child communication for a positive family environment, which promotes children's development (emotionally and morally) and a model for future relationships. Parents, as university teachers, with a high and respected status in the Romanian cultural context, despite societal expectations to have better skills in communication with their children, face the same problems: time, stress, and technology. Personal development courses seem to be the solution for improving parents' management skills (e.g., time management, stress management, self-control). Parents were quite dissatisfied with the school's involvement for an effective communication. Schools could not represent a guide of good practices for family communication. As a solution for improving school implication for parent-child communication, parents suggested community involvement (teachers, parent, and children).

Implications

First, the results of the article can contribute to making principals aware of the important role that parents give to the school, towards the development of an effective parent-child communication. Organizing events in which parents and children would participate can become routine activities, in which teachers can observe some difficulties in parent-child communication.

Second, the article draws attention on the need of parents of school-aged children to attend classes or group counselling with parents. Social service agencies can come to their aid, systematically organizing in schools' courses for the development of effective parent-child communication and assertive communication. An important aspect is related to the costs of the courses, which if high, will not be attractive for parents, as Axford et al. (2012) conclude. The results of the article clearly highlight that even if parents are teachers and are supposed to have very good communication skills, in communicating with their children they face the same problems as other parents and feel the need for expert help.

Third, another important implication could be for teachers to understand that they, too, through classroom communication rules and established sanctions, can contribute to the development and improvement of parent-child communication. Children need rules of effective communication, and teachers and parents, because they are the most important adults and educators in the child's life, must be partners in developing communication skills.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is the organization of a single focus group. A focus group with children would have been welcome to find out their opinions about the parent-child relationship, but being of different ages, problems arose in the organization. The second limit is represented by the fact that the information obtained from the participants in this focus group was not completed with a questionnaire on parent-child communication. The interweaving of qualitative and quantitative research would have presented a more complete and complex vision on parent-child communication.

Future Directions

Future researchers could investigate other universities' view on the subject. This university is a Life Science one, and this aspect could influence some aspects of parent-child communication. Maybe in other kinds of universities (e.g., Medicine, Technical, Military, etc.) the results would be different.

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