

## CASE STUDY ON THE VIEWPOINT OF PARENTS FROM A RURAL AREA CONCERNING MODERN EDUCATION AND ICT

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***Abstract:** Technology is present in almost all aspects of live. It is generally considered that people living in the countryside are more reluctant to adapt to innovation. This study is designed as a questionnaire aiming at discovering the viewpoint of parents with children at secondary level in education (V-VIII) towards new ICT at school and at home and their awareness on the multitude of possibilities offered by communication technology. All of the students involved in the case study attend Răscăieți Elementary School (I-VIII) in Dâmbovița.*

***Key words:** rural area, parents, ICT, education.*

***JEL Classification:** I21, O30.*

### 1. Introducere

Society adapts to social, economic, technological evolution changes through education. Thus, the institutionalized education, the school has the task of educating the population according to the requirements of the labor market. Globally, education is modernized through the involvement of ICT tools in learning.

The process of adapting to the new technologies does not only concern students but also their parents. In both urban and rural areas, most homes have Internet connection and have various technological means of accessing the web such as computer or laptop, smart phone and more.

Although the new technologies have many advantages and are increasingly being introduced into learning, researchers' studies indicate that people in general spend a lot of their lives using new technologies that seem to create addictions and generate new health problems both physical and mental. This is why moderate use of new technologies is recommended especially for young children.

### 2. Case study on the viewpoint of parents from a rural area concerning modern education and ICT. The methodological context.

This study aimed at identifying the perceptions of rural parents about the extensive use of new technologies in their children's daily activities, both for educational and for relaxation purposes. It was carried on at *Răscăieți Elementary School (I-VIII) in Dâmbovița County* involving parents with children in grades V-VIII.

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How wide-spread is the use of the Internet and the tools used to access it taking into account the context (rural area and young students from 12 to 15 years old)?
2. What is the parents' opinion regarding the usefulness of ICT?
3. To what extent are the parents familiar with some of the positive features of communication through technology?

The hypotheses and issues studied:

H1: To a large extent homes have an Internet connection and at least two types of devices used to access the web.

H2: In the opinion of most of the participants in the research the new ICT tools used both in education and for communication or relaxation purposes are useful.

H3: Respondents are familiar and use some features the technology has to offer in communication.

The hypotheses formulated above are intended to be confirmed or denied by the respondents' answers.

**The research method**

The targeted group is made up of parents of young students (of gymnasium) from a rural school in Dâmbovița County, Romania. There are 79 students enrolled in grades V– VIII. The sample size is represented by 66 parents calculated at 95% confidence level and with a 5% confidence interval. The sampling mode - Non-equitable sampling was used. The research was conducted through the opinion poll and is a quantitative research based on the questionnaire tool.

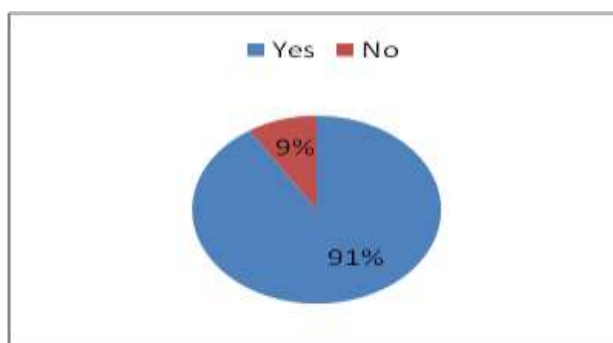
The purpose of the questionnaire is to identify the perception of rural parents about the extensive use of new technologies in their children's daily activities. In the questionnaire, nominal questions were used. The questionnaire was applied through the face to face method. Identifying the level of importance of some criteria was achieved using the 5-step Semantic Differentiation Scale.

The questionnaire was processed in the database created in Microfoft EXCEL.

Question 1. Does your home have Internet connection?

**Table 5. The existence of Internet connection at home**

Response	Percentage
Yes	91
No	6



**Figure 6. The existence of Internet connection at home**

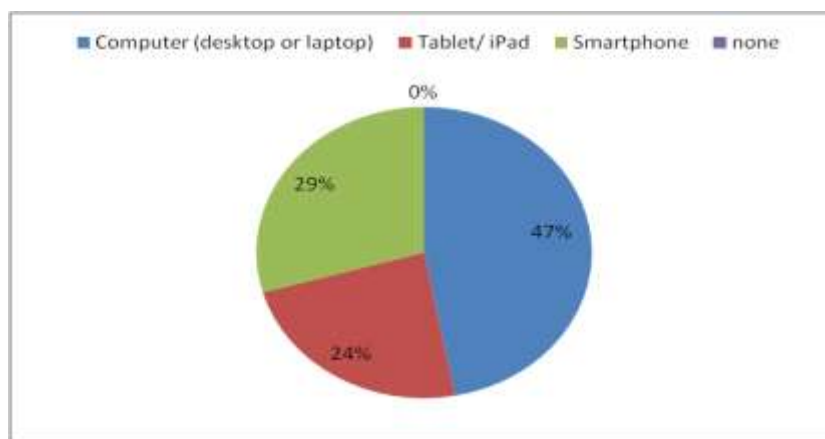
Source: elaborated by the author

Most of the respondents have an Internet connection at home (91%).

Question 2. Do you have available at home for your child/children?

**Table 6. The ICT devices available at home**

Response	Percentage
Computer (desktop or laptop)	47
Tablet/ iPad	24
Smartphone	29
None	0



**Figure 7. The ICT devices available at home**

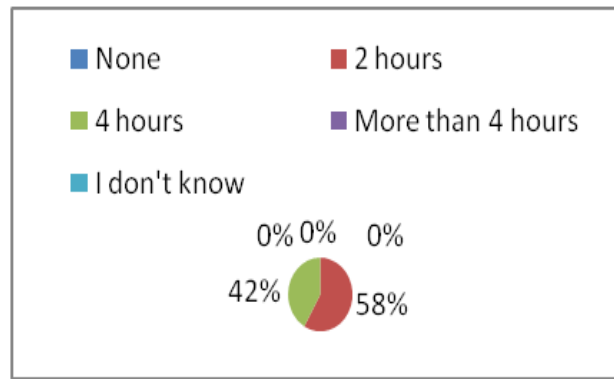
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We can observe from the chart that the computer and the smart phone are the most popular and only few have tablets or iPad.

Question 3. How many hours a day does your child spend using ICT?

**Table 7. The time spent by children using the new technology**

Response	Percentage
None	0
2 hours	58
4 hours	42
More than 4 hours	0
I don't know	0



**Figure 8. The time spent by children using the new technology**

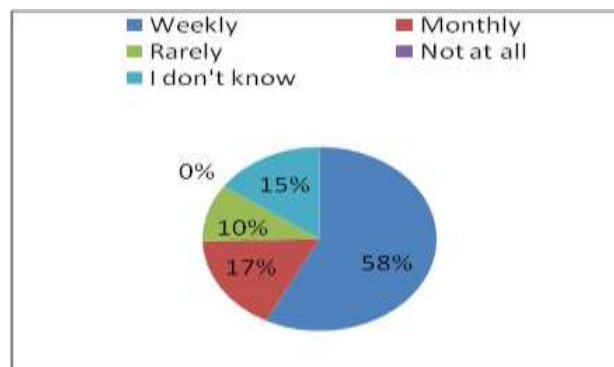
Source: elaborated by the author

Most children spend between two to four hours a day using the new media either for study or for enjoyment.

Question 4. How often does your child use the NICT for study or homework?

**Table 8. The hours spent using ICT for study/ homework**

Response	Percentage
Weekly	58
Monthly	17
Rarely	10
Not at all	0
I don't know	15



**Figure 9. The hours spent using ICT for study/ homework**

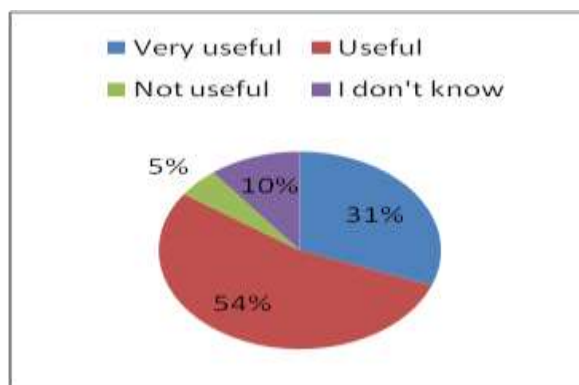
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From the answers of the respondents, most of the parents consider that their children use the new information and communications technology every week for study and homework, few – only monthly and a small number of parents answered rarely. However, a number of parents are not aware of the hours spent by their children for educational purposes.

Question 5. Do you consider the employment of ICT for school courses useful?

**Table 9. The importance given to ICT in school**

Response	Percentage
Very useful	31
Useful	54
Not useful	5
I don't know	10



**Figure 10. The importance given to ICT in school**

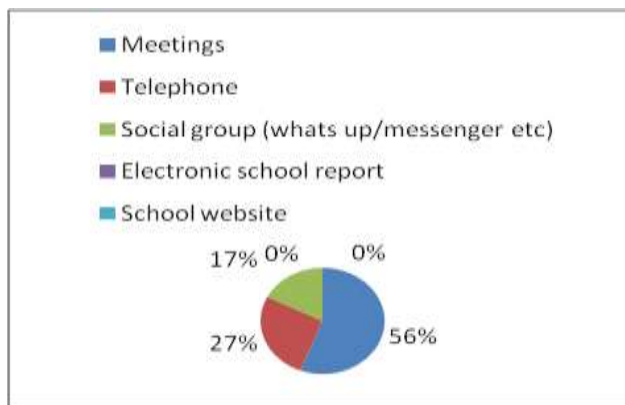
Source: elaborated by the author

Most of the respondents acknowledge the usefulness of the ICT tools in teaching.

Question 6. How do you keep in touch with the school?

**Table 10. Means of knowing the school report**

Response	Percentage
Meetings	56
Telephone	27
Social group (whats up/messenger etc)	17
Electronic school report	0
School website	0



**Figure 11. Means of knowing the school report**

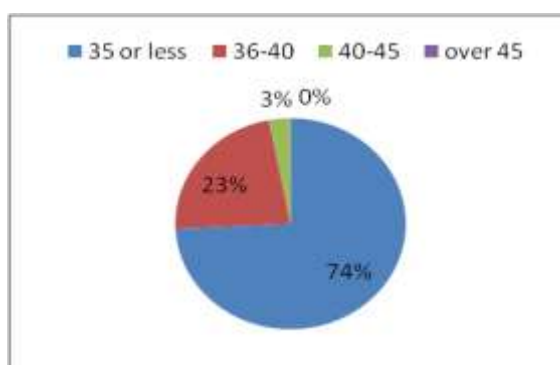
Source: elaborated by the author

Most of the respondents prefer the classic teacher-parent meetings while a few of the parents prefer using the telephone to obtain information about their child's school situation. None of the parents find information from the last two variants because they are not available at this school.

Question 7. What is your age?

**Table 11. The age group of the respondents**

Response	Percentage
35 or less	74
36-40	23
40-45	3
over 45	0



**Figure 12. The age group of the respondents**

Source: elaborated by the author

From this question we can conclude that the respondent group is mostly made up of young parents, age being an important factor in adapting to new technology and to new ideas.

### 3. Conclusions

The respondent group comprised young parents of 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade children attending Răscăieți Elementary School (I-VIII) in Dâmbovița County, a public rural area school unit

stated that they have Internet connection at home and a computer and at least a smartphone to access the Internet.

To a great extent, parents recognize the benefits of using NICT in teaching and learning. Though only 45% of them have a computer at home most of them answered that their children use ICT for study weekly.

Although parents are aware of the expansion of the new manners of communicating, most prefer face-to-face meeting with the teachers.

Regarding social groups for school purposes, there is only one group and it has about 17 members, parents only.

Also we are compelled to mention that the respective school unit does not have a website.

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