

An Analysis of Collaboration Between School, Family and Community in Education

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Abstract: Collaboration between family, school and community in education has been brought back under the spotlight as hybrid teaching was imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, existing cases of these collaborations show problems of misunderstanding, lack of trust and involvement in the interactions between these parties in supporting and educating children. Meanwhile, the mechanism and system of collaboration have rarely been analysed, thus not yielding abundant suggestions for updating and improving the interactions of the parties involved. Therefore, this article examines how addressing information asymmetry and building trust can help improve the situation. This article concludes that a free flow of information and continuous collaboration can establish trust between family, school and community, increasing the involvement of these parties and consequently benefiting children. Therefore, this article suggests schools should actively contact and communicate with families and communities, establish a flow of information and utilise resources and efforts to ensure a conclusive and collaborative education for all children.

Keywords: Collaboration, Information Asymmetry, Game Theory

1. Introduction

The education of children is an effort requiring collaboration. On the one hand, children are educated within and towards adapting to a society with various entities, obtaining different resources and acting on behalf of a diverse range of motives and interests [1, 2]. On the other hand, "a child educated only at school is uneducated" is a common belief proven by studies.

The idea that collaboration in education is beneficial has been a topic of discussion among intellectuals and academics for a long time. Historically, John Dewey believed that schools can be a source of social change. Therefore, all reformations and refinements of the schooling system must be analysed under a broader social lens. Schools as institutions must also guide living and a "miniature society" in which students learn by doing and by living and experiencing [3].

Recent studies also indicate that family and community engagement positively influences students' performance and benefits students' upbringing, as collaboration can utilise extra resources, provide consistency, and improve and expand students' opportunities while offering students a chance to contribute to families and communities [1, 4].

Therefore, in the education of children, it is essential not to rely all efforts on solely and lay all responsibilities upon any single entity, namely the schooling system, as collaborations are not merely

an expansion of time and space, a collection of resources from these parties, but a construction of a system in which children can be more efficiently and effectively educated [2].

As this article has developed, the collaboration between school, family, and community is of great importance. However, such collaborations have been challenged by technological and social changes. Navarro and Tudge concluded that Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory has to be modified, as the virtual environment is imposing a significant influence on the upbringing of children, fundamentally changing the system in which children gain knowledge, experience and establish identity and other characteristics and children's method and mechanism in interacting with such systems [5]. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent shutdown of schools also raised awareness of family and community involvement in education, as the conventional schooling system became unavailable for children, requiring new pedagogical skills and social and parental commitments [6].

Therefore, understanding how such collaboration performs and evaluating the efficiency and robustness of the system becomes vital in providing more conclusive education for children. Beyond studies of superficial phenomena, comprehending the fundamental mechanism would give insight into the system and consequently help devise methods to further advance the family-school-community coordination into a more inclusive, effective, and practical one on which children can rely.

2. Challenges to Collaboration

2.1. Flow of Information

For a collaboration to be successful, a free flow and effective communication of information is vital [2, 7]. The exchange of information is the basis for entities to share resources effectively, combine efforts and make joint decisions, as each entity in collaboration has a comparative advantage in the resources these entities acquire, a unique motivation and a benefit to yield through cooperative actions.

However, such an exchange of information generates transaction costs, as sharing information about one's assets, capabilities, and interests takes time and trust. Meanwhile, the opportunity cost of not exploiting the benefit from holding undisclosed information could also be a negative incentive for productive communications.

This is why, in the practice of collaboration between school, family and community, the flow of information may be inefficient despite the act of supporting and educating children, which should ideally cause little to no conflict of interest between these entities, thus not creating negative incentives for sharing information and communications.

For example, parents in a study were shown to have a demand to acquire information about their children's academic performance despite the actual scores [2]. Another study showcased that parents urge more information to engage with school better [1]. However, due to a lack of resources and potential judgment from families and communities, activities such as parental education, school-and-family activity, and family visits, etc, are not being implemented sufficiently to bridge the informational gap between parents and schools.

2.2. Stakeholder Autonomy

Each stakeholder or entity within the collaboration must remain rather than forego their autonomy to preserve their specialised advantages, gain profit, and fulfil their distinctive interests [8]. Conversely, this could hamper the dependence and trust-building between entities in collaboration by further raising the cost for parties to work together and diminishing efficiency.

Families and communities with diverse sociocultural backgrounds and each family practice education individually under the unique influence of their community. A positive, inclusive, and

collaborative environment, meanwhile, can allow schools to use diversity as a resource in education to facilitate children's self-awareness and social awareness, thus supporting children in living and learning in a community with respect and responsibility while enjoying the benefits of diversity.

Nevertheless, besides the cost of such interaction in a culturally diverse environment, there might be a balance between respecting sociocultural differences and individual education practices and the school's role in protecting and educating children with diligence.

For example, physical discipline may be accepted in a certain culture and families, while some schools mandate their faculty to report to law enforcement when they spot children's suspicious injuries.

The religious and cultural customs of a community may also contradict school education in terms of building citizenship and a sense of nationality in some countries. Without a balance between the autonomy of families or communities and the autonomy of schools, trust cannot be constructed between these parties and consequently, collaboration could be hampered as entities have a negative incentive to work together. This may, in the end, restrict children from opportunities to enjoy the benefit of diversity and the chance to build responsibility for the environment they live in.

3. Possible Reasons for Difficulty in Collaboration

3.1. Information Asymmetry

Since its establishment, information asymmetry has been the subject of economic, political, and sociocultural debates. The theory highlights how information asymmetry can lead to adverse selection, a market phenomenon in which the party with less information, even if they seem to be making the decision, is adversely selected by the party with more information [7]. Ultimately, no party in a market can gain what they demand, as public information would not effectively indicate the essence of the trade.

A case showing information asymmetry within the collaboration between family and school is school choosing. Parents obtain less information when choosing a school, as parents do not know how the curriculum is arranged, how well teachers can communicate and educate, and other issues about children's day-to-day lives before their children's enrolment [9].

Meanwhile, parents may not be capable of utilizing information in decision-making, as parents might not obtain enough pedagogical knowledge and relative information about schooling, for example, funding and government policy, and may not come up with a rational conclusion about which school is the best for their children [9].

Thus, parents would rely on networking and other means to obtain publicly unavailable information [9]. Yet, the issue of being unable to utilize such information still exists. Especially when assessing whether the quality of education provided to their children is worth the tuition. This allows schools to select parents and children adversely by setting tuition fees, marketing through certain channels to target families, providing exaggerated information about their capabilities, and so forth. These actions, however, would likely provide false expectations to the parents and children and lead to a breakdown of trust by cognitive dissonance, should reality fail to meet these expectations.

Also, after enrolment, parents urge more information to be conveyed through modern methods. This can indicate the scarcity of information for the parents, as children spend most of their time at school and away from their parents. This created a natural gap in information between enclosed schools and the parents, leading to interactions similar to incomplete information games, where trust can be established but inefficiently or tarnished through merely accidental or possibly worse events.

3.2. Difficulties in Building Trust in the Bayesian Game

Akerlof has also emphasised the importance of trust. According to Bayes's rule in game theory, trust is established through repetitive cooperation and mutual benefits. Betrayal actions damage trust and lower the parties' expectations of the interaction, consequently discouraging further cooperation [10].

Bayesian game reflects how continuous mutual benefits can establish trust in the long term and how beliefs of one another can be influenced and shifted by observations of their actions. This put forward a mathematical proof of how people "build trust" while suggesting that policies and external incentives can "nudge" people away from betrayal (which in most cases yields more personal benefits than cooperation with a partner by hurting the counterpart), and help maintain if not strengthen the coalition.

This is why the collaboration between the community and school in education must be in the form of repeated cooperation to ensure effectiveness. The community and its entities are conventionally considered outsiders of the schools, even though organizations and other entities in the community might obtain more advantageous resources in providing certain services (in the previous case, supporting children living through trauma) than school faculty. However, because they are separated for the most part from lectures of the schools, they do not have information on the specific needs of children in their school and family context. To make matters worse, sources of such trauma, for example, family member, will conceal their activities and segregate children from law enforcement, family services, and organizations of help, adversely "selecting" the members of the community with which children can interact. Schools, namely ones in countries without mandatory laws for reporting these incidents, would be the only haven for these children to seek help, but they might fail to provide such support and even, in rare cases, collude with parents, further threatening children.

Therefore, information can be considered the key intermediary of school, family, and community coordination. To prevent information asymmetry, trustworthy sources of these facts should actively publish relevant information to foster a cooperative, inclusive, and efficient system.

4. Suggestion

Family and community are key members of children's education that can be overlooked, as they are not a center of discussion in educational reformations and enforcement of pedagogical policies, as they are not under the public sector and cannot be easily regulated and supervised [11]. Yet, they play an important role, and children will ultimately become members of family and society as they leave school. Excluding involvement and efforts of family and community does not merely reduce potential opportunity and resources for children that school on their own can hardly provide; it would also close a door for children in exploration in socialization, communication, interpersonal interaction, and involvement in establishing their own life and identity.

Schools should actively contact and communicate with parents to provide information and convey practical methodology for education in a household context. Utilizing and empowering parents in collaborative education will expand the scene further and could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education.

Schools, meanwhile, must remain socially and culturally sensitive when conducting interactions and communications with families and communities. Schools should actively balance autonomy between entities while utilising expanded resources and opportunities to keep the environment and relationships inclusive and friendly, making long-term collaboration possible. They should also encourage families and communities to cooperate with schools when needed by conducting pedagogical education to parents and social organisations, explaining certain school decisions that are prone to be misunderstood, and ideally fostering parental and social engagement in the management and operation of schools.

Community and social groups should consider going one step forward in supporting education. A cooperative relationship can and should be constructed between local institutions, organizations, and other entities, not only to expand the horizon for children, who mainly learn through a lecture in school and lack practical, social, and interactive channels of learning but also to help the institutions as a channel to market their goal and capabilities. However, supervision, labor training, and legal issues might need to be addressed in practice.

Policymakers should establish an organized set of policies incentivizing families and communities to participate in educational activities. Social groups, especially organizations in child protection, must keep a close eye on familial and communal actions to prevent foul actions against children throughout the process. Further study on the role and impact of family, peers, community, and society in children's academic, health, and overall well-being can also provide detailed suggestions on how such coordination can be further advanced in supporting school students.

5. Conclusion

This article looks at collaboration between schools, families, and communities using the theory of information asymmetry and game theory. The theory of information asymmetry and game theory, namely the Bayesian game, have been well established in analyzing interpersonal interactions when at least one party does not obtain abundant information to make a rational, most beneficial decision. Decision-making, as such, appears widely in the complex relationships and cooperation between school, family, and community, therefore causing issues in specific cases. Understanding how a free flow of information and long-term commitment can eventually help parties better cooperate and build trust can provide a positive factor for these parties to collaborate in raising and helping children, especially the ones in need. Schools can take up an active role in coordinating these relationships and utilizing the involvement of others to ensure the effectiveness and quality of schooling while expanding potential opportunities and sources of resources for children.

The research can be improved by looking into the gap between existing theories and the new context: Despite management theories being widely used in policy-making and mechanism design for the time being, the unique features of education, especially the unique traits of children, could present new situations and contexts for these theories.

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