

FAMILY INFLUENCE AND RELATED ISSUES WITHIN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE VIEW WITH A FOCUS ON THE CZECH REPUBLIC

RODINA A SOUVISEJÍCÍ VLIVY V KONTEXTU MEZINÁRODNÍ KOMPARACE SE ZAMĚŘENÍM NA ČESKOU REPUBLIKU

Daniela Vrabcová, Olga Kesnerová Řádková (Czech Republic)

Abstract

The paper, using meta-analysis and comparison, focuses on the highest parents' education attainment and socioeconomic status as indicators of intergenerational educational mobility. Upward/downward intergenerational mobility in selected countries is monitored as a context for focusing the Czech Republic and the education. The paper is thus an insight into the issue of how schools develop as a place for inclusive education. The main focused period includes period from 2014 onwards. Based on the analytical and comparative findings, some further theses are formulated in the context of the parametres of inclusive education.

Keywords: family influence; international comparison; OECD indicators; educational systems; Czech Republic; parents' educational attainment; socio-economic status

Abstrakt: Článek s užitím metaanalýzy a komparace pohlíží na nejvyšší vzdělání rodičů a socioekonomický status jako na indikátory mezigenerační vzdělanostní mobility. Sledována je vzestupná/sestupná mezigenerační vzdělanostní mobilita ve vybraných zemích jako kontext pro zaměření na ČR a vzdělávání. Příspěvek je tak vzhledem do otázky, jak se daří rozvíjet školu jako místo pro inkluzivní vzdělávání. Příspěvek se týká zejména období od roku 2014. Na základě analyticko-srovnávacích zjištění jsou v kontextu parametrů inkluzivního vzdělávání formulovány některé další teze.

Klíčová slova: vliv rodiny, mezinárodní komparace, OECD indikátory, vzdělávací systémy, Česká republika, vzdělanostní úroveň rodičů, socioekonomický status

Introduction

The contemporary Czech society faces a wide variety changes: social, economic, educational, in particular. This trend does not seem to be exceptional and its framework as well as effect, causes, and consequences are of multiple and global character, though numerous regional cultural conditions are highly recommended to be taken into consideration. This paper provides an insight into some of the most specific features of the theoretical and empirical investigation of family influence within the educational systems with a focus on the Czech Republic. Apart from the context of family-oriented discourse being presented, basic family functions are employed as the base for family influence. Attention is focused on the impact of social origin on education, measured by the relationship between the highest level of education attained by parents or primary household members and the educational attainment of their offspring.

It reveals an insight into how Czech educational system succeeds to develop inclusive dimension of the educational system.

Czech family-oriented educational discourse

The concept as well as phenomenon of family in the Czech Republic and society has been under change due to social historical development in the European society though with some restrictions apparent in regions with stronger religious belief. A very interesting view of the family and marriage partnership, in relation to religious issues, with a focus on the Christianity – Islam comparison is provided by Nešporová (2005), a Czech sociologist. It is possible to specify some attributes fundamental to the contemporary Czech family:

1. intense individualism (intense focus on concerns of individual beings, family members),
2. low expectations of permanency of relationship including marriage,
3. restricted face-to-face contact between parents and children,
4. shift of some of the responsibilities that used to belong to families to the state system,
5. postponing parenthood/delaying childbearing,
6. pre-marital sexual contacts, adulthood and maturity of partners,
7. low stability of families,
7. social tolerance to divorce issues,
8. focus on materialist values,
9. high employment and educational attainment of women (Šulová, 1998, In Haviger, et al, 2014).

The discourse on contemporary Czech family and family system seems to reflect on changes and shifts at the level of roles – expected roles/meanings of issues such as: love, life partner (man/woman), children and childbearing, family as such. Deficiency of a model that could be accepted as a model/ideal, and struggle for equality in relationships contrasting with need of more or less mutual relationship/bond to the partner appear to represent some of the main causes of deeper threat (Haviger, et al, 2014). For more sociological, psychological, pedagogical, or interdisciplinary analytical, and reflective findings on family, and parenthood

in the contemporary society, in the field of Czech region see also writings of some of these authors: Dudová, Vohlídalová (2005), Matoušek (2003), Kraus (2014), Lašek and Loudová (2013), Možný (1999, 2006), Rabušic (2001). These represent some of the main pedagogical, psychological, and sociological views applied in the contemporary Czech educational environment.

Educational science/pedagogy in the Czech area uses family as a concept in multidimensional context; in numerous pedagogical works there are treated issues such as: functions of family, in-family education, upbringing, and socialization, school-family relation and cooperation, family as one of the organizational forms of education.

Tab 1 - Typologies of family and school functions in Czech environment

Family functions (Janiš, Loudová. 2011)	School functions (Koťa, Havlík, 2002)	School functions (Malach, 2003)
1. Reproductive	1. Rearing	1. Contributes to complex
2. Socialization	2. Educational	personality development;
3. Educational	3. Qualification	2. Represents a protective
4. Emotional	4. Integrative	institution;
5. Economic	5. Selective	3. Moulds human being;
	6. Special – protective and resocialization	4. Instrument of social politics;
		5. Part of living environment

(Vrabcová, 2015)

In the Czech environment it is also possible to find a set of six family functions (Haviger, 2014): 1. reproductive function, 2. normative, providing socialization and education, 3. protective, 4. maintenance and rearing, 5. emotional /affective, 6. economic, 7. recreational. All of the functions are interrelated. However, due to this paper orientation, on the grounds of the family functions there arises the concern for one question: What is the extent to which parents influence their children's education at the level of international comparative statistics? In more general terms: What is the intergenerational educational mobility in the Czech educational environment from the international perspective of comparative pedagogy? How strong is the impact of socio-economic status and the family background upon the children's performance and educational attainment?

This section focuses on the absolute intergenerational educational mobility. This concept is used to *'refer to the proportion of individuals whose level of education is different from that of their parents: higher in the case of upward mobility, and lower in the case of downward mobility across generations'* (OECD, 2014, p. 86). In case of the situation where children attain the same level of education as their parents, there might be used two concepts: *'immobility in education'* or *'status quo in education'*. The influence of the socioeconomic status of the family background is also visible in mathematics performances of 15 year old ones when comparing the results of those from the advantaged background (higher socioeconomic status, higher educational level attained by parents) with the disadvantaged background. (OECD, 2024).

Intergenerational educational mobility at the level of literacy skills

In a 2014 comparative view of the Czech Republic the highest proportion of young adults attaining highest literacy proficiency levels 4-5 was in case of those whose parents have attained tertiary education. For more details see Tab 2; compare particularly the difference between the proportion of young adults with the highest literacy levels whose parents have attained below upper secondary education (column A at the levels 4-5) and the proportion of young adults with the highest literacy levels whose parents have attained tertiary education (column C at the levels 4-5).

Tab 2 - Proportions of students with highest vs. lowest literacy proficiency levels 4-5 vs. 0-1: by parents' education (in %)

	A/ Parents with below upper secondary education		B/ Parents with all levels of education			C/ Parents with tertiary education		Difference B – A (impact of A upon proficiency levels)		Difference C – A (impact of C upon proficiency levels)	
	Proportion at levels		Proportion at levels			Proportion at levels		Proportion at levels		Proportion at levels	
	0-1	4-5	0-1	4-5		0-1	4-5	0-1	4-5	0-1	4-5
Czech Republic	c	c	7	14		2	26	c	c	-5	12
Finland	9	26	5	35		4	49	-4	9	-1	14
Germany	c	c	14	15		7	23	c	c	-7	8
Canada	26	7	12	20		7	25	-14	13	-5	5
France	21	6	11	14		5	28	-10	8	-6	14
OECD average	23	8	11	17		5	27	-12	9	-6	10

(OECD, 2014, Vrabcová, 2015)

As to the Czech Republic Tab 2 shows that the highest proportion (26 %) of young adults with the highest literacy levels was observable among those whose parents have attained tertiary education which is 12 % more if compared to the group with parents educated without any specification (14 %). The impact of parents' tertiary educational level upon literacy skills of the children of the young adult age is larger in the Czech Republic (in terms of proportion: 12 %) than in OECD countries (as to the OECD average, in terms of proportion: 10 %), but even larger if compared to Germany (proportion: 8 %) or Canada (proportion: 5%). Higher educational level attained by parents' is a precondition for higher literacy skills of their children/young adults in the family.

Let us have a current comparative view (OECD, 2024). Despite the comparative studies use new category to differentiate the background into two categories (see 'bottom quartile disadvantaged' vs. 'top quartile advantaged'), it is possible to make a similar comparison focusing the proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency in mathematics by the end of lower secondary education by socio-economic background. Tab 3 compares the same countries as Tab 2 and some more.

Tab 3 - Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency in mathematics by the end of lower secondary education by socio-economic background (2022)

– selected countries

	Socioeconomic status		Difference
	Bottom quartile (disadvantaged)	Top quartile (advantaged)	
Australia	57	88	31
Austria	55	93	38
Belgium	54	94	40
Canada	66	89	22
Colombia	29	66	42
Czechia	52	91	39
Denmark	66	91	25
Finland	61	89	18
France	51	91	40
Japan	79	94	15
Slovak Republic	37	88	53
OECD average	53	86	33

OECD, 2024, Indicator SDG 4.1.1

Tab 3 illustrates that the influence of the socioeconomic status of the family background is still present. The Czech Republic (Czechia) unfortunately belongs to countries with very big difference (6 points higher compared to OECD average), similarly as for example Belgium, Colombia, France, Slovak Republic with the highest impact of the socioeconomic status upon the educational performance compared to countries, such as Japan where advantaged children's performance is only 1 point better when compared to the disadvantaged as to the socio-economic status (similarly, Finland 18 points difference, Denmark 25 and Canada 25 points difference).

Conclusion

Upward intergenerational educational mobility represents one of the factors, attributes and aspects of such educational systems that are inclusive and that employ the principles of both equity and equality. Summarising some of the key findings, Czech Republic must be viewed as a country where families' and parents' socio-economic and educational status has quite a strong impact on educational level of attainment in case of people, young adult particularly,

but not exclusively. Due to the fact that motivational role of family appears to represent the core of most of family functions as they are usually described, family's motivational role incorporates the economic parts of life-cycle. However, given the ongoing expansion of educational attainment, inequalities appear to persist.

The significance of the family, in terms of the family environment, is increasingly examined today also with respect to the living conditions in which children grow up. This is considered in connection with the risks of poverty or material and social deprivation, environments that foster inequality, lower motivation and aspirations for higher education, opportunities for attaining higher social or economic status, and prospects for upward educational mobility. The Czech Statistical Office's *Living Conditions Survey* (Korychová, 2024) also assesses the impact of three levels of education, categorized as below upper secondary education, upper secondary education, and tertiary education. (The classification is based on the education of the household's reference person—since 2023 defined as the individual with the highest household income. Furthermore, the survey confirms the relatively high educational homogeneity within households: partners typically share the same or a similar educational level, with 57% of couples having attained the same level of education, 38% differing by one level, and only 5% consisting of partners with the highest and lowest observed levels of education). The survey further demonstrates that the degree of material and social deprivation is substantially higher in households where the reference person has attained, at most, lower secondary education (deprivation in households with lower secondary education: 12%, compared to 3% with upper secondary education and 1% with tertiary education) (Korychová, 2024).

The ideal case is that, families focus on motivating their members, i.e. young people, young adults, to fulfill family functions by various means, one of which is fully-conscious struggle to provide them opportunity to attain: higher educational level in comparison to that of parents' one/s, higher levels of literacy proficiency. Negative view of this struggle might be identified within the discourse as irrelevant pressure on school performance. Achieving this kind of targets depends on more factors; two main groups/types are related not only to the families and parents themselves, but also to the system of education, including inclusive strategies and supportive instruments, strategies at school environment, educational policy, including educational expansions, effort to widen the educational opportunities.

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Mgr. Daniela Vrabcová, Ph.D.

Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Ethics Education

Faculty of Education

University of Hradec Králové

Czech Republic

daniela.vrabcova@uhk.cz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6169-0899>

Mgr. Olga Kesnerová Řádková, Ph.D.

Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Ethics Education

Faculty of Education

University of Hradec Králové

Czech Republic

olga.radkova@uhk.cz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9494-543X>



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