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DEVELOPING AN INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR SCHOOL–FAMILY PARTNERSHIP IN ENSURING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

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Abstract. *This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of developing an institutional governance model for school–family partnership as a strategic condition for ensuring educational quality. The study moves beyond the traditional understanding of parental involvement as participation in school activities or communication with teachers and conceptualizes school–family partnership as an integral component of institutional educational governance. Particular attention is given to parental participation in decision-making, bilateral communication, mutual trust, distribution of pedagogical responsibility, family engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. The theoretical perspectives of K.V. Hoover-Dempsey and H.M. Sandler, J.L. Epstein, C. Desforges and A. Abouchaar, J. Goodall and C. Montgomery, V. Stratan, Y.S. Handayani, and E.V. Ryabova are critically examined and synthesized in relation to the proposed institutional governance model. The analysis demonstrates that an effective school–family partnership should be constructed as a systemic governance process integrating strategic objectives, stakeholders, governance functions, communication mechanisms, participatory decision-making, pedagogical support, monitoring, evaluation, and institutional feedback. The article argues that the transition from formal parental involvement to genuine*

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partnership represents an important transformation in contemporary educational governance and quality assurance.

Keywords: *educational quality, school–family partnership, institutional governance, parental involvement, parental engagement, participatory governance, educational management, school governance, communication, decision-making, monitoring, feedback.*

In contemporary educational systems, the concept of educational quality can no longer be reduced exclusively to students' academic achievement. It increasingly encompasses the effectiveness of institutional governance, the quality of the learning environment, students' social and emotional development, the sustainability of school–family relations, mutual trust among educational stakeholders, and the capacity of educational institutions to mobilize families and communities in pursuit of common educational objectives. From this perspective, the school and the family should not be regarded merely as two relatively independent social institutions operating in parallel; rather, they should be conceptualized as interdependent institutional actors whose coordinated actions contribute to the construction, maintenance, and improvement of educational quality. Desforges and Abouchaar, in their extensive literature review, demonstrate that parental involvement encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from educational support provided within the home to participation in school-related activities and governance [1, pp. 3–6]. Their analysis is particularly significant because it conceptualizes parental involvement not simply as assistance provided to individual children, but as a broader process through which families may contribute to educational development and school improvement. In this context, parental participation should be understood not as an auxiliary function

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imposed by the school, but as a legitimate dimension of educational governance.

A particularly important theoretical contribution is provided by K.V. Hoover-Dempsey and H.M. Sandler, whose model explains why parents become involved in their children's education and under what conditions such involvement may occur. The authors identify parental role construction, parental sense of efficacy, and invitations or opportunities for involvement as central determinants of parental participation [2, pp. 3–4]. In their formulation, “parents’ role construction defines parents’ beliefs about what they are supposed to do in their children’s education” [2, p. 3]. This proposition has considerable implications for the institutional governance model proposed in this study. If parents perceive their role merely as receiving information from the school, attending meetings, or supervising homework, their participation is likely to remain predominantly functional and reactive. However, when parents perceive themselves as legitimate participants in educational decision-making and as partners responsible for supporting educational development, their engagement can acquire a qualitatively different institutional character. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s emphasis on parental efficacy is equally important. Parents need to believe that their participation can produce meaningful educational consequences; otherwise, even formally established participation structures may remain ineffective. Therefore, an institutional governance model should not simply create opportunities for parental involvement but should also create conditions in which parents can perceive the tangible consequences of their participation.

The conceptual framework developed by J.L. Epstein further expands the theoretical foundation of school–family partnership by identifying multiple dimensions of family engagement. Epstein and colleagues conceptualize school–family–community partnership through six major forms of

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involvement, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community [3, pp. 165, 180]. Particularly relevant to the present research is the proposition that families should be included as participants in “school decisions, governance, and advocacy” [3, p. 165]. This position is directly related to the concept of institutional governance because it moves parental involvement beyond communication and participation toward actual participation in organizational decision-making. From a theoretical perspective, Epstein’s framework provides a functional architecture for the proposed model: communication establishes the information exchange mechanism; parenting strengthens the family’s educational capacity; learning at home connects school-based and home-based learning environments; decision-making provides the participatory governance dimension; and community collaboration expands school–family relations into a broader social ecosystem.

The distinction between parental involvement and parental engagement, developed by J. Goodall and C. Montgomery, represents another theoretically important dimension of the present research. The authors argue that parental involvement and parental engagement should not be treated as synonymous concepts and conceptualize them as different points along a continuum [4, pp. 399–410]. Their approach emphasizes the difference between parents being physically or administratively involved in school activities and parents becoming meaningfully engaged in their children’s learning processes. This distinction has substantial methodological implications for evaluating institutional governance. The number of parent meetings, school events, or communication messages cannot, by itself, demonstrate the quality of school–family partnership. A genuinely effective governance model must assess the depth and quality of engagement, including parents’ contribution to learning,

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communication with teachers, participation in decision-making, and capacity to support students' development [4, pp. 399–410].

The conceptual contribution of V. Stratan is particularly relevant to the institutional dimension of the present research because the author interprets school–family partnership as a structured relationship rather than merely an aggregate of individual interactions. Stratan describes school–family partnership as “a governing relationship of the actions orchestrated by a purpose and idea” [5, pp. 182–187]. This formulation is especially important because it allows school–family cooperation to be interpreted through the theoretical lens of governance. Partnership becomes institutional when its objectives, participants, responsibilities, communication procedures, decision-making processes, and expected outcomes are systematically coordinated. Consequently, the development of an institutional governance model should transform school–family relations from isolated initiatives into a sustainable organizational system based on common objectives and clearly defined responsibilities. Stratan — paper details

Y.S. Handayani's research adds another important dimension by emphasizing trust and communication in teacher–parent relationships. The author argues that “trust and communication skills are two important elements for managing teacher-parent partnerships” [6, p. 10]. This perspective is significant because it demonstrates that institutional mechanisms alone cannot guarantee effective partnership. Even where formal structures exist, cooperation may remain superficial if parents and teachers lack mutual trust, perceive each other through stereotypical assumptions, or do not possess adequate communication competencies. Handayani further emphasizes the importance of relationships based on trust and equality, noting that differences in perceptions can become significant obstacles to effective teacher–parent cooperation [6, pp. 13–15]. From the perspective of the proposed institutional

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governance model, this suggests that institutional trust should be regarded as a measurable dimension of partnership quality rather than as an informal or secondary characteristic.

E.V. Ryabova's analysis of contemporary family–educational organization interaction provides further support for institutionalizing parental participation. The study examines several dimensions of cooperation, including parental educational support, joint activities involving students and parents, psychological and pedagogical assistance, and parental participation in the governance of educational organizations [7, pp. 86–102]. Of particular significance is the identification of parental participation in educational governance as a distinct dimension of school–family interaction [7, pp. 96–99]. This position reinforces the argument that families should be regarded not merely as consumers of educational services but as stakeholders capable of contributing to institutional decision-making, quality assurance, and educational development.

A synthesis of these theoretical perspectives makes it possible to reinterpret the concept of institutional governance of school–family partnership as a systematic process through which the school and family jointly establish educational priorities, coordinate responsibilities, participate in decision-making, exchange information, monitor outcomes, and implement corrective measures. Such an approach represents a significant departure from the traditional “school-to-parent” communication paradigm. In the traditional model, the school predominantly determines educational priorities and parents are expected to support or implement decisions externally. In an institutional partnership model, however, the relationship becomes more horizontal and participatory: the school retains its professional pedagogical authority, while parents contribute their knowledge of the child, family context, expectations, values, and social resources.

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Consequently, the proposed institutional governance model may be conceptually structured around an interconnected sequence of strategic objectives, stakeholder participation, distribution of authority and responsibility, bilateral communication, collaborative action, participatory decision-making, monitoring, feedback, and corrective development. The strategic component aligns educational objectives with the needs and expectations of families; the organizational component defines the roles of school leaders, teachers, psychologists, class teachers, parents, and other stakeholders; the communicative component establishes continuous two-way information exchange; the pedagogical component develops parents' capacity to support learning; the participatory component creates opportunities for parents to contribute to decision-making; the monitoring component evaluates the effectiveness of partnership; and the reflective-corrective component ensures continuous institutional improvement.

From a methodological standpoint, one of the most important problems is distinguishing formal participation from substantive participation. The existence of a parents' council does not necessarily mean that parents exercise meaningful influence over school governance. Likewise, attendance at parent meetings does not automatically constitute engagement. Therefore, the effectiveness of school–family partnership should not be evaluated merely by quantitative indicators such as the number of meetings conducted or parents attending school events. Instead, evaluation should consider the depth, quality, influence, and outcomes of parental participation. Such indicators may include parents' perceived influence on school decisions, quality of communication with teachers, level of institutional trust, contribution to students' learning, participation in school improvement initiatives, satisfaction with feedback processes, and observable changes in students' academic and socio-emotional development.

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This interpretation is consistent with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's emphasis on parental role construction and efficacy, Epstein's participatory decision-making framework, Goodall and Montgomery's distinction between involvement and engagement, Stratan's understanding of partnership as a governing relationship, and Handayani's emphasis on trust and communication [2–6]. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that the central research problem should not be formulated merely as “how to increase parental participation.” Rather, the deeper question is how to transform parental participation into an institutional capacity for jointly governing educational quality.

From this perspective, the scientific novelty of the proposed approach lies in reconceptualizing school–family partnership not as a set of supplementary pedagogical activities but as an institutional mechanism for co-producing educational quality. Educational quality should therefore be understood not simply as an outcome generated within the school, while family participation remains an external factor, but as a result of coordinated institutional action involving both school and family. This conceptual shift changes the logic of educational governance: from vertical management to collaborative governance, from one-way information transfer to bilateral communication, from formal involvement to meaningful engagement, from isolated initiatives to institutionalized practices, and from activity-based monitoring to outcome-oriented quality assurance.

Within such a framework, the institutional governance model can be represented conceptually as a continuous cycle: “strategic objectives → stakeholders → authority and responsibility → communication → collaborative action → decision-making → monitoring → feedback → institutional correction and development.” Each component is functionally dependent on the others. Without clearly defined objectives, cooperation becomes fragmented; without clearly distributed authority, participation

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remains symbolic; without bilateral communication, institutional trust cannot be sustained; without trust, collaborative decision-making loses legitimacy; and without monitoring and feedback, the governance system cannot develop through evidence-based correction. Therefore, school–family partnership should be understood not as an additional element of educational management but as one of the systemic conditions through which educational quality can be continuously maintained and improved.

The available literature also indicates that the relationship between parental involvement and educational outcomes is complex and that different forms of participation do not necessarily produce identical effects. Desforges and Abouchaar emphasize the importance of supportive parenting practices within the home, parent–child communication, educational expectations, and continuity between home and school environments [1, pp. 20–25, 34–35]. Their findings are particularly relevant because they caution against reducing parental involvement to participation in school-based activities. This implies that an institutional governance model must evaluate not only what parents do within the school but also how effectively the school creates conditions for productive educational interaction between the home and school environments.

Accordingly, the proposed model should integrate academic outcomes with broader indicators such as attendance, learning motivation, student behavior, socio-emotional development, parental trust, teacher–parent communication, parental participation in decision-making, and satisfaction with institutional feedback. Such a multidimensional approach would provide a more scientifically defensible representation of educational quality than a model based exclusively on examination results or conventional parental participation indicators.

The central conceptual proposition of this study can therefore be formulated as follows: school–family partnership becomes an effective

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instrument of educational quality assurance only when it is institutionalized as a structured, participatory, trust-based, and outcome-oriented governance system. In this model, parents move from the position of passive recipients of school information toward becoming legitimate stakeholders in the creation, monitoring, and improvement of educational quality. The school, in turn, moves from the role of an institution that merely communicates decisions to families toward the role of a coordinating educational institution capable of building sustainable partnerships with families and other stakeholders.

Thus, the development of an institutional governance model for school–family partnership represents a transition from the conventional paradigm of “working with parents” to the more advanced paradigm of collaborative educational quality governance. Its scientific and practical significance lies in establishing a coherent institutional framework through which school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders can coordinate educational objectives, share responsibilities, participate in decision-making, evaluate outcomes, and continuously improve the educational environment. Such a model provides a conceptual foundation for developing measurable criteria and indicators of school–family partnership, designing diagnostic instruments, establishing institutional regulations, and conducting experimental studies to determine the effectiveness of different governance mechanisms.

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