OPTIMIZING THE PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN SCHOOLS THROUGH COOPERATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

OPTIMIZAREA CLIMATULUI PSIHOEMOȚIONAL ÎN ȘCOALĂ PRIN COOPERAREA DINTRE FAMILIE ȘI INSTITUȚIA DE ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNT

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Abstract: *The psycho-emotional climate in schools through the lens of cooperation between family and educational institutions. This paper highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships, emotional support, and parental involvement in creating a balanced educational environment. Theoretical models, influential factors, consequences for students, and concrete intervention strategies applied in schools in the Republic of Moldova are presented. The work is based on recent specialized literature and offers practical recommendations for teachers, parents, and school counselors.*

Keywords: *psycho-emotional climate, educational partnership, family, school, cooperation, emotional health, school psychopedagogical counseling.*

In the context of profound transformations in contemporary education, increasing attention is being paid to the psycho-emotional dimension of school life. Whereas previously the focus was almost exclusively on academic performance, cognitive skills, and curricular standards, a more holistic approach is now emerging–one that acknowledges how students' emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships within the school environment directly influence educational success, social adaptation, and long-term mental health (Vlasov, 2020; Stratan, 2018).

The psycho-emotional climate in schools is a complex construct, shaped by the overall atmosphere of the educational institution, the quality of interactions between students, teachers, parents, and support staff, as well as institutional practices that either foster or hinder emotional and relational development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rusnac, 2017). A healthy climate involves a secure environment characterized by empathy, acceptance, cooperation, mutual respect, and genuine emotional support. In the absence of these conditions, issues such as school anxiety, social withdrawal, disruptive behavior, or even school dropout may arise (Pianta, 1999; Stratan & Păvăluc, 2022). In this equation of factors shaping the psycho-emotional climate, the relationship between family and school plays a central role. Recent research shows that parental involvement in children's education, open collaboration with teachers, and the existence of a genuine partnership significantly contribute to creating a safer and more emotionally balanced school environment (Epstein, 2001). At the same time, when this relationship is fragile, conflictual, or merely formal, the climate perceived by students may become tense, with negative effects on behavior and well-being.

Optimizing the psycho-emotional climate through cooperation between family and school has thus become a strategic priority in current educational efforts. The school–family partnership should not be seen as a one-time or formal act, but rather as a continuous process based on authentic communication, mutual trust, and shared educational goals.

This article aims to explore the complex relationship between the psycho-emotional climate in schools and the degree of cooperation between family and educational institutions. We will analyze the theoretical foundations of these two concepts, functional models of collaboration, communication barriers between parents and teachers, and concrete intervention strategies that can help build a positive and emotionally balanced school environment. The article draws on up-to-date scholarly literature and best practice examples, and it is intended for educators, school counselors, parents, and educational policymakers alike.

The psycho-emotional climate in schools is a central concept in current educational literature, representing the totality of perceptions, relationships, and emotional states that define the overall atmosphere of an educational institution. In the Republic of Moldova, interest in this dimension has intensified over the past decade, driven by increasing concern for the quality of education, students' emotional health, and the prevention of phenomena such as bullying and school dropout (Stratan, 2021). A positive psycho-emotional climate is characterized by relationships built on mutual respect, empathy, emotional support, psychological safety, and openness. In contrast, a negative climate is associated with persistent tensions, marginalization, lack of support, and a sense of emotional insecurity among both students and teaching staff (Rusnac, 2019).

According to research conducted by the Institute of Educational Sciences, the factors that contribute to a healthy climate include: an empathic teaching style, nonviolent communication, student involvement in decision-making, and the cultivation of authentic relationships among all educational actors. Moreover, the educational regulatory framework in the Republic of Moldova – including the Regulation on the Prevention and Combating of Violence in General Education Institutions (Ministry of Education, 2018) – emphasizes the importance of a secure climate and promotes student-centered approaches.

In Moldovan schools, the psycho-emotional climate is influenced by multiple components, including: the quality of institutional leadership, teachers' didactic styles, the level of parental involvement, the availability of psychopedagogical support resources, and the specific characteristics of the local community. A key factor is teachers' emotional competence, which directly influences their interactions with students. Studies conducted at the State University of Moldova indicate that teachers who engage in pedagogical reflection, empathic communication, and emotional validation contribute to the development of a harmonious climate, even in challenging educational contexts (Bodrug-Lungu & Ciumac, 2020). Equally important is family involvement in school life. In many rural schools, collaboration with

parents is often weakly structured or formal, leading to misunderstandings, disengagement, and even tensions that negatively affect students. Conversely, where functional partnerships between family and school exist – through parent councils, joint activities, or reciprocal emotional support–there is a significant improvement in children's psycho-emotional well-being (Stratan, 2023).

The presence of certain phenomena related to social and educational inequalities also indirectly affects the psycho-emotional climate. For example, students from migrant families or disadvantaged backgrounds may exhibit emotional vulnerabilities, integration difficulties, or defensive behaviors that disrupt classroom cohesion (UNICEF Moldova, 2021). These realities underscore the need for an effective support system in schools – one that involves school counselors, psychologists, and, equally, the child's family.

The psycho-emotional climate has a significant impact on students' well-being, motivation, and behavior. Studies conducted in schools in the Republic of Moldova (Bodrug-Lungu, 2021; Ceban, 2022) indicate that students who perceive school as a safe and supportive environment are more academically engaged, develop better social skills, and have more stable mental health. At the same time, a school climate marked by stress, rigidity, or indifference can lead to emotional withdrawal, absenteeism, or aggressive behavior. A report by the Center for Psychosocial Research and Studies (2020) found that students in schools with a negative climate exhibit symptoms of anxiety, irritability, and academic underperformance two to three times more frequently. Another important aspect is that students' emotional well-being is closely correlated with teachers' emotional states. Teacher burnout, lack of recognition, or emotional overload indirectly affect students by diminishing relational quality and reducing affective engagement.

In conclusion, the psycho-emotional climate is not a passive result of daily interactions, but an educable outcome shaped by school policies, leadership style, and–most importantly–by how the family is perceived and engaged as an active educational partner.

From the perspective of the school–family educational partnership, collaboration between families and schools is a defining element for the

effective functioning of the educational system. In the literature, this relationship is conceptualized through various partnership models, ranging from formal, one-way communication to active cooperation based on shared responsibility and mutual trust (Epstein, 2018). In the Republic of Moldova, the evolution of the family–school relationship has undergone several phases, shifting from the authoritarian-communicative model of the Soviet period to more open and participatory forms in recent decades. However, in many schools–especially those in rural areas–unequal relationships still prevail, where parents are perceived more as spectators than active partners in the educational process (Stratan, 2023).

Functional partnership models include:

- **Active parental involvement** in school activities (open classes, workshops, thematic projects);
- **Parental counseling** on issues related to adaptation, behavior, and emotional relationships with children;
- **"Educational triangle" meetings** involving student–parent–teacher to set common development goals;
- **Community partnerships** involving local authorities, resource centers, or NGOs to support vulnerable families (UNICEF Moldova, 2021).

These forms of collaboration are more effective when based on transparency, mutual respect, and the recognition of the complementary roles of the school and the family in education (Ceban, 2022). Parents contribute significantly to the psycho-emotional climate of the school, even when their impact is indirect. The way children perceive their parents' attitude toward the school influences their sense of safety and confidence in the educational environment (Zamfir & Cuciureanu, 2017). Parents who show trust in teachers, avoid criticism in front of the child, and cooperate openly in conflict resolution send clear messages of emotional security.

In Moldova, there are increasing initiatives to train parents in developing parenting skills. Programs such as *"Parents' School"* and *"Family and School–Together for the Child"* (implemented by the Ministry of Education and NGOs like "Partnerships for Every Child") promote

constructive dialogue and conscious parental involvement in supporting children's psycho-emotional development. Likewise, parents' involvement in extracurricular activities focused on emotional themes–such as *"Kindness Days"*, *"Healthy Relationships Week"*, or *"Parent–Child Workshops"*–has a visible impact on school climate, reducing tensions, fostering inclusion, and cultivating empathy among students (Moraru, 2019). Despite this high collaborative potential, the parent–school relationship is often tense or formalized, particularly in institutions with vulnerable student populations or in communities where the school's authority is not perceived positively. Among the most frequent collaboration barriers identified in Moldovan schools are:

- Lack of time or professional overload among parents, especially those working abroad;
- Differences in perception between parents and teachers regarding educational roles;
- Authoritarian or permissive parenting styles that conflict with school norms;
- Defensive attitudes from teachers, caused by negative past experiences or lack of training in working with families.

Additionally, some parents feel intimidated by the school's authority or believe that educational responsibility lies solely with the institution. This mindset contributes to the emergence of a "relational gap" between the two entities, affecting the school's ability to foster a favorable psycho-emotional climate. Studies show that in the absence of consistent and authentic dialogue, students perceive this relational rupture, which weakens their sense of security and negatively impacts their academic motivation (Ciumac, 2021).

For the school–family relationship to truly contribute to the optimization of the psycho-emotional climate, a reconstruction of the culture of collaboration is necessary. This entails continuous training for teachers in family counseling, as well as the development of parental skills through workshops and support sessions–especially in vulnerable communities. One of the most effective ways to improve the psycho-emotional climate in schools is by organizing activities that actively involve both the family and the educational institution. Collaboration in

joint actions helps reduce the emotional distance between parents and teachers, and it gives students the sense that the adults in their lives are cooperating for their well-being.

In schools across the Republic of Moldova, various extracurricular activities with psychoeducational and relational themes have been successfully implemented:

- **Emotional Open Door Days**, where parents attend themed lessons on emotion regulation and empathy development;
- **Parent–child personal development workshops** focusing on nonviolent communication, mutual trust, and emotional recognition;
- **Emotional health promotion campaigns**, organized by school counselors or local NGOs (e.g., *"Loved Child – Protected Child"* or *"Wellbeing Week"*, supported by UNICEF Moldova, 2022).

These initiatives enhance the sense of belonging and create bridges between family and school, reducing tensions and supporting the cohesion of the educational community (Ceban, 2022). An effective model is the **"Parents' Council for Emotional Well-being"**, established in some pilot schools in Chișinău and Ialoveni, which involves parents in identifying psycho-emotional issues within student groups and in finding appropriate solutions for each situation (Stratan, 2023).

A key role in facilitating the relationship between parents and the educational institution is played by **school psychopedagogical counseling**. In Moldovan schools, this can be achieved through: assessing students' emotional states, providing individual and group counseling, supporting teachers, and advising parents.

According to the **Ministry of Education and Research Report (2021)**, about 60% of general schools have specialized counseling staff, with even greater coverage in urban schools. However, in rural areas or in institutions with limited resources, counseling services are either limited or nonexistent.

To strengthen the educational partnership for the benefit of the psycho-emotional climate, school counselors can carry out the following activities:

- **Parental counseling sessions**, offering support in managing children's emotions at home and at school;
- **Support groups for parents** dealing with challenges in their relationship with the school or their children (conflicts, misunderstandings, family stress);
- **Mediation interventions** in situations of conflict between families and schools;
- **Teacher training** in effective communication with parents.

A remarkable example is the implementation, in partnership with the **Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the State University of Moldova,** of continuing education programs for school counselors, with a focus on developing the **child–parent–school triadic relationship.**

In recent years, several Moldovan schools have developed innovative projects aimed at optimizing the psycho-emotional climate through active cooperation with families.

At the international level, initiatives such as **"Whole School Approach"** in Finland or **"Parents as Partners"** in Canada promote the holistic involvement of families in school life through strategies such as:

- **Joint training for teachers and parents** on emotional intelligence;
- **Development of joint family–school policies** for conflict prevention;
- **Promotion of "parent ambassadors"** – trained parents who support other families in the adaptation and collaboration process (Epstein, 2018; Lemire, 2021).

These models can be adapted to schools in the Republic of Moldova with the support of school counselors and local educational authorities, taking into account the cultural context, community resources, and institutional openness.

Thus, improvements in the school psycho-emotional climate cannot take place in isolation but require **strong collaboration among teachers, parents, school counselors, and institutional leadership.** Joint activities, psychoeducational support, and emotionally inclusive policies are the pillars of real transformation. The family, far from being just a spectator of school life, becomes a **strategic partner** in shaping a safe, balanced, and authentically learning-oriented educational environment.

In **conclusion**, the psycho-emotional climate in schools represents an essential component of educational quality, influencing not only academic performance but also students' emotional well-being, motivation, resilience, and interpersonal relationships. As highlighted in the theoretical and practical analysis presented in this article, the school climate is not a static factor, but a highly dynamic one, shaped by the interaction of various educational actors – particularly the cooperation between family and the educational institution.

In the context of the Republic of Moldova, where social and educational realities are marked by migration, economic vulnerability, academic pressure, and unequal resources between urban and rural environments, optimizing the psycho-emotional climate requires a systemic approach tailored to the specific needs of each school community. The school–family partnership has proven to be an effective tool in supporting this climate, provided that it goes beyond formalism and is grounded in trust, dialogue, mutual respect, and active involvement. Joint activities, parental counseling, thematic workshops, and parents' participation in educational decision-making contribute to building a school atmosphere that is safe, emotionally balanced, and conducive to learning.

Based on the analysis, we formulate the following recommendations:

1. **Promote a culture of authentic collaboration** between school and family, including through the adaptation of institutional regulations and the encouragement of participatory initiatives;
2. **Strengthen the network of school counselors**, especially in rural schools, and expand their competencies in working with families;
3. **Implement parental education programs** across all educational levels – not only at the preschool level – with a focus on emotional management, empathic communication, and emotional support;
4. **Provide continuous professional development for teachers** in the areas of emotional intelligence, family counseling, and conflict prevention;
5. **Develop national and local educational policies** that explicitly recognize the importance of the psycho-emotional climate and the school–family relationship in promoting student well-being.

Thus, the school cannot function effectively without the involvement of the family, and the family cannot support the child's emotional development outside of a favorable school environment. Only through a **real and functional educational partnership** can we build a school of empathy, safety, and harmonious growth – a school where every child feels understood, supported, and valued.

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