The Concept of Child Well-Being: Parenting and School

Ledia Kashahu Xhelilaj[1]

Kinga Orzeł-Dereń[2]

[1]Faculty of Education,
University "Aleksandër Moisiu",
Durrës, Albania
[2]Pedagogical University of Krakow,
Poland

Abstract

This century is characterized by dramatic changes in all aspects of human life. Technological changes, the covid-19 pandemic and accompanying factors, fierce competition in every direction and especially in the labor market, have increased the pressure on families and children and added uncertainty and dilemmas for the future. In this context, the well-being of families and the younger generation is in question. In this study, the authors focuses on the concept of well-being and the theories on which it is based as well as the changes that this concept has undergone for several decades. They analyze the objective and subjective well-being of children based on the Theory of Ecological Systems by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1992). Based on literature review, there is a high variation in the definition of the term well being. The lack of clarity on the full meaning of the term is seen as a potential factor in the misuse of this concept by professionals who support the well-being of children in schools. The authors addresses the role of the school family in the well-being of children by highlighting the importance of a systematic assessment of their subjective well-being. Finally, strategies and policies at various levels are discussed, which should be followed to ensure the well-being of new generation.

Keywords: *child well-being, objective well-being, subjective well-being, parenting, school*

1. Introduction

In recent years, Albanian families have faced successive crises and incessantly increasing dilemmas for the future and questioning their well-being. The earthquake of November 26, 2019, caused loss of human lives, injuries, and other traumas. The fragile Albanian economy faced a financial bill of 985 million euros of damages calculated by the Albanian Government in cooperation with specialists from the Council of Europe, the World Bank, and the United Nations. About 1.076 billion euros[16] were estimated for the recovery of the economy. Less than four months after this natural disaster, Albanian families faced the crisis caused by covid-19 pandemic with impossible challenges, not only in terms of health and economic problems, but also challenges related to technological developments and digital skills to cope with the isolation and relocation of home schooling for a long time. Nowadays, they are facing uncertainty and price increases due to the war in Ukraine.

In fact, the entire world just felt relief from the crisis caused by Covid-19 pandemic, entered the economic crisis due

---

[16] *https://ata.gov.al/2020/02/05/raporti-i-plote-demet-e-shkaktuara-nga-termeti-1076-miliarde-euro-per-rimekembjen/*

to the Russian occupation of Ukraine. The World Bank's 2022 spring report states that the economic prospects of the Western Balkan countries are now extremely uncertain. What is certain according to this report is the fact that there is, and it will be high level inflation, for several reasons among which, the increase in the price of energy and food due to supply chain disruptions for both imports and exports, as well as declining tourism revenues (World Bank Group, 2022). The unemployment rate in Albania in 2021 resulted in 11.7% of the total population, where 20. 9% of the unemployed are young people. The poverty rate reaches 22% of the population, or in other words, one in five citizens live in poverty (Word Bank Group, 2022: 71). World Bank specialists therefore recommend policies focused on building resilience to cope with crises (Word Bank Group, 2022), which aims to maintain well-being.

This study focuses on the well-being of children but based on the theory of individual development of ecological systems by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), it is impossible to treat child well-being detached from the family, school, and social context. Well-being has become the theme of every policy undertaken today in every field, so specialists in the respective fields have treated the concept of well-being, but each from different perspectives. The different purposes of use make it difficult to clearly define the term "well-being" (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action 2019; Ben-Arieh, Casas Frønes, & Korbin, 2014; Clarke, 2020). Education policymakers, teachers, employees who support psychological and social well-being in schools, but also parents themselves need to understand the terms used to be able to answer the question: Are they planning and practicing appropriate actions to best serve the well-being of children?

1.1 The concept of well-being and its theoretical basis

The concept of well-being has its origins in Greek philosophical thought appearing in two forms: *Hedonic well-being* and *Eudaimonic well-being*, where the first refers to feelings and the second to the functioning of the individual (Ryan & Deci 2001). *Hedonic well-being* is seen as related to the feelings of satisfaction that one experiences during life, expressed as satisfaction with life. In other words, how the individual feels in their life (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Ryan & Deci 2001). This kind of well-being is achieved through experiencing pleasure and joy and is based on the notion of subjective well-being (SWB) that tries to avoid pain and suffering (Ryan & Deci 2001). *Eudaimonic well-being* is seen in relation to how the individual functions to achieve self-realization and to find meaning in life consistent with human values (Kagan 1992; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Russell, 2014). To summarize, while the hedonic approach focuses on positive subjective state of mind, the Eudaimonic approach focuses on activities or experiences that are objectively positive for personal development (Kagan 1992).

When it comes to the definition of child welfare, there is a high variation of definitions, which describe well-being in its qualitative aspect. Although objective well-being factors such as mortality, poverty level (considering meeting basic housing, food and living and physical security needs), access to health and education services continue to be listed when assessing child well-being. In recent years it has been recommended to add to the measuring instruments a number of subjective well-being factors including the perspective of children (Ben-Arieh, et al. 2014). These genuine evaluation reports or studies include various dimensions such as family and social relationships, education, safety, and their psychosocial well-being (Ben-Arieh, et al. 2014). A special emphasis in subjective well-being studies is given to: *"How people evaluate their lives and includes people's emotional reactions to events, their moods and the judgments they form about life satisfaction"* (Kosher and Ben-Arieh 2017: 256). In the variety of definitions of well-being found in the literature, internal factors of individual, family, community, and social aspects are considered.

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, (2019) has defined child well-being in terms of both objective and subjective well-being as: *"Child well-being is a dynamic, subjective and objective state of physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social health in ëhich children: are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence; meet their basic needs, including survival and development; are connected to and cared for by primary caregivers; have the opportunity for supportive relationships with relatives, peers, teachers, community members and society at large; and have the opportunity and elements required to exercise their agency based on their emerging capacities "*(The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019: 23). This definition considers individual, family, community, and contextual factors, which makes this definition suitable to be used in school contexts, although the purpose of formulating this definition has been to accurately orient specialists in humanitarian contexts. Studies show that children's well-being is related to how and to what extent groups that have an impact on child development meet their needs based on the Ecological Model. So how are the needs of children met by family, school, community, and society (Ben-Arieh 2010; Jones, LaLiberte, & Piescher 2015).

To ensure well-being in schools by professionals it is necessary to know the theoretical frameworks on which the concept of well-being is developed. In fact, there are a complex of theories and models that support the concept of well-being. One of these theories is that of the American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943) called *The Theory of Human*

Motivation. This theory explains human needs divided into two categories, which escalate into five levels hierarchically, from the lowest to the highest. At the base of the pyramid of needs lying *physiological needs* such as the need for food, shelter, fresh air, and water or even quality sleep. The second level is the need *for Safety*, which includes physical security, health, and income. At the third level lies the need for *Belonging*, which includes love, acceptance, connectedness to others. Going up to the fourth level, we have high level needs like the need for *Self-esteem*, which include achievements, status, recognition. The highest level is *Self-actualization* which includes Fulfilment of one's potential. This theory has important implications in the field of education as it explains the order of fulfillment of needs to achieve Self-actualization, which means that students tin order to have high academic achievement, they must have a set of needs met (Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, & Bergen, 2012).

The second theory of motivation is the Self-theory of Stanford University professor of psychology Carol Dwek (1999). *Growth and Fixed Mindsets* that is associated with confidence in the possibility of improvement. People with *Fixed Mindset* believe that they are born with certain characteristics, which cannot be changed. While people with *Growth Mindset* think that they can change thanks to the work done to gain new skills. This theory has an impact on student well-being based on research conducted, where people who cultivate Growth Mindsets increase their motivation to learn, experience less stress and present a higher level of their well-being for this reason (Dwek, 1999; Schleider, Abel, & Weisz, 2015).

The model based on positive psychology that explains well-being through the five pillars, is the model of the American psychologist Martin Seligman, (2011) known by the acronym PERMA. These pillars are: *Positive emotions* (the ability to stay positive); *Engagement* (being completely focus on activities); *Relationships* (strong and loving connected to others); *Meaning* (sense of being purposeful); and *Achievement* (sense of accomplishment and success). This theory is used today by school psychologists around the world to treat children, to orient pedagogical staff and to support parents with psychoeducation, but also to seek community support to meet the needs of children.

The Bio-ecological Model of the American psychologist of Russian origin, Uri Bronfenbrenner on the development of individual, also has an especially key role in understanding how the needs of children are met in different environments. The model of bio-ecological systems includes four systems that interact and influence the development of the child: *microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem,* and *macrosystem*. The child first interacts with the family environment, which has the greatest impact on him. For many children, the family is the main *micro-environment* where the child communicates not only with parents but also with siblings, as well as other members in the case of extended families, thus meeting his needs. After the family, equally important are the school peers, sports, artistic, religious, political groups, etc. The interaction between *several microsystems* constitutes *the mesosystem*. A typical example is communication between family and school. *The ecosystem* is the whole community framework in which the individual and his family live. This includes the friendships of parents, their place of work, the numerous services to which citizens have access, but also the media. Although the child or young person does not participate directly in ecosystem decision-making, these decisions have a direct or indirect impact on their life. The events that occur and the decisions that are made in an environment in which the individual belongs, strongly influence his development as they affect the structure of microsystems. *The macrosystem* is the broader context: cultural, political, social, legal, religious, economic, that of educational values as well as public policies, which are the most important. Thus the macrosystem can be called as the social project, which circulates all other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, in Kashahu, Xhelilaj, 2015).

Another model, but already from a *sociological point of view*, is the model of the Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt (1976), who describes the fulfillment of some special needs as the source of well-being in every nation and culture. He identified three core needs, such as: *1) Having*; *2) Loving,* and *3) Being* (Allardt, 1976: 228, 230). In this way he confirmed that for well-being both objective and subjective indicators are needed. Researchers Konu & Pimpelà (2002) developed a model of school well-being (see Figure 1), based on Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s model of bioecological development and on Allardt's theory, and on the findings of his 1989 study, where the latter found that there is a positive relationship between objective and subjective factors of well-being and three core needs (having, loving, being).
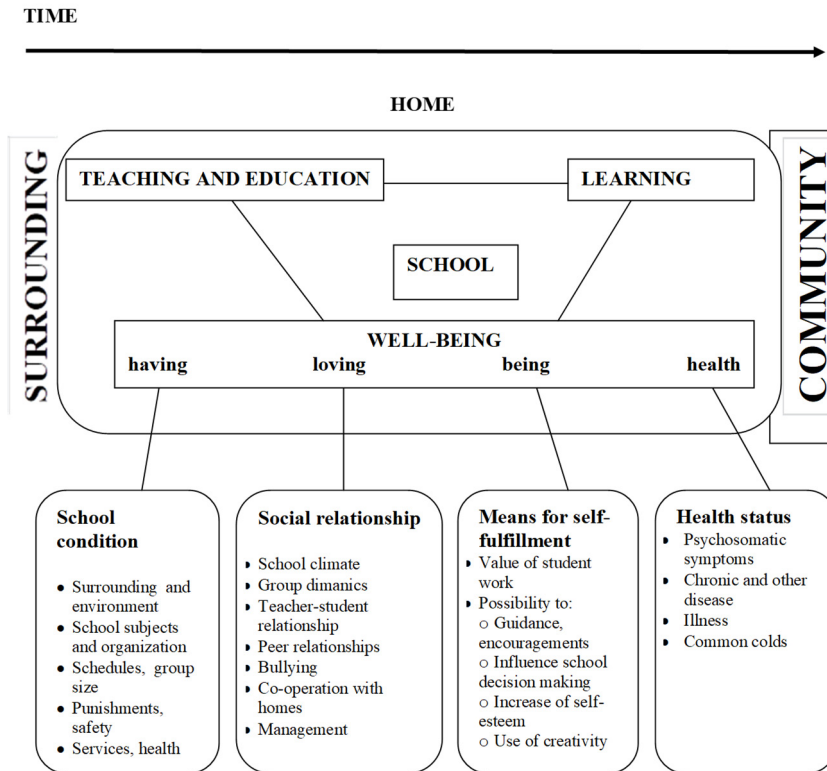
Well-being in Schools

Figure 1: The School Well-being Model (Konu and Rimpelà, 2002:83)

Theoretical clarity and full understanding of the concept of well-being is the starting point to plan work in schools both for the proper treatment of children, but also for the support of educators and parents to pursue the well-being of children consciously and based on accurate scientific measurements. Conversely, the misuse of this concept by professionals who support the well-being of children in schools may serve as a potential factor (Clarke, 2020; Konu & Pimpelà, 2002). To enable an accurate measurement of child well-being indicators it is necessary to understand how the indicators have changed over time.

1.2 The changes that "well-being" indicators have undergone in recent decades

Researcher Ben-Arieh, after an incredibly detailed analysis summarizes with nine points the difference that the concept of children's well-being has undergone:
1. Early indicators tended to focus on child survival, whereas recent indicators look beyond survival to child well-being.
2. Early indicators primarily focused on negative outcomes in life, while recent indicators look also at positive outcomes.
3. Current indicators incorporate a children's rights perspective but look beyond it as well.
4. Early indicators emphasized children's *'well-becoming,'* that is, their subsequent achievement or well-being; recent indicators focus also on children's current well-being.
5. Early indicators were derived from *'traditional'* domains of child well-being, primarily those determined by

professions, while recent indicators are emerging from neë domains that cut across professions.

6. Early indicators focused on the adult's perspective, whereas new indicators consider the child's perspective as well.
7. Early indicators were usually looking at national geographic units, while recent indicators are measured at a variety of geographical units.
8. Recent years have seen efforts to develop various composite indices of children's well-being; and
9. Recent efforts are guided by their policy relevance (Ben-Arieh, 2010:129-142).

This summary is an unbelievably valuable contribution for all professionals who measure the well-being of children, to increase the accuracy of their measuring instruments and the significance of the data they collect.

1.3 Characteristics of families and their impact on the well-being of children

Answering the question of what is good for the child and his well-being to develop properly has engaged not only pediatricians, developmental psychologists, educators, and other professionals who support psychosocial care in schools, but also parents. It is often difficult for all stakeholders to agree on this, as cultural disputes affect definitions of values and perspectives (Ben-Arieh et al, 2014). However, there is a full consensus on the undeniable negative impact of poverty on child well-being (Chaudry, & Wimer, 2016; Evans, 2004) and the fact that parents 'marital status matters (Krueger, Jutte, Franzini, Elo, & Hayward, 2015).

Studies show better economic stability of two-parent families compared to single-parent families, despite diverse types of single-parent families (Poston & Micklin, 2005). In Albania 24.4% or 1 in 4 marriages end in divorce[17]. Although this is a figure to be considered due to the impact that this indicator has on the well-being of children, in Albania there are still no such studies. I highlight this fact, as studies around the world have shown that the cultural aspect has its effects on reporting the well-being of single-parent children and consequently every country despite the negative relationship between child well-being and family structure, child well-being appears to be different level.

In all this gap there is an attempt to understand the challenges of single parents in fulfilling parental responsibilities. The researcher Kile (2019) has explored this aspect. She has found that these parents face unemployment and economic hardships by seeking the help of family members. Their biggest problem is housing and since they do not have economic opportunities, they live in apartments that lack basic conditions. This study shows that divorced parents who have the right of custody, do not pay any financial contribution for the upbringing of children and after divorce do not show any interest in them. Support from various social services and NGOs focusing on families and children is sporadic and insufficient. The well-being of children in single-parent families has been influenced by cultural attitudes towards this type of family from society, but also by state policies and contributions to support them (Chapple, 2009). Therefore, studies of this nature are necessary to understand the effect of family status on the well-being of children in Albania.

Based on scientific evidence, it results those children from single-parent families where the mother is the head of the household and children of parents who cohabit in different ways (Kenney, & McLanahan, 2006) have resulted in lower academic and behavioral achievements, compared to children coming from pristine families (Brown & Rinelli, 2010; Scharte, Bolte, & GME Study Group 2013). Cohabiting couples have lower social and economic status. These parents are characterized by a higher unemployment rate than married couples and have fewer legal rights over the family. These factors make these families more at risk of sharing its effects on children (Kenney, & McLanahan, 2006).

Studies show that in addition to the family structure, the well-being of children can be destroyed by several factors, which are again very much related to the family, but also beyond. In these studies poverty is the key word (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Counterpoint Research 2008; Pannilage, 2017), but other factors are also listed such as: unsafe environments (Counterpoint Research 2008), limited opportunities for "quality" family time (Counterpoint Research 2008; Pannilage, 2017) and family disharmony (Pannilage, 2017); lack of love and care for children (Pannilage, 2017), children's exposure to domestic violence (Chaudry, & Wimer, 2016; Evans, 2004; Pannilage, 2017) and other forms of violence (Evans, 2004), *political correctness "gone mad"* (Counterpoint Research 2008:54) as well as discrimination of families for socio-cultural reasons (Pannilage, 2017).

In Albania it is reported that 27% of families with children aged 0-17 are at risk of being poor (INSTAT, 2021), while Eurostat reports that 51% of the population in Albania are at risk of poverty and social exclusion[18]. There is a discrepancy in the figures, as the methodologies used are different and that governments set their own minimum wage, referring to

---

[17] *http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/treguesit-demografik%C3%AB-dhe-social%C3%AB/lindjet-vdekjet-dhe-martesat/#tab2*
[18] *https://exit.al/en/2021/11/01/over-half-of-albanians-are-at-risk-of-poverty-worse-rates-in-europe/*

measurements made by INSTAT. According to researchers Chaudry & Wimer (2016), poverty is not just an indicator of a child's well-being, but much more than that. They argue that poverty affects the poor development of children, especially poor cognitive development, and educational outcomes. The comparison of groups of children coming from economically disadvantaged families with poor families shows that the life of these children is exceedingly difficult and disadvantaged due to material deficiencies, lack of family stability, but also due to high exposure to violence (Evans, 2004). For Albania it is reported that 47.5% of children aged 1 to 14 years have experienced physical punishment and/or psychological violence by their guardians in the last month (INSTAT, 2021), when the negative impact of violence on the well-being of children is known (Evans, 2004). What is even more worrying is the fact that 11.1% of children from birth to the age of 17 are reported to be either victims or potential victims of human trafficking (INSTAT, 2021).

Poor children, on the other hand, benefit less from social services (Chaudry, & Wimer, 2016; Evans, 2004). The neighborhoods where they live offer lower-level services and are more insecure. Schools and childcare in these areas is not of excellent quality. The houses in which they live have inadequate conditions such as lack of water and clean air, heat, and ventilation, overcrowding and noise (Evans, 2004). But as if all this were not enough, parents living in poverty have careless parenting (Evans, 2004) and mostly appear authoritarian in parenting style (Evans, 2004; Kashahu 2014). Their children experience violence and abuse for a variety of reasons ranging from addiction problems like alcohol, drugs, gambling, lack of strategies to create resilience and coping strategies and mental health problems. Their children due to parenting are not regularly exposed to reading, watch TV for hours (Evans, 2004; Kashahu, Xhelilaj 2021), use mobile phones without control in cases when parents have them (Kashahu, Xhelilaj 2021), and have extraordinarily little access to books and computers (Evans, 2004; Kashahu, Xhelilaj 2021). Moreover, Low-income parents are less involved in their children's school activities (Evans, 2004; Kashahu, 2012) less cooperation with their children's teachers in school which results in lower school results (Kashahu, 2013).

We return once again to the question of *what is good for the child and his well-being? How did the Albanian parents understand this and how did they intend to solve it? What opinion would psychologists have in this context?* Albania's exceptionally long transition to membership in the European Union has exhausted Albanians and for years they think they have found the formula to ensure a dignified and well-being life for their children. Previous experiences as immigrants have taught them that the only solution to integrate into democratic societies is to educate children in the prestigious universities of the most developed OECD countries, and of the United States of America and beyond, to prepare them for international labor market. Albanian parents choose countries with high living standards and career opportunities, valuing education abroad for higher education as a long-term investment strategy that gives their children the chance to gradually integrate in the countries where they study, not to return more in Albania. And yet, this is a strategy that can only be used by families who have high social status, above average income level, and enjoy wealth status (Gëdeshi & King 2020).

The reasons that Albanians see as the only way to ensure the well-being of children leaving the country are related to political correctness 'gone mad' (Counterpoint Research 2008:54). Albanians cite several factors that are related to misgovernance such as: elevated level of corruption, lack of meritocracy, low trust in the justice system, economic and social problems, inferior quality of health and education services, lack of security, dissatisfaction with the political class etc. To *"save the children",* they spend everything they have and possess, making extraordinary sacrifices. On the other hand, entering prestigious universities is a challenge that requires advance investment starting from intensive foreign language courses, but not only (Gëdeshi & King 2020). In addition to the extremely high financial cost, the commitment to achieve high academic results and the level required to become part of the best Universities, causes stress not only for children, but also for their families who undertake these types of investments. On the other hand, even though this brain hemorrhage has been going on for more than 20 years, no one has studied the subjective level of well-being of outgoing students and how they have coped with immigration processes and the costs to their well-being. Parents need this scientific evidence to make decisions, recognizing this side of the coin as well.

1.4 The education system and the role of school in the well-being of children

We live in globalization and as a result many policy perspectives are international. The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 is one of the documents that orients education policy at the international level which highlights the need for inclusive and quality education. The fourth goal of this Agenda is to: "Ensure inclusive and equal qualitative education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", (UNESCO, 2015). This goal turns attention to the two terms inclusive education and quality education. How and to what extent is this goal of sustainable development related to the well-being of children and young people? How do educators and families understand this? The draft National Education Strategy (NES) 2021-2026 sets out the vision for education:

> *"A comprehensive education system based on the principles of equality and lifelong learning, which enables the qualitative formation of all individuals, contributing to the personal well-being of as well as in strengthening democracy and the country's integration into the European Union" (MASR, 2021:7)*

We will focus on educators because they are the X factor of the equation, who create and realize the concept of social justice from the school desks, what affects the younger generations in their well-being in the present and in their life perspective. Based on the PERMA model (Seligman, (2011) we understand that in their attendance children need to feel engaged not only with the academic activity offered by the school curriculum, but also to feel part of the organization and governance of the school to have opportunities to develop a sense of relationships (positive and friendly relationships). This not only provides them with well-being but also gives meaning to their lives and develops a sense of their purpose in life and helps them achieve the desired success.

In the vision of NES (MASR, 2021), quality education is seen as related to the well-being of the younger generation. This vision is supported by 11 principles in Article 6 of Law No. 69/2012 on the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania (amended in 2015), which go in the same line with the education laws in the most developed countries. Specifically, in article 19 (Care for special categories of students), of the same law, students are provided with opportunities for inclusion through exceptional care and in article 20 (Psycho-social service in educational institutions), they are provided with psycho-social support of children and young people to increase their well-being. The standards of the School as a Community Center, also focus on increasing the quality of educational service referring to area 1 of the standards (Ensuring quality education for every student and child well-being) and sustainable development of communities referring to area 2 (Ensuring social welfare, Emotional and Student Health) (MASR, 2014). In Specific Objective A1: Inclusion and equity in education in NES (MASR, 2021) specifically in Output A1.4. It is foreseen to increase the quality of psycho-social service for all students through the provision of psycho-social service in schools, providing optimal conditions for this purpose, drafting work protocols and capacity development of employees (MASR 2021:73-74). There are also other accompanying documents that highlight the quality education and well-being of children in Albania. So, the legal basis and the strategic vision are not lacking, but what we see with concern are the rare evaluation reports and focused on objective well-being and the lack of independent studies on subjective well-being to understand where the situation is. and how they will continue to achieve our goals on educating the younger generation.

The focus on children's well-being in the field of education has long been part of the teachers's agenda, and still the concept of well-being seems to have been further strengthened after the Covid-19 pandemic (Clarke, 2020). The school's mission today is seen as related to creating the competencies needed to be productive and grow healthily. Child well-being has attracted the attention of many researchers from different fields to understand the relationships that exist between child well-being and their academic achievements, but also beyond. Studies in the field of economics show that students' academic achievement is predictive of economic growth of countries (Hanushek, & essoessmann, 2007 in Kashahu, Xhelilaj 2015), seen through the lens of Putnam theory (Putnam, 2000, in Kashahu, Xhelilaj 2015) for the development of human capital, which is why so much attention is paid to them. Meanwhile, it has been proven that children's well-being is related to their academic achievements (Kaya, & Erdem, 2021; Spratt, 2017; Steinmayr, Heyder, Naumburg, Michels & Wirtheein 2018), but there are also studies that show that high academic achievements also have an impact on student well-being (Kaya, & Erdem, 2021).

In this context it is appropriate to ask: What can school do for the well-being of family and children? There have been discussions among researchers that schools focus on academic achievement at the expense of child well-being (Heller-Sahlgren, 2018), which have been judged to be inaccurate due to the methodology used to make measurements (Clarke, 2020). Researcher Clarke, after analyzing in detail the study of Heller-Sahlgren, (2018), concludes that it is not necessary to exchange academic achievement with the well-being of students based on her finding but also on the findings of Cigman, (2012) who confirms that the school has the potential to guarantee both academic achievement and student well-being.

First, to understand how school can do this, we will dwell on the findings of neuroscience, which prove the plasticity of the brain, in favor of well-being training as a skill which can be formed through the continuous exercise of the four components of well-being as emotional resilience, positive attitudes, focus on the present, and generosity (Dahl, Wilson-Mendenhall, & Davidson, 2020). By emotional resilience, we understand the ability of individuals to acquire and overcome life's difficulties. By positive attitudes we mean the ability to positively perceive life events and the ability to find the best in everything and in every individual. By focusing on the present, we mean the ability to enjoy the moment and stay in the present in its full sense, without focusing on the worries of the past and without being overly afraid of thinking about the future. While with generosity they will understand every act of kindness they do in relation to others, which turns out to produce well-being for individuals who show kindness to others. The work of educating these qualities is more fruitful if it

begins with educating parents not only in this regard, but also with their support to understand aspects of their children's well-being and the relationships between parenting styles. Schools have opportunities, but they need to develop capacities to help parents in this regard.

Second, we will look at formal, informal, and hidden curricula where I can intentionally incorporate the above four indicators with the aim of training them to develop these skills. So, promoting well-being through the curriculum in the broadest sense. Regarding the formal curriculum, schools are obliged to follow the programs defined by the curriculum framework according to the levels, but the seriousness and quality of its practical implementation is related to the school staff and the way in which teachers include families in learning activities, knowledge, skills, and competencies planned in the curriculum by levels. Specifically, the physical education hours are defined in the curriculum, but the quality of realization of the topics is to be considered. In school children learn about the importance of balanced nutrition and self-care, about various diseases and their prevention, about the importance of the developmental stages of their body and the care they should show, about addictive substances, about care to physical security to be protected from accidents and other harmful events, to care to establish positive relationships and care for people in need, etc. All of this has to do with the well-being of the students, so it is important for them to feel that these are not just learning topics, but are a practical part applied in every cast in school and family settings, where the school culture is oriented towards well-being which penetrates and joins that of families.

It is impossible for every educational goal and achievement to be realized only through the formal curriculum. If we refer to the achievements of Albanian students in PISA, we are still far from realizing the goal of quality education. According to PISA results calculations by World Bank 2018 specialists, 48% of Albanian students possess at least the minimum level of reading (males 37.9% and females 58%) at the end of the ninth grade. Similarly, 58% of students completing compulsory education possess at least the minimum level of skills in mathematics (males 55.9% and females 59.4%) (INSTAT, 2021). Informal curriculum is a way to support the goals of education through various informal activities such as reinforcement programs or various sports, cultural, scientific or even political clubs such as debate clubs. In Albania, the number of SACC has reached 400. From public funds in each school are paid based on Instruction no. 30, dated 12.09.2018, 10 hours a week for teachers engaged in activities in support of students, families and the community. However, studies show that school principals and aspiring principals feel that so many hours are insufficient to achieve the goals of the SACC (Kashahu, Xhelili & Satka, 2022). Whereas when we talk about the hidden curriculum, we refer to the sharing of common values and ethics between teachers, students, parents and school community. The school uses different strategies to send its messages to student communities, parents and beyond, about what is a priority. These messages can be related to mutual respect, zero tolerance for bullying and discrimination, culture of caring for each other, or even the priority of preserving everyone's well-being.

Third, all school staff should be promoters of the well-being of not only the children but also themselves. Familiarity of teachers, parents and all support staff with child well-being protection guidelines should be within the school's goals and should be carefully planned. This raises the need for training to support all stakeholders with information and opportunities to develop new habits in building strategies to understand the condition of children and their treatment. But given that teaching is a profession with high burnout, it is considered special support for teachers to build positive strategies to cope with stress and overload at work (Kashahu, Xhelilaj, Petani & Ntalla, 2021), as the lack of teacher well-being is inevitably reflected in students.

Fourth, targeted interventions are an opportunity to ensure that students' needs are met according to their individual characteristics and those of their families, when the impact of family characteristics on the well-being of children is noticeably clear. *We strongly believe that the School as a Community Center is the right approach to solve the problems caused by poverty.* Referring to the figures on poverty and the experience of situations of violence by children mentioned in the introduction of this study, but also the demands on the inclusion of students, I think that schools in Albania need cooperation not only with local government and policies but must find forms to set up joint working groups with various agencies and organizations to share information on student needs and to provide coordinated support. We relate this to John DeWey's philosophical concept, according to whom school should be the place where community life takes place, where students learn not only contemporary knowledge, but acquire skills and habits to find solutions to their own problems. and their families. (Dewey, 2003, in Kashahu, Xhelili & Satka, 2022). Some examples of targeted interventions may be, for example, child development specialists to support children with learning difficulties, or gifted children, coordinating family-school interaction to find solutions to current problems, especially for families with disabilities, low socio-economic income, management assistance groups on problems of inappropriate behavior etc.

Finally, schools have a duty to show transparency about the quality of service they provide. Since 2015, schools report several indicators based on the School Performance Charter document. Referring to the model of Allardt, (1976), it

would be good if the transparency reports did not include only some indicators of the conditions offered by the school and academic achievement that are related to objective well-being but also to include subjective indicators of well-being related to social relationships (school climate, teacher-student relationship, teacher-parent, student-student, bullying, cooperation with families, etc.) or self-fulfillment (evaluation of student work and achievement, opportunities to engage in stimulating activities according to personal interests, the opportunity to be involved in decision-making at school, etc.) but also health indicators (overall health condition and treatment to strengthen mental health). To carry out the evaluation of health indicators, it is necessary to draft work protocols for the systematic assessment of students' well-being, but this requires continuous investments in the development of the capacities of psycho-social service employees in schools.

2. Conclusions

Strategies and policies to ensure the well-being of the younger generation, and their implementation with truthfulness, correctness and honesty must be the mission of our lives, regardless of the sector to which we contribute. We live in the best age of humanity, with so much knowledge and constant development. There are so many studies and communication between scientists in various fields around the globe, which have completely opened our eyes to understand what is valuable to achieve the well-being of children, not only as their undeniable right, but also as an obligation to protect the country's human capital from destruction. This is both a professional and a patriotic responsibility. Through careful policymaking, but also their systematic evaluation and where everyone responsibly performs his task, especially in schools, we will be able to break the cycle of poverty.

The results of studies have made it clear that children are much more sensitive and affected far more than adults from poverty and that children raised by poor parents have a high probability of repeating the story of their growing parents (Cheng, Johnson, & Goodman, 2016). Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Development (1979) make us aware that the child is entirely related to the well-being of the family and the school and entire society must understand that everyone truly desires the well-being of the child, firstly must invest in the well-being of the child's family. Our sensitivity and reaction should be emormus to the risk factors that poor families typically have as insufficient parental education to fit the job market, single-parent families, or families where only one parent is the provider. The most appropriate way to reduce the effects of poverty is to support parents in maintaining parental responsibility, educating them, and providing quality education to their children, so that they can develop the skills needed for adequate employment when they grow up (Cheng, Johnson, & Goodman, 2016). Based on the research products of Harvard Center on the Developing Child[19], proper intervention in the moments when the child develops is the most effective way than take care of repairing the damage caused by poverty later. In other words, the role of the school in helping empowerement of families is crucial.

We return in considering to "*the hope of escaping poverty and depersonalisation"*. We need to study more about risk and promotional factors of child well-being in Albania, at the same time we need to know the results of sporadic interventions to ensure child well-being at all levels of their education. If there was scientific evidence on the subjective well-being about students leaving families *with the mission to never return to a place,* they think that *never will be done*, Albanian parents would at least think again about this mission. Seeing the impact of emigration processes on the well-being of their children, they would assess differently the return of children to their homeland. They would understand that each of us has our own contribution to "*a place that never will be done"*, and this can not happen just because of some of people. The political and policy-making environment in Albania is exceedingly difficult, but to withdraw from participating in various levels of government means to leave the country in the hands of those who should not and accept the costs that will be paid by next generations. Therefore, we have no choice but to do our best, to be vigilant and to take on the obligations as active citizens in ensuring the well-being of our children and our country.

References

Allardt, E. (1976). Dimensions of welfare in a comparative Scandinavian study. *Acta Sociologica, 3*(19), 227–239.
Ben-Arieh A., Casas F., Frønes I., Korbin J.E. (2014) Multifaceted Concept of Child Well-Being. In: Ben-Arieh A., Casas F., Frønes I., Korbin J. (eds) Handbook of Child Well-Being. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9063-8_134

---

[19] *https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/five-numbers-to-remember-about-early-childhood-development/*

Ben-Arieh, A. (2010). Developing Indicators for child well-being in a changing context. In book: Child wellbeing understanding children's lives, Chapter: Developing indicators for child well-being in a changing context, Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Editors: McAuley, C. and Rose, W., pp.129-142 https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Asher_BenArieh/publication/262178886_Developing_indicators_for_child_well_being_in_a_changing_context/links/55ff079608ae07629e51d0b4/Developing-indicators-for-child-well-being-in-achanging-context.pdf

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press in Kashahu, Xhelilaj, L. (2015) Shkolla dhe komuniteti, Pegi, Tiranë pp 121-126

Brown, S. L., & Rinelli, L. N. (2010). Family Structure, Family Processes, and Adolescent Smoking and Drinking. *Journal of research on adolescence : the official journal of the Society for Research on Adolescence*, *20*(2), 259–273. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00636.x.

Chapple, S. (2009). Child Well-Being and Sole-Parent Family Structure in the OECD: An Analysis", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 82,* OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/225407362040

Chaudry, A. & Wimer, C. (2016). Poverty is Not Just an Indicator: The Relationship Between Income, Poverty, and Child Well-Being. *Academic Pediatrics Volume 16*, pp 523-530

Cheng, T. L., Johnson, S. B., & Goodman, E. (2016). Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Disadvantage: The Three Generation Approach. *Pediatrics*, *137*(6), e20152467. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-2467

Cigman, R. (2012). We need to talk about well-being. *Research Papers in Education 27*(4): 449–462. In Clarke, T. (2020). Children's wellbeing and their academic achievement: The dangerous discourse of 'trade-offs' in education. *Theory and Research in Education, 18*(3), 263–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878520980197

Clarke, T. (2020). Children's wellbeing and their academic achievement: The dangerous discourse of 'trade-offs' in education. *Theory and Research in Education, 18*(3), 263–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878520980197

Counterpoint Research (2008). *Childhood Wellbeing: Qualitative Research Study.* London: Report DCSFRWO31

Dahl, C. J., Wilson-Mendenhall, C. D., & Davidson, R. J. (2020). The plasticity of well-being: A training-based framework for the cultivation of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *117*(51), 32197–32206. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2014859117

Dweck, C. (1999). Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development. Psychology Press.

Evans. G. W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *The American psychologist*, *59*(2), 77–92. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.59.2.77

Gëdeshi, I. & King, R. (2020). The actual and potential migration of students from Albania: a putative Brain Drain? Tirana: F. Ebert Foundation. Retrieved from: http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/albanien/17258.pdf

Hanushek, E. and Woessmann, L. (2007). The Role of Education Quality for Economic Growth, *Policy Research Working Paper* no. 4122, World Bank, in Kashahu, Xhelilaj, L. (2015) Shkolla dhe komuniteti, Pegi, Tiranë

Heller-Sahlgren., G. (2018). Smart but unhappy: Independent-school competition and the wellbeing-efficiency trade-off in education. *Economics of Education Review 62*: 66–81.

INSTAT (2021). Treguesit e mirëqenies së fëmijëve, adoleshentëve dhe të rinjve në Shqipëri. Të dhëna mbi periudhën kohore 2016-2019 https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/3816/file/INSTAT_UNICEF_2021_STATISTICS_Publication_Alb.pdf

Jones, A. LaLiberte, T. & Piescher, K. (2015). *Defining and strengthening child well-being in child protection.* Children and Youth Services Review 54 57–70.

Kagan, S. (1992). The limits of well-being. In E. F. Paul, F. D. Miller, Jr., & J. Paul (Eds.), *The good life and the human good* (pp. 169-189). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kahneman, D., Diener, E., & Schwarz, N. (Eds.). (1999). *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Kashahu (Xhelilaj)., L (2021). Social family background: Exposure to technology and its use by preschool children *IJPINT 2021; 8* (1): 15-30 DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.9138

Kashahu (Xhelilaj)., L & Satka , F. (2022). Perceptimet dhe qëndrimet e drejtuesve dhe aspirantëve për drejtues mbi shkollën si qendër komunitare. *Social Studies Vol. 16, No. 2* (56):37-55

Kashahu Xhelilaj, L., Petani, R. ., & Ntalla, M. . (2021). Relationship Between Teacher's Burnout, Occupational Stress, Coping, Gender and Age. *Journal of Educational and Social Research, 11*(4), 266. https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2021-0094

Kashahu, L. (2012). The influence of gender, demographic characteristics, as well as teacher-parent relationship, on adolescents academic achievement. *Conference paper in proceedings me ISBN: 978-9928-133-021* pg 338-348

Kashahu, Xhelilaj, L**.** Dibra, G. Osmanaga, F. & Bushati, J. (2014). The relationship between parental demographics, parenting styles and student academic achievement. *European Scientific Journal* Vol.10, No.13, pp. 237-250

Kashahu-Xhelilaj, L. (2013). Ndikimi i funksionimit familjar dhe bashkëpunimit familje-shkollë në përmarimin e adoleshentëve. Doktoraturë, Retrieved from: http://www.doktoratura.unitir.edu.al /2014/01/doktoratura-ledia-kashahufakulteti-i-shkencave-sociale-departamenti-psikologji-pedagogjise

Kaya, M., & Erdem, C. (2021). Students' Well-Being and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis Study. *Child Ind Res 14*, 1743–1767 https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-021-09821-4

Kenney, C. T., & McLanahan, S. S. (2006). Why are cohabiting relationships more violent than marriages?. *Demography, 43*(1), 127–140. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.2006.0007

Kile, M. (2019). *Prindërit e vetëm: Sfidat për balancimin e përgjegjesive në familje dhe në tregun e punës*. Mikrotezw Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/43480823/PRINDËRIT_E_VETËM_SFIDAT_PËR_BALANCIMIN_E_PËRGJEGJËSIVE_NË_FAMILJ E_DHE_NË_TREGUN_E_PUNËS?email_work_card=view-paper

Konu, A., & Rimpelä, M. (2002). Well-being in schools: a conceptual model. *Health promotion international*, *17*(1), 79–87. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/17.1.79

Kosher, H. and Ben-Arieh, A. (2017). What Children Think About Their Rights and Their Well-Being: A Cross-National Comparison. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry; Washington Vol. 87, Iss. 3

Krueger, P. M., Jutte, D. P., Franzini, L., Elo, I. & Hayward, M. D. (2015). Family structure and multiple domains of child well-being in the United States: a cross-sectional study . *Population Health Metrics 13*:6 DOI 10.1186/s12963-015-0038-0

Ligj NR. 69/2012 "Për Sistemin Arsimor Parauniversitar në Republikën e Shqipërisë", i azhurnuar

MAS (2014).Standardet e shkollës si qendër komunitare, miratuar nga MAS më 13.03.2014 Retrieved from: http://education.umb.edu.al/pdf_docs/STANDARDET-E-SHKOLLES-KOMUNITARE.pdf

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. Psychological Review, 50(4), 370–396.

MASR (2021). Strategjia Kombëtare e Arsimit 2021-2026, Draft, mbështetur nga UNICEF Shqipëri për Ministrinë e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë TOR-ALBA-2019-033

Noltemeyer, A., Bush, K., Patton, J., & Bergen, D. The relationship among deficiency needs and growth needs: An empirical investigation of Maslow's theory. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(9), 1862–1867. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.05.021

Pannilage, U. (2017). Impact of Family on Children's Wellbeing. *Journal of Sociology and Social Work Vol. 5, No. 1*, pp. 149-158 DOI: 10.15640/jssw.v5n1a1 Retrieved from::https://doi.org/10.15640/jssw.v5n1a15

Poston, D. L., & Micklin, M. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of population*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling Alone. The collapse and revival of American community* , New York: Simon and Schuster Pp 19, 296-306, 307-325, in Kashahu, Xhelilaj, L. (2015) Shkolla dhe komuniteti, Pegi, Tiranë

Russell, D. (2014). Eudaimonia. In: Michalos A.C. (eds) Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_928

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52,* 141-166.

Scharte, M., Bolte, G., & GME Study Group (2013). Increased health risks of children with single mothers: the impact of socio-economic and environmental factors. *European journal of public health*, *23*(3), 469–475. https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cks062

Schleider, J.L., Abel, M.R., & Weisz, J.R. (2015). Implicit theories and mental health problems in youths: A randomeffects meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review, 35*, 1–9

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Spratt, J. (2017) Wellbeing, Equity and Education: A Critical Analysis of Policy Discourses of Wellbeing in Schools. Springer.

Steinmayr R, Heyder A, Naumburg C, Michels J and Wirthwein L (2018). School-Related and Individual Predictors of Subjective Well-Being and Academic Achievement. Front. Psychol. 9:2631. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02631

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019). Desk Review on Child Wellbeing in Humanitarian Action: Concepts, Definitions, and Domains.

UNESCO. (2015). *Sustainable Development Goal 4*. Retrieved from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4.

Word Bank Group (2022).Western Balkans Regular Economic: Steering Through Crises. *Report No.21*/Spring