

EXPLORING PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS ABOUT CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN LATVIA: A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the nuanced view of parental expectations regarding their children's educational objectives in Latvia, with a focus on the perspective of teachers. As parental involvement is an important determinant of a child's educational journey, understanding the dynamics of these expectations becomes paramount for educational stakeholders. The study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of teacher observations and experiences related to parental expectations, shedding light on the intricate interplay between home and school environments.

The methodology employed for this research includes mixed methods: literature context analysis and surveys for teachers ($n = 1150$).

Preliminary findings reveal a spectrum of parental expectations, ranging from a desire for academic excellence to broader developmental goals. The study identifies commonalities and variations in teacher experiences, highlighting cultural influences and socio-economic factors that may impact the nature and intensity of parental expectations.

This research contributes to the broader field of education by providing a localized understanding of the role parental expectations play in shaping children's educational trajectories. Insights gained from teacher perspectives can inform educational policies, interventions, and practices aimed at fostering a collaborative and supportive partnership between parents and educators.

Keywords: *common understanding, cooperation in education, educational objectives, parental expectations, partnership in education, primary education, teacher's perspective.*

Introduction

In the dynamic environment of basic education, parent-school collaboration is a cornerstone of a child's academic achievements and holistic development. Parents, as children's first teachers and leaders of educational opportunities, influence a child's education, parental expectations, beliefs, and meaningful engagement with the education system shape the child's learning experience (Robinson & Aronica, 2015). A common understanding of the objectives of primary education, which is possible in cooperation, in

which understanding of school objectives, mission, vision, school ethos and values, and parental expectations contributes to the achievement of the objectives of primary education (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Parental expectations play an important role in shaping a child’s academic experiences and outcomes. From the perspective of teachers, understanding and navigating parental expectations is essential for effective communication, collaboration, and child support (Henderson et al., 2011; Park & Holloway, 2017).

The study on parental expectations about the objectives of primary education, and their evaluation to promote cooperation with the school, evaluates parental expectations in the context of the objectives of primary education. An assessment of parental expectations is necessary to explain the interaction of parental expectations with the school from the perspective of children’s educational achievement.

Parental expectations from the teacher’s perspective outline several aspects of the problem – the level and structure of cooperation and collaboration between parents and teachers, the way how teachers perceive and react to parental expectations, educational objectives that are common for all educational actors, and parents as educational actors with their vision about education, cooperation, and collaboration in educational process. The objective of this research is to study teachers’ perspective about parental expectations about a child’s educational objectives. In order to achieve the objective pursued by the study, the following research question is identified: what is teachers’ view of parental expectations about primary educational objectives?

Theoretical background

The theoretical background of the study reveals different theories that describe teachers’ perspectives on parental expectation. To describe the question of the study: what is teachers’ view of parental expectations about primary educational objectives, several theories were analyzed to reveal teachers’ perspectives about parental expectations (see Table 1) – Humanist theories, Social Cognitive Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, Parental Involvement Theory, theories, that describe parents as educational actors, studies about parental expectations, Cultural Capital Theory and theories that describe cooperation in the educational process.

Table 1 Theoretical background – describing teacher’s perspective about parental expectations

Theory	Parental expectations from teachers’ perspective
Humanist theories (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1961; Erikson, 1963; Freire, 1970; Brofenbrenner, 1979, 2009; Giligan, 1982; Noddings, 2005; 2013; Ryan&Deci, 2017; Miller, 2016; Pink, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014)	Parental expectations and their related actions that highlight human value and meaning based on the concepts of fair and unfair, correct and wrong, emphasizing personal development through actor collaboration.
Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1969, 1977, 2016; Schunk, 2012; Pajares & Urdan, 2006; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Maddux, 2016; Lent & Brown, 2013; Miller & Rollnick, 2012; Usher & Pajares, 2008; Hoffman, 2015; Wood & Bandura, 1989)	The emphasis on the dynamic interaction between teachers and parents, their behavior, and their environments.

Theory	Parental expectations from teachers' perspective
<p>Expectancy-Value Theory (Atkinson, 1964; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield, Tonks & Klauda, 2009; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010; Flake et al., 2015; Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007; Trautwein et al., 2009; Gaspard et al., 2015; Hulleman et al., 2010; Simpkins, Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2006)</p>	<p>The educational goal-directed actions are guided by expectations that certain behaviors are likely to lead to a desired outcome and by the extent to which the outcome is valued.</p>
<p>Parental Involvement Theory (Epstein, 1995, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2010; Epstein et al., 2002; Jeynes, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2001; Walker et al., 2005; Sheldon, 2003; Pomerantz et al., 2007)</p>	<p>Children whose parents are involved in their education will be more likely to develop a strong, positive sense of efficacy for successfully achieving school-related tasks.</p>
<p>Theories describing parents as educational actors (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2010; Weiss, Lopez & Rosenberg, 2011; Jeynes, 2011) Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2012)</p>	<p>The essential role of parents as educational cooperation partners in a successful educational process is revealed.</p>
<p>Studies about parental expectations (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Froiland et al., 2013; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014; Dumont et al., 2014; Lareau, 2011; Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Muller, 1998)</p>	<p>Studies regarding parental expectations, their formation, and the factors that affect them describe the value of parental expectations in the educational process and child's motivation to study.</p>
<p>Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau, 2011; Kingston, 2001; Dumais, 2002; Reay, 2004)</p>	<p>Family-embodied cultural capital is measured by parents' daily reading time after work, frequency of cultural activities, parents' educational expectations, and parents' requirements for academic achievement.</p>
<p>Cooperation in the educational process (Epstein, 2018; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sime & Sheridan, 2014; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011)</p>	<p>Studies and theories regarding cooperation in the educational process, which promote the understanding of other actors regarding the parental expectations regarding educational objectives and ways to implement such objectives in cooperation.</p>

These theories disclose the importance of cooperation in education between educational actors, which is essential for schools to promote the quality of school and children's educational achievements. Parental expectations from a teacher's perspective indicate the role of observational learning and self-efficacy, highlighting how students' beliefs in their abilities shape their academic outcome, the importance of parental expectations for success and the value they place on educational objectives, the significant impact of parents' engagement in their children's education and importance of socio-economic and cultural resources influence students' access to educational opportunities and success.

Methodology

A mixed method research design (Kristapson, 2008; Cohen et al, 2018, Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was applied to make systematic literature analysis and to collect

quantitative data using semi-structured questionnaires using Google Forms (Bryman, 2016).

The aim of this study is to determine the teacher's perspective about parental expectations about educational objectives.

Before creating questionnaire, a systematic literature analysis was done- studies and articles that characterize parental expectations from the teacher's perspective The analysis of systematic literature was carried out on a seven-stage model (seven-step model) – planning, data collection, data analysis, data evaluation, (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016), following the basic principles of the SALSA (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis and Analysis) method (Mengist et al., 2010).

Code of ethics. The study uses the principle of fair research, implemented at all stages of the study. When developing questionnaires and collecting data, participants are only provided with confidentiality, anonymity, non-traceability, ethical monitoring, and access to data (British Educational Research Association, 2018). The study used FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) data principles where data can be found, available, interoperable, and reusable (Wilkinson et al., 2016). The General Data Protection Regulation and ethical considerations were respected and the study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Latvia (13 September 2023; Nr. 71-46/134).

Questionnaire participants. Questionnaire for Latvia primary school teachers (Ponto, 2015) was designed as a data acquisition method. Questionnaire was implemented in Latvia from September – November, 2023 and was distributed via Latvian county Educational governance network. 1150 respondent answers were collected that represent 17.92% of primary school teachers in Latvia.

The structure of the questionnaire. There were several types of questions used to reveal the teacher's perspective – Osgood scale questions (Osgood semantic differential scale questions (Semantic Differential Scale (Osgood et al., 1957) questions in the survey consist of a list of seven-point scales (-3; 0; +3) between bipolar, contrasting opinions to measure teacher's perspectives about parental expectations), open questions, multiple choice questions, demographic questions (Fowler, 2013).

There are several views of parental expectations about educational objectives that reveal the teacher's perspective that was established in questionnaire:

- 1) What are parental expectations about a child's educational objectives?
- 2) How do parents form their expectations?
- 3) How do parents form their expectations about a child's educational objectives?
- 4) How do parents inform teachers about their expectations about educational objectives?
- 5) Do parental expectations change when a child grows?
- 6) Do parental expectations influence a child's well-being?
- 7) Do parental expectations affect a child's motivation?
- 8) Whether parental expectations are taken into account in the school education process?

Data collection and analysis. Data was collected online using Google Forms, the data is anonymous, accessed by study researchers and stored in Google Drive with dual authentication protection. Data analysis as data processing method was done using different methods –

- 1) XLSTAT – data preparation, data research analysis, analysis of study questions, reflection and modeling of results;
- 2) Osgood’s semantic differential scale analysis was performed in program XLSTAT describing and displaying data in differential analysis;
- 3) Analysis of open questions in phases – preparation of data, extraction of unifying elements, rotation of elements, interpretation of elements, presentation of results of analyzed elements using Factor analysis system (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020).

Results

1150 respondents – primary school teachers participated in a survey revealing their perspective about parental expectations about educational objectives.

Descriptions of respondent profiles disclose that:

1. 90% of respondents were women, 9% men, and 1% specified gender as other.
2. Analyzing the age of the teachers that participated in the survey – 34% of teachers are 51–60 years old, 30% are 41–50 years old and 22% are 61 and more years old.
3. Respondents’ profiles reveal that a major part of teachers (79%) have master’s degrees.
4. Describing the region, where teachers work, 38% of teachers detect that the capital city Rīga is their workplace, 11% – the region around Rīga, 20% Kurzeme, 11% equally Zemgale un Vidzeme, 7% Latgale, 2% Sēlija.
5. Analyzing the educational level that teachers work with, 27% of teachers work with classes 1–3, 38% of teachers work with classes 4–6, and 35% of teachers work with classes 7–9.
6. There are several areas describing subjects that teachers teach 30% of teachers teach languages, 19% of teachers are primary school teachers that teach multiple subjects, 13% of teachers teach science, 11% of teachers teach social sciences and civic education, 9% of teachers teach art like music, art, design and technologies, 7% of teachers teach mathematics, 7% of teachers teach information and technologies, 4% of teachers teach health and physical education.

The question “What are parental expectations about a child’s educational objectives?” from the teacher’s perspective, discloses five main parental expectations (see Figure 1). Teacher’s perspectives about parental expectations about educational objectives reveal the importance of knowledge and high educational achievements that are connected with future education and professions. Negative opinions about parental expectations describe high pressure and parental power as well as the fulfillment of parents’ dreams.

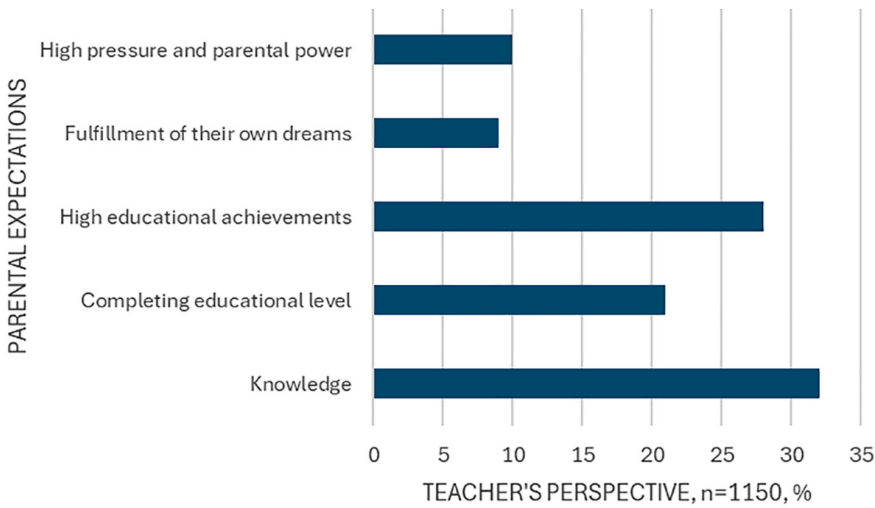


Figure 1 Parental expectations about educational objectives from teachers' perspective

Question about parental expectation relationship with a child's possible future occupation for example profession, competitive pay, and others, detects teacher's perspective assessing valuing emotions – a major part of teacher's (see Figure 2) reveal a positive relationship with parental expectations and child's future profession commitment.

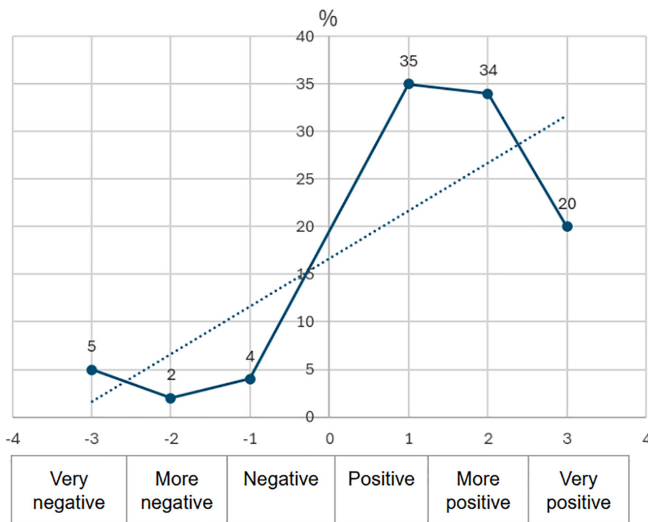


Figure 2 Parental expectations about relationship with child's future occupation, teachers' perspective

Teachers' perspectives disclose several aspects of the manner how parents form their expectations (see Figure 3). The major part (54%) of teachers indicate that parental expectations about educational objectives are specific but often not related to the educational objectives, 17% of teachers note that parental expectations are low or do not exist, 14% of teachers specify that parental expectations are formed in cooperation with child, they are clear, justified and well defined, 12% of teachers state that parental expectations are formed in cooperation with child, but they are unclear, unjustified and uncertain, 3% of teachers describe parental expectations as non-existent or they are not related to the child.

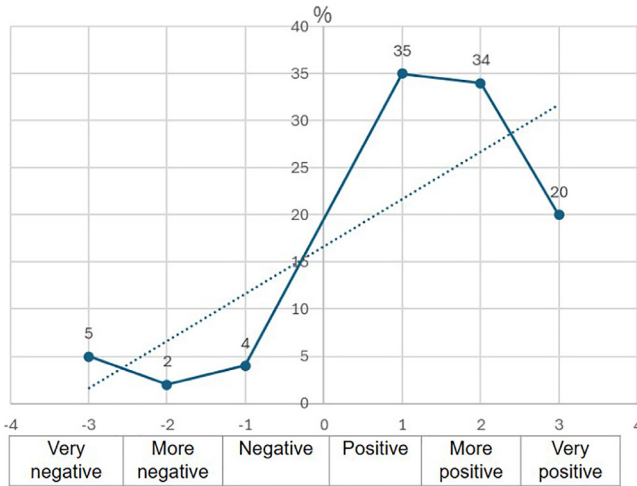


Figure 3 Parental expectations about relationship with child's future occupation, teachers' perspective

Question about parental expectations and child's well-being, 14% of teachers specify a negative impact on a child's well-being, indicating parental power and pressure, 34% of teachers note that parental expectations positively affect a child's well-being, respect in the school, society, peers, confidence (see Figure 4).

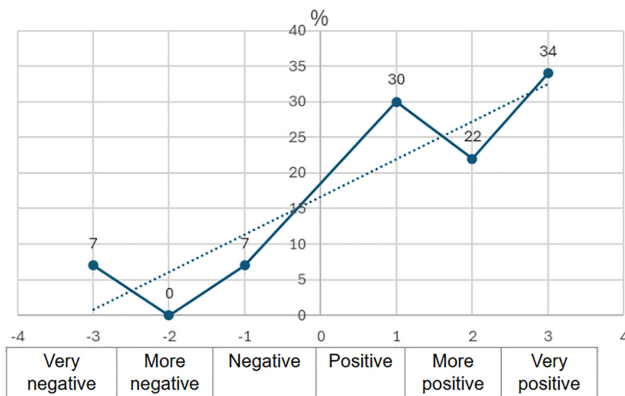


Figure 4 Parental expectations and child's well-being from teachers' perspective

A teacher's perspective about parental expectation influences a child's motivation, and ability to learn and make decisions for themselves to promote a child's learning achievements state positive opinion. 25% of respondents emphasize a very positive attitude between parental expectations and child's motivation, 28% detect a medium positive attitude, and 34% positive opinion. Only 11% of teachers state a negative perspective between parental expectations and a child's motivation, and 2% of teachers indicate a very negative impact on a child's motivation.

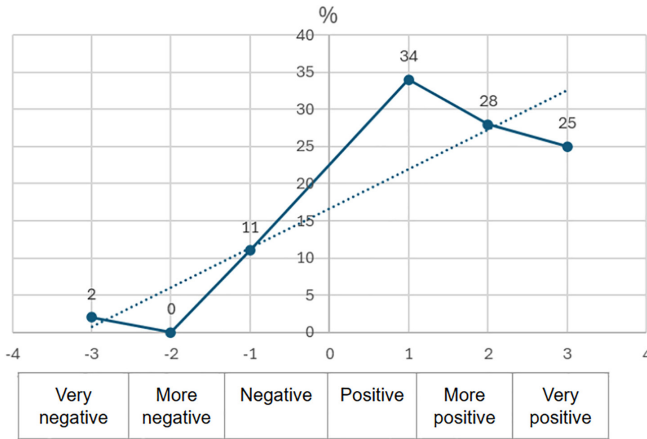


Figure 5 Parental expectations impact on child's motivation from the teachers' perspective

Teachers' opinion about how parents inform teachers about their expectations about educational objectives is common – 74% of teachers state that parents do not inform the school about their expectations, 13% of teachers specify that parents inform teachers using different information channels (e-klase, WhatsApp, etc.) 11% of teachers reveal that parents inform teachers about their expectations in conversation (parent-teacher meeting, individual conversation and others), 2% of teachers state that parents inform school management about their expectations about educational targets.

3% of teachers state that they feel very negative about how parents inform teachers about their expectations, 9% of teachers state more negative opinions and 10% reveal their negative opinion. Positive attitudes to communication between parents and teachers are for 38% of teachers, 15% feel more positive and 25% very positive about communicating parental expectations to teachers or school management (see Figure 6).

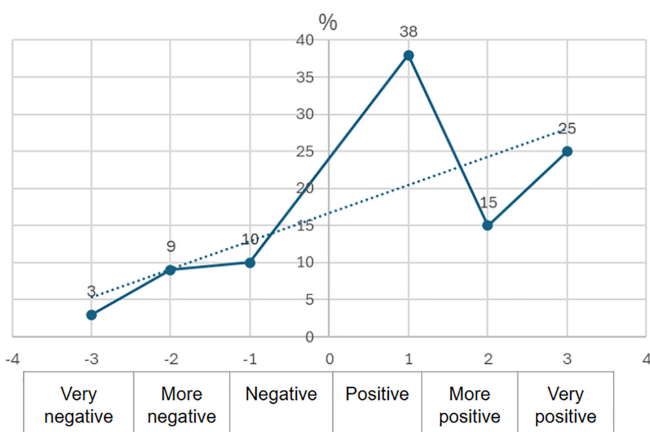


Figure 6 Parental expectations communication to teachers from teachers' perspective

Respondents' perspectives on whether parental expectations are taken into account in the school education process (see Figure 7) detect that 48% of teachers are positive about parental engagement in the educational process, 20% of teachers feel medium positive and 4% very positive. Negative perspectives of parental engagement detect 12% of teachers as negative, 9% more negative and 7% of teachers state this engagement as very negative.

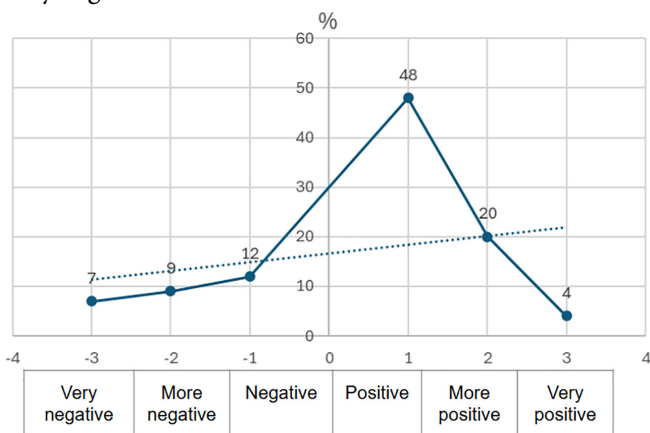


Figure 7 Parental expectations in school education process from teachers' perspective

81% of teachers reveal that parental expectations about educational objectives change when a child grows, while 19% of teachers state that parental expectations do not change.

Summarizing teacher's questionnaire answers about parental expectations about educational objectives (see Table 2), the most positive importance of parental expectations from teacher's perspective is connected with parental expectations relationship with child's future occupation, the most negative interest teacher's reveal is the problem of parental expectations role in school education process.

Table 2 Teacher’s perspective about parental expectations about educational objectives

Question	Semantic differential scale, Teacher’s perspective, %							
	-3	-2	-1	% negative	1	2	3	% positive
Parental expectations about educational objectives relationship with child’s future occupation	5	2	4	11	35	34	20	89
Parental expectations and child’s well-being	7	0	7	14	30	22	34	86
Parental expectations impact on child’s motivation from the teachers’ perspective	2	0	11	13	34	28	25	87
Parental expectations communication to teachers	3	9	10	22	38	15	25	78
Parental expectations in school education process	7	9	12	28	48	20	4	72

Conclusions

The intersection of parental expectations, teacher perceptions, and a child’s educational outcomes is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration and analysis, and engagement from all educational actors.

Analyzing a teacher’s perspective about parental expectations about educational objectives, teachers describe a positive relationship with a child’s future occupation, significant part of teachers state that parental expectations impact on educational process has negative influence (see Table 3). Semantic differential analysis disclose that teachers’ perspective is mainly positive to parental expectations. Teacher’s perspectives disclose that parental expectations are connected with a child’s future occupation, well-being, motivation, and the way how parents communicate about their expectations and expectation impact on the educational process. Teachers consider parents as important educational actors.

Teachers consistently emphasize the importance of parental involvement and communication in supporting a child’s learning and development. However, despite this acknowledgment, research reveals a significant gap between the perceived importance of parental expectations and the actual communication between parents and teachers regarding these expectations. While teachers recognize the crucial role of parental expectations, they often report a lack of information from parents about their educational goals and aspirations for their children.

Furthermore, there are various factors contributing to the formation and evolution of parental expectations over time. As children progress through different stages of development, parental expectations may shift in response to changing circumstances and contexts. Understanding these factors is essential for educators to effectively engage with parents and support their children’s educational journey.

Effective communication between parents and teachers is paramount for bridging the gap between parental expectations and teacher perception. Teachers play a crucial role in interpreting and responding to parental expectations, and their perceptions can significantly impact students' motivation and academic outcomes. Positive teacher-parent relationships built on trust, respect, and open communication are essential for fostering a collaborative approach to education.

Moving forward, there is a clear need for proactive efforts to improve communication and collaboration between parents and teachers in setting and achieving educational objectives. Establishing clear channels of communication and defining the frequency and format of parent-teacher interactions can facilitate meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding. Additionally, developing models of cooperation that explicitly address parental expectations and incorporate them into the educational planning process is crucial for promoting student success.

Furthermore, addressing the question of leadership in education and the role of effective communication is essential for fostering a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Educational leaders have a vital role to play in creating supportive environments that encourage open communication and partnership between parents, teachers, and students. By promoting a collaborative approach to education, leaders can empower stakeholders to work together towards common goals and aspirations.

In conclusion, the research underscores the teacher's perspective about the importance of parental expectations in education and the critical role of teachers in interpreting and responding to these expectations. By fostering positive teacher-parent relationships and promoting effective communication and collaboration, we can create supportive environments that enable all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Summarizing:

1. Teachers indicate that parental expectations are essential, yet parents do not inform teachers about them.
2. Teachers perceive and interpret different levels of parental engagement in a child's education positively.
3. Teachers highlight the relationship between parental expectations, teachers' notions, and students' motivations.
4. The issue of disproportionate parental expectations and the stress a child experiences is being raised.
5. Actual is a question about leadership in education and the role of effective communication in reconciling the expectations of parents and teachers.
6. Existing models of cooperation between parents and teachers in setting and achieving educational objectives do not reveal the expectations of the parents.

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