The Role of Non-Cognitive Skills in the Successful Integration of Roma Students into the Hungarian Public Education System

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ABSTRACT

Despite the efforts of the integration program in Hungary from 2002-2010 aimed at eliminating the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma students, that gap persists. This thesis seeks to explain why the integration program did not bring a breakthrough for Roma students. At the same time, it aims to examine whether the system of methodological and pedagogical practices of the integration program that already proved to be effective, are presently applied and whether their application show correlation with students' non-cognitive skill level. The research focuses on non-cognitive skills due to their special role in educational performance attributed to them by US researchers, Cunha, Heckman and Rubinstein. According to them, such non-cognitive skills as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation are catalysts of cognitive skill development and the level of these skills are predictors of educational attainment. The research examines and compares two schools in a ghetto like urban area of the capital of Hungary, Budapest. It focuses on the extent to which the methodological and pedagogical system of the integration program is applied in the two schools and whether non-cognitive skill level of students show correlation with it. Data analysis shows correlation between the level of non-cognitive skills and teachers' attitude, but not with teaching methodology, since that did not differ significantly in the two schools. This finding shows with great power the impact of a positive, encouraging, and confirming teacher attitude on students' skill development. At the same time, these results underline the important role of teacher attitude and training in future integration programs.

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DEFINITIONS

1. Roma in Hungary

There are around 750,000 Roma living in Hungary, and out them, around 500,000-600,000 live in deep poverty, according to the 2013 Report of the National Social Integration Strategy of the Hungarian government.[1] Children of impoverished Roma parents with low level of education and socioeconomic status (SES) are considered to be at risk of educational failure, hence disadvantaged.[2] However, although these numbers show that the overwhelming majority of Roma students in Hungary are at risk of lower educational performance due to their family background and SES, non-Roma students from similar background are in a similar position, as Kertesi and Kézdi pointed out.[3] Therefore, although this thesis talks about the educational results and skill level of Roma, it should be highlighted, that this group of underperforming students meant by it covers the problems of not only Roma students but also non-Roma students from impoverished, low SES families.

[1] Hungarian Government, *Report on the National Social Integration Strategy (Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkóztatási Stratégia)* (Budapest, 2013), 4.
[2] Ibid., 4, 21–22; Gábor Kertesi and Gábor Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)," *Budapest Working Papers On The Labour Market (Budapesti Munkagazdaságtani Füzetek)*, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Economics, no. 1 (2014): 30.
[3] Kertesi and Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)," 30.

2. Desegregation in School

Desegregation means placing children from different ethnic background to the same schools and in the same classes. Desegregation is the implementation of the European Council's Racial Equality Directive (Directive 2000/43 EC) which prohibits any form of racial discrimination, direct or indirect, including the segregation of children from various ethnic backgrounds into different schools or different classes. Desegregation means not more than placing children from various ethnic backgrounds into schools and classrooms where they are mixed with the majority. The term 'desegregation' does not refer to any form of fostering quality education, neither in the fields of pedagogy nor in a teaching methodology.

3. Integration in school

Integration, as opposed to desegregation, means the successful inclusion of ethnic minority children into classes. Successful inclusion means that ethnic minority children have similar educational performance to that of the majority children, and that they are accepted by the majority to an extent that inter ethnic friendships are created, i.e. there is no social exclusion inside the class community.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Why the integration programs of the 2000's failed to close the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma in Hungary? – The lack of breakthrough results after a decade of school integration program (2002-2010)

From 2002 to 2010, over the 8 years of two subsequent socialist-liberal government periods, there have been considerable efforts focused on solving the desperate situation of Roma children in the Hungarian education system. The year 2002 indicated a paradigm shift in Hungarian education policy. Earlier the idea was to provide education for disadvantaged Roma children in separate classes, in which they helped them to catch up to the majority, and they were taught special curriculum that included elements of Romani culture. However, seeing the persisting educational gap between majority and Roma children, the entering socialist-liberal coalition government decided to take a different approach: they decided to teach Roma and non-Roma, low-performing and well-performing students in integrated classes following the USA example of desegregation.

Disadvantaged Roma children in the Hungarian education system were exposed to various forms of discriminative treatments ranging being channeled to Roma majority schools, separate Roma classes, schools for disabled for no good reasons and being exposed to prejudiced teachers.[4] The new government entering into power in 2002, therefore, designed an integration program that aimed to provide all children, including the most disadvantaged ones, with equal access to quality education. An amendment to

[4] Margit Bordács, "A pedagógusok előítéletességének vizsgálata roma gyerekeket is tanító pedagógusok körében. (Examination of school teachers teaching also Roma children)," *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, no. February (2011), http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00035/00046/2001-02-ta-bordacs-pedagogusok.html.

the Act on Public Education was passed that made school desegregation mandatory, and segregation based on ethnicity became illegal as a form of ethnic discrimination. This act provided the legal basis of the integration program. At the same time the National Educational Integration Network was set up, which was responsible for providing assistance in teaching methodology appropriate for teaching integrated classes.

By 2013, more than a decade after the integration program was launched, it can be concluded that the integration program did not manage to close the gap between the educational performance of Roma and non-Roma students, and data shows that segregation is a persisting practice in the education system of Hungary.[5] Kertesi and Kézdi found in their research (2013) that the distribution of Roma and non-Roma in schools has become more unequal in terms of segregation since the 1980s.[6] Their data shows that segregation increased since the late 1990s until 2006, then between 2006 and 2006 it decreased, and, after 2008 it started growing again. This shows that after the segregating policies of the post transition period the integration program launched in 2002 started to show its impact by 2006. Then after 2008, the same time when political

[5] Roza Vajda and Csaba Dupcsik, *Edumigrom_background_paper_hungary_ethnic.pdf*, Country report on ethnic relations: Hungary, EDUMIGROM Background Papers (Budapest, Hungary: Roma Education Fund, 2011), 6–7, http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/documents/edumigrom_background_paper_hungary_ethnic.pdf; Decade of Roma Inclusion, "Civil Society Monitoring Report on the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Hungary," *Www.romadecade.org*, 2013, 8, 49, 60, http://www.romadecade.org/civilsocietymonitoring; Lilla et al. Farkas, *Discrimination in Education: UNESCO National Report (Diszkrimináció Az Oktatásban: UNESCO Nemzeti Jelentés)*, UNESCO National Report on Hungary (Educational Research and Development Institute of Hungary, 2008), 7, https://www.google.hu/search?q=Farkas+Lilla+et+al,+Diszkrimin%C3%A1ci%C3%B3+az+oktat%C3%A1sban:+UNESCO+nemzeti+jelent%C3%A9s&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=sb&gws_rd=cr&ei=8g79UrWMA-fnygOx14LoCQ.

[6] Gábor Kertesi and Gábor Kézdi, "School Segregation, School Choice and Educational Policies in 100 Hungarian Towns," *Budapest Working Papers On The Labour Market (Budapesti Munkagazdaságtani Füzetek)*, no. 12 (2013): 3, http://nda.sztaki.hu/kereso/index.php?a=get&id=822123&pattern=&t=School+segregation%2C+school+choice+and+educational+policies+in+100+Hungarian+towns.

will to implement the integration program decreased for political reasons, segregation started rising again.

Regarding equal access to quality education, the integration program did not manage to increase the educational results of Roma children. Only 19% of them apply to high school or vocational school after finishing the last year of elementary school, and only 6% of them complete.[7] The numbers are even more disappointing when it comes to higher education: only 1% of all Roma students will participate in some way in higher education – and the report has no data on how many of them actually complete.[8]

There have been various explanations why the integration program failed to bring breakthrough results. The Decade of Roma Inclusion initiative and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) mentioned the lack of reliable data and the difficulty of "robust" monitoring, evaluating, and reporting.[9] Other sources name the decreased priority of Roma inclusion in both the EU and in Hungary due to the long lasting economic crisis.[10] The ineffective and badly targeted distribution of funds, including EU funds is also highlighted by the ERRC: although a considerable amount of funds were allocated to school development, the schools mostly attended by disadvantaged children received very little of it.[11] Further reasons are mentioned by Kertesi and Kézdi in 2013, who claim

[7] Decade of Roma Inclusion, "Civil Society Monitoring Report on the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Hungary," 17.
[8] Ibid.
[9] *To Be or Not To Be.. Roma Decade After 2015? Decade in Brief - Romadecade.org* (Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, 2012), http://www.romadecade.org/about-the-decade-decade-in-brief; Bernard Rorke, "Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next?," *Www.errc.org*, 2014, http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=4238&page=2.
[10] Rorke, "Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next?".
[11] *Ten Years after: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest : New York: Roma Education Fund, CEU Press, 2012), 259; Rorke, "Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next?".

that free school choice and student mobility in the Hungarian education system are the primary cause of school segregation.[12] They claim that although local educational policy has an impact on whether the town's education system leans towards integration or segregation, still the most influential factor responsible for segregation is free school choice.[13] Inequality among schools, they argue, is the result of parents' decision to take their children to a different, often more distant school, which they believe will provide a better quality education than the local mixed schools. They argue that prejudice against Roma children motivates parents to a smaller extent than the better reputation and perceived better quality of education of another school. Therefore middle class parents, more aware of their options, take their children to better schools. Better schools, having the option to filter children, pick the better performing, easier-to-teach middle class children. This is how some schools end up with better performing middle class children and others with disadvantaged, weaker performing Roma ones. Obviously, more talented teachers will choose to work in better schools, whereas the less talented ones will end up working in worse schools. Therefore, disadvantaged children, the majority of them being Roma, who need the most attention and expertise development will end up with the less qualified teachers to provide this to them.

What is noteworthy is that Kertesi and Kézdi interpret the concept of inequality as synonymous to segregation: „inequality known as segregation".[14] This, though unintended, suggests that in the absence of segregation, inequality would not exist. This

[12] Kertesi and Kézdi, "School Segregation, School Choice and Educational Policies in 100 Hungarian Towns," 3, 41–42.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 3.

points our attention to an important and so far overlooked factor responsible for the lack of breakthrough results of the integration programs. The fact that desegregation does not mean automatic access to quality education and will not result in *successful* integration of disadvantaged Roma children into the education system was overlooked not only by Kertesi and Kézdi. An interview with Viktória Mohácsi, initiator of the integration program, reveals that she placed the emphasis on desegregation, and the reason why it was called an integration program and not a desegregation program was only because of the insistence of the educational minister.

"I wanted desegregation, Bálint Magyar (Minister of Education) wanted integration. … So I agreed, but insisted that, whatever it is called, it has to be about desegregation – the elimination of Gypsy classes and schools."[15]

The difference between integration and desegregation is not defined, and neither the interviewer nor Mohácsi realizes that it would be crucial to differentiate. The amendment of the Act on Public Education, that provided the legal basis of the integration program, made only desegregation mandatory, but paradoxically participation in the integration program and the application of methodological changes in teaching was optional for schools.[16] Only 45 school model schools started participating in the optional integration program in 2003, out of the total number, 3748, elementary schools is Hungary at the time. [17] This means most schools remained without adequate professional training and methodological support after desegregation. In summary, although there were efforts to

[15] *Ten Years after: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe*, 208.
[16] Ibid., 235.
[17] Ibid., 238; Central Statistics Office of Hungary KSH, "STADAT – 6.2.5.1. A Köznevelési Intézmények Feladat-Ellátási Helyeinek Száma (2000–)," accessed May 22, 2014, http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_zoi009.html.

introduce new and more effective teaching methods, these changes did not become widespread. [18] This is indicated by the fact that a significant proportion of teachers remain prejudiced against Roma, as research from 2011 found, despite the fact that the integration program promoted multicultural education which excludes prejudice and promotes a personalized, supportive relationship between teachers and students.[19]

However, despite the lack of large scale success, those schools that decided to introduce the methodological innovations recommended by the National Educational Integration Network achieved good results. This indicates that that teaching methodology probably played an important role in the success. The impact assessment of the integration program, prepared by Kézdi and Surányi, revealed that not only Roma children achieved better educational performance but non-Roma. [20] Furthermore, the performance gap between Roma and non-Roma also decreased.[21]

These results indicate the importance of methodological change in the success of desegregation. This thesis suggests that apart from all the other factors listed by scholars, the lack of widespread methodological change played an important role in the general failure if the integration program. I will argue that the designers of the program and the policy framework failed to realize an integration program without adequate teaching methodology in *every school*, is doomed to fail.

[18] *Ten Years after: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe*, 259–260.
[19] Bordács, "A pedagógusok előítéletességének vizsgálata roma gyerekeket is tanító pedagógusok körében. (Examination of school teachers teaching also Roma children)"; Gábor Kézdi and Éva Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007.* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).
[20] Kézdi and Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007.*
[21] Ibid.

The consequences are that the Hungarian education system is still unable eliminate the skill gap of children from low socioeconomic background, it fails to break the cycle of poverty, and still contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities.

Chapter 2. THE NATURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL GAP BETWEEN MAJORITY AND MINORITY IN THE US AND IN HUNGARY

In order to understand and measure why and how teaching methodology has a central role in the success of integration programs it is important to understand the nature of the disadvantage Roma children face. The situation is very similar in the USA and in Hungary regarding the nature of the educational gap. Wan concludes based on her comprehensive meta-analysis (2008) on US research, that the academic achievement gap between disadvantaged minority and white majority students is still present.[22] She explains that the achievement gap can be noticed in various dimensions such as standardized test scores, graduation rate, dropout rate, and admissions to college.[23] The nature of the educational achievement gap is very similar in Hungary. The educational gap between white majority and Roma, and other majority children from similarly low socioeconomic status in Hungary can be witnessed in many aspects of education, Rostas explains: drop out rates from primary and secondary education, admissions to secondary and tertiary education, secondary school graduation rate, and test results.[24]

Since it is clearly reflected by data that worse educational performance of Roma in Hungary is due to their lower skill level, the current thesis will assess the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma based on this. Kertesi and Kézdi found that there is a significant gap between the skill level of Roma and non-Roma students. The cognitive test scores of Roma 8th graders were lower in reading comprehension, writing, and

[22] Guofang Wan, *The Education of Diverse Student Populations. A Global Perspective.* (USA: Springer US, 2008), 8.
[23] Ibid., 9.
[24] *Ten Years after: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe,* 217–219.

mathematics skills were lower than the results of non-Roma middle class children.[25] In order to stop the (re)production of skill gap of Roma, or more generally disadvantaged children, we have to understand the mechanism how skills are developed and under what conditions they remain underdeveloped. The next chapter discusses how skills can be effectively developed.

[25] Kertesi and Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)," 9.

Chapter 3. THE PROCESS OF SKILL FORMATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN CLOSING THE EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE GAP

Several US researchers found a significant difference between the skill levels of children from low socioeconomic status (SES) and middle class background. These confirm correlation between skill level determining educational performance and SES, and provide valuable insight into the case of Roma students in Hungary.

One of these was conducted by Cunha and Heckman, who focuses on the relationship of public education and skill formation. They found that children's cognitive skill development (such as reading comprehension and mathematics) and non-cognitive skill development (such as motivation and self-esteem) are inter-dependent.[26] They highlighted that non-cognitive skills play a key role in the process of children's cognitive skill development: their research provided evidence that well developed non-cognitive skills, such as motivation, self esteem, and self-efficacy, are a precondition of cognitive skill development.[27] Their research data proved that without strong motivation, even children with high-level cognitive skills did not achieve good results in their studies.[28] Therefore they argued that non-cognitive skills have a catalyst effect on the development of cognitive skills.[29] Moreover, Heckman and Rubinstein found based on examining the results of the USA second chance educational program, GED, that although high school

[26] Flavio Cunha and James Heckman, "The Technology of Skill Formation," *American Economic Review* 97, no. 2 (May 2007): 42–43; Flavio Cunha and James J. Heckman, *Investing in Our Young People*, Working Paper (National Bureau of Economic Research, July 2010), http://www.nber.org/papers/w16201.
[27] Cunha and Heckman, "The Technology of Skill Formation," 42–43.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Flavio Cunha and James J. Heckman, "Formulating, Identifying and Estimating the Technology of Cognitive and Noncognitive Skill Formation," *Journal of Human Resources* 43, no. 4 (September 21, 2008): 43, doi:10.3368/jhr.43.4.738; Cunha and Heckman, *Investing in Our Young People*; James J. Heckman and Yona Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills: Lessons from the GED Testing Program," *The American Economic Review* 91, no. 2 (May 1, 2001): 145–49.

drop-outs who passed the GED are smarter than drop-outs who did not pass the test, they achieve a lower level of education than those drop-outs who did not pass the test.[30] The authors argue that the reason behind this that these people are smart but have a low level of non-cognitive skills that would make them persistent in their studies, and adapt well to the requirements of their environments. [31]

Several other studies conducted in the USA and elsewhere confirm that non-cognitive skills are not simply as important as cognitive skills, but perhaps even more important. Duckworth and Suligman, in the US, revealed the absence of non-cognitive skills has a negative impact on student performance.[32] They found that talented students with high IQ often fall short of their own potential because they do not exercise self-discipline.[33] This raises the question whether the development of non-cognitive skills would raise educational performance. Krishnan and Krutikova showed that the development of students' non-cognitive skills has a long term positive impact not only on educational performance but on the overall life performance of students. They found evidence that the development of children's non-cognitive skills from low SES families

[30] Heckman and Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills," 146.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Angela L. Duckworth and Martin E. P. Seligman, "Self-Discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents," *Psychological Science* 16, no. 12 (December 1, 2005): 939–44, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01641.x; Lex Borghans, Huub Meijers, and Bas Ter Weel, "The Role of Noncognitive Skills in Explaining Cognitive Test Scores," *Economic Inquiry* 46, no. 1 (2008): 2–12, doi:10.1111/j.1465-7295.2007.00073.x; Heckman and Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills."
[33] Duckworth and Seligman, "Self-Discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents"; Borghans, Meijers, and Ter Weel, "The Role of Noncognitive Skills in Explaining Cognitive Test Scores"; Heckman and Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills."

in urban slums of India had a measurable, long lasting positive impact on the life achievement of individuals in terms of social performance.[34]

OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation also addresses the importance of non cognitive skills. The organization underlined that the "key factors" behind educational performance are interest, enjoyment, and motivation of students. It highlighted that the school's task is not simply to provide literacy, but also to develop the confidence, motivation and interest of children in their subject areas. These principles clearly reflect Heckman's argument, that non-cognitive skills are catalysts for the development of cognitive skills. These results indicate that placing emphasis on developing students' non-cognitive skills is essential in the success of integration programs aiming at closing the educational gap between students from various backgrounds and with various skill levels.

The Hungarian integration program of the past decade, although it has failed to live up to its goal of providing all children with a quality education, still achieved some positive results in the skill development of both Roma and non-Roma students. The impact assessment by Kézdi and Surányi (2010) of the integration program showed that the performance of all children, Roma *and* majority, improved in schools participating in the integration program and applying the recommended methodological changes by the

[34] Pramila Krishnan and Sofya Krutikova, "Non-Cognitive Skill Formation in Poor Neighbourhoods of Urban India," *Labour Economics* 24 (October 2013): 42, doi:10.1016/j.labeco.2013.06.004; Cunha and Heckman, *Investing in Our Young People*.

National Educational Integration Network.[35] The main elements of the methodological part of the integration program were:

→ Differentiated teaching for heterogeneous classrooms
→ Cooperative teaching methods
→ Project-based learning
→ Multicultural pedagogy
→ Cultural sensitivity training
→ Partnership building with Roma families.[36]

The researchers examined the personality of teachers as an important factor impacting students' performance. Teachers' personality and motivation differed significantly in program and in control schools according to Kézdi and Surányi: they had much higher levels of patience and enthusiasm in program schools than in control schools in seventh grade.[37] As for inter-personal relationships in the classroom, the quality and quantity of student-teacher and student-student relationships differed in program and in control schools. In line with the principles of student-centered education, teachers in program schools had much more personal relationship with their students, and they fostered much more student-student cooperation, student activity, attention and autonomy in the classroom than teachers in control schools.[38] Regarding classroom activities, teachers used much less frontal work, and individual work and more group work.[39] At the same time, Kézdi and Surányi found that teachers in program schools introduced more

[35] Kézdi and Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007.*
[36] *Ten Years after: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe*, 238.
[37] Kézdi and Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007.*, 44.
[38] Ibid., 46.
[39] Ibid., 51.

peer-cooperation and inter-dependence between peers during class work.[40] In addition, they gave more room for application, representation and construction of knowledge than reception to students during classes compared to teachers in control schools.[41]

The impact of these methodological and pedagogical practices described above was encouragingly positive. Regarding *cognitive skills* (reading and mathematical skills, grades, admission to secondary schools) both Roma and non-Roma performed more or less the same in program schools and in control schools in third grade.[42] However, in grade seven both Roma and non-Roma students performed better in program schools regarding both their cognitive and non-cognitive skill.[43] However, as opposed to the relatively moderate increase in cognitive skills, *non-cognitive skills* – self-esteem, internal locus of control, and coping with stressful situations – were significantly more developed in program schools: non-cognitive skill levels of both Roma and non-Roma students were radically higher in both third and seventh grade.[44] Another noteworthy finding of the research is that the educational results of the majority children in integrated classes did not become worse; on the contrary, they improved. Their performance in program schools was slightly better in cognitive skills and a lot better in non-cognitive skills.[45]

These outcomes suggest that the system of methodological and pedagogical practices used by the integration program is successful in raising both the cognitive and non-cognitive skill level of students. Hence, the "tool kit" applied by the program was

[40] Ibid., 53.
[41] Ibid., 49.
[42] Ibid., 61.
[43] Ibid., 61–63.
[44] Ibid., 74–85.
[45] Ibid., 60–62, 69, 70,76, 82, 84.

effective in teaching successfully integrated classes of students with different skill levels, from diverse socioeconomic and sociocultural background. The other important finding is that close teacher-student relationship showed correlation with significantly increasing non-cognitive and cognitive skills. This indicates that teachers' attitude to their students plays a key role in developing skills.

Chapter 4. THE CAUSES BEHIND THE WEAKER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ROMA STUDENTS

4.1. The role of poverty and low socioeconomic status in lower educational attainment of children

Children from low socioeconomic status families have lower educational performance, the literature shows. Massey et al conducted the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF) in the USA, which aimed to uncover the socioeconomic and cultural background of college freshmen at the ages of 6, 13 and 18. The goal was to find out the causes of educational performance difference between the better performing white and Asian students, and the worse performing African American and Latino students. The survey used a huge representative sample, and Massey found correlation between socioeconomic background and academic performance: children from lower socioeconomic background (SES) families performed worse.

USA based research on the causes behind the lower educational attainment suggest that children from low SES families accumulate a remarkable skill gap yet before even starting school. Research by Hoff revealed that children already have a significant skill gap and a lack of knowledge about the world compared to middle class children by kindergarten age.[46] She found that children from low SES families had a significant 2-3-times difference in language skills already by the age of three compared to children of middle class background.[47] Low SES children at the age of three knew fewer words and

[46] Erika Hoff, "How Social Contexts Support and Shape Language Development," *Developmental Review* 26, no. 1 (March 2006): 55–56, doi:10.1016/j.dr.2005.11.002.
[47] Ibid., 60–63; Erika Hoff, "The Specificity of Environmental Influence: Socioeconomic Status Affects Early Vocabulary Development Via Maternal Speech," *Child Development* 74, no. 5 (2003): 1368–78, doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00612.

visited places outside the home area for a much smaller number of hours than their middle class peers, she explained. This places the characteristics of the family into the focus, as the source of children's lower educational performance.

Heckman, another USA researcher, examined primary school children and found that impoverished children grow up in a family environment that does not provide them with the intellectual stimulation that is necessary for their skill formation.[48] He argues that without sufficient stimulation, children's skills remain underdeveloped. Lower skill level and a much poorer knowledge about the world places them at disadvantage compared to middle class peers and results in worse educational performance in primary school.

Research findings from Hungary point to the same direction. They show that socioeconomic background strongly determines the school performance of children in Hungary. The prominent Hungarian researcher pair, Kertesi and Kézdi, found a strong link between socioeconomic status and the skill level of children in kindergarten age: low SES predetermined the low cognitive skills of kindergarten age children.[49] Therefore, it is clear that poverty results in worse educational performance. However, as Kertesi and Kézdi pointed out, it is not obvious through which factors and mechanisms poverty "translates" into educational disadvantages.[50] They examined how poverty impacts on

[48] James Heckman, "Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children Is an Economically Efficient Policy" (Presented at the Committee for Economic Development/The Pew Charitable Trusts/PNC Financial Services Group Forum on "Building the Economic Case for Investments in Preschool," 2006), 2.
[49] Kertesi and Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)," 26–27.
[50] Kertesi and Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)."

children and what exactly being disadvantaged means. They identified three factors that mediate the effect of poverty. Perhaps the most important is the quantity and the quality of parent-child relationship.[51] Kertesi and Kézdi found that parents in low SES families spend less time with their children and provide a less stimulating home environment.[52] They use a poor vocabulary, very rarely or never tell a bedtime story to their children, and tell more discouraging remarks and fewer encouraging compliments to their children, the authors highlight.[53] . The skill gap of Roma children grows even further during school: the skill gap increases from grade 2-4 and stagnates from grade 5-8, as Kertesi and Kézdi pointed out.[54]

The second important factor is the lack of access to quality schooling, Kertesi and Kézdi argue. They explain that disadvantaged children from low SES families have no access to quality education and a motivating school environment that would successfully eliminate the skill gap of disadvantaged children.[55] The third one is the poor health condition of children, due to scarce resources, which eventually results in missed days from school due to illness.[56] Based on these factors, poor Roma children are at a serious disadvantage compared to non-Roma middle class children already at the age of three, *before* even starting elementary school, and their disadvantages are not mitigated by public schooling, indeed they even grow further in some periods.

In summary, the low SES and the characteristics of the parents and the family are the primary causes behind the worse educational performance and skill gap of Roma children.

[51] Ibid., 16, 22.
[52] Ibid., 16–17, 24–28.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 10.
[55] Ibid., 17–18, 29.
[56] Ibid., 16.

And public schools in Hungary are unable to mitigate the impacts of the shortcomings of the education by the family. These findings are similar to that of Hoff pointed in the USA context.[57]

Based on this, it is clear that if an integration program aims to foster the better educational performance of any children, intensive and well targeted skill development is inevitable for disadvantaged children in order to help them overcome their lower skill levels. Desegregation, the simple act of placing children from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds into the same classes, will obviously not do this job. Indeed, placing children from very different socioeconomic backgrounds and different skill levels into mixed classes creates a challenge on its own: to respond to the very much diverse educational needs of students is a serious professional challenge. And the Hungarian education system, using frontal teaching techniques in classes of up to 30 children is not ideal for integrated classes. Teachers need to be adequately prepared with professional knowledge and practice in student centered teaching and differentiated education. [58] Therefore, desegregation should go hand in hand with appropriate training and methodological and pedagogical innovations and teachers training in order to teach mixed groups successfully. [59]

[57] Hoff, "How Social Contexts Support and Shape Language Development"; Hoff, "The Specificity of Environmental Influence."

[58] Based on interviews I conducted with teachers, I learned that teachers do not apply methodological innovations. They use obsolete class leading methods, and are unable to handle students with "behavioural problems". Instead the apply a legal practice that enables the school to eliminate "problematic" children from their classes by requesting the authorities to find another school for the given child that "better accommodates his or her needs". These problematic children with behavioral issues end up being sent in the same few schools of Budapest. These schools have almost exclusively low status disadvantaged children exposed to cultural deprivation. The quality of education is low and the material resources and human resources are scarce and often of a much worse quality than in schools with middle class students.

[59] "Kézdi_Surányi_2008_A Successful School Integration Program.pdf," n.d.; Rorke, "Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next?," 9; Kertesi and Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between

4.2. The role of ethnicity in lower educational attainment – The impact of prejudice and stigmatization

Based on the above mentioned it could seem that the lower educational attainment of Roma children are only due to poverty and their lower skill levels. However, there is another cause behind their worse educational performance: their ethnicity. Ethnicity has an important role in the lower educational attainment of Roma children. The widespread prejudice against Roma children by their teachers is a widespread phenomenon in the Hungarian public schools, as research of Bordács from 2011 reveals. This is a great concern, because, as Szalai argued, Roma students with visible signs of ethnicity are stigmatized by prejudiced teachers and peers.[60] They are channeled into low quality schools and classes, face prejudice and low expectations[61], and this makes it highly unlikely to work off their skill gaps, Szalai explained.[62] She explains that the impediments caused by systematic prejudice are so grave that it makes the educational prospects of Roma much worse than those of majority from an equally low SES background. In summary, it is evident that not ethnicity is the source of Roma children's skill gap, it contributes to the reproduction of their disadvantaged position.[63]

Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)," 31.

[60] Júlia Szalai, *Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects of Urban Youth*, Country report on ethnic relations: Hungary, EDUMIGROM Summary Findings (Budapest, Hungary: Roma Education Fund, 2011), 10.

[61] Kertesi and Kézdi, "On the Test Score Gap between Roma and Non-Roma Students in Hungary and Its Potential Causes (A Roma És Nem Roma Tanulók Teszteredményei Közti Különbségekről És E Különbségek Okairól)," 5, 13.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Szalai, *Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects of Urban Youth*, 3; Bordács, "A pedagógusok előítéletességének vizsgálata roma gyerekeket is tanító pedagógusok körében. (Examination of school teachers teaching also Roma children)."

Chapter 5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will learn to live together." Millikin v Bradley 418. US 783, 1974.

While chapter IV discussed *how* the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma develops and how poverty translates into lower skill level, this one will provide theoretical explanation for *why* this happens explaining why poverty translates into lower educational attainment. It provides a more systematic theoretical framework that will help understand why the educational gap is so persistent among Roma and non-Roma, and how can this be changed.

As presented in the previous chapter, there are two major causes behind the worse educational performance of Roma children in Hungary: *low SES* and *stigmatization* in school are responsible for the *lower skill level* of Roma children. These result in children having lower skill levels already by the time they enter school. To explain why these factors have a crucial impact on the educational gap of Roma students a theoretical framework need to be introduced.

The role of *SES* in the lower educational performance of students can be explained by the Theory of Capital Deficiency. This theory will discuss how the lack of various types of capital results in a lower educational attainment. Since public schools remained unable to successfully help Roma students to work off their skill gap this important task calls for well targeted professional methodological and pedagogical techniques. To explain the role of public schools in successfully handling the challenge posed by

teaching children with various *skill levels* and from various ethnic backgrounds the theory of Multicultural Education will be introduced. At the same time it will clarify the role of teaching methodology and pedagogy in successfully teaching in classes mixed in terms of skill level, culture, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. The colour-blind approach of Multicultural Education has its limits though. It does not consider that discriminatory outcomes can be the result of ethnically neutral policies, and Critial Race Theory will be introduced to explain these shortcomings. CRT will also discuss the role of *stigmatization* and of a social and institutional context in which Roma seem to fail naturally due to their own inabilities.

5.1. Theory of Capital Deficiency (TCD) and Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction

The Theory of Capital Deficiency was elaborated to explain why African American students who are very often coming from low SES families, do generally worse in school than other students. Since Roma face similar problems as African Americans in the USA TCD is applicable to the Hungarian context to explain the lack of educational success of Roma students; they lack various kinds non-financial resources that would help them achieve success in the public education system.

In the early 1960's Oscar Lewis elaborated his theory that some poor people have the "culture of poverty".[64] He explained the culture of poverty is not just about the lack of money, but more importantly about the lack of education and feeling marginalized and

[64] Oscar Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty," *Society* 35, no. 2 (February 1, 1998): 7; Oscar Lewis, *The Children of Sanches. Autobiography of a Mexican Family.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), xxiv in the Introduction.

demotivated to break out from the situation.[65] While Lewis has been heavily criticized for stigmatizing the poor, his concept is important, because it helps to understand that poverty is more than the lack of money, it is about the lack of certain kinds of cultural capital.[66] Similarly to Lewis, the impact of cultural deficit on life attainment was discussed by French academic, Bourdieu. Building on his thoughts, the theory of cultural deficiency was elaborated in the USA by Massey.

Massey, like Lewis and Bourdieu, did not view low educational and life attainment simply as a result of poverty, but as a result of the lack of other kinds of capital related to culture. He held that the lack of various kinds of resources of the family is the cause behind the worse educational attainment of disadvantaged ethnic groups in the USA; the African Americans and Latinos.[67] The great advantage of this theory is, as Philipp, another proponent of TCD rightly pointed out, that while many theories on educational failure focus on some of the causing factors, TCD offers a comprehensive approach.[68] It views educational failure as a result of a complex interplay of various kinds of deprivation ranging from cultural and social habits to financial hardship, Philipp explains.

Massey argued that capital comes in a number of forms. The four dimensions of capital deficiency listed by Massey are financial, human, social, and cultural capital. Among them, the most obvious is *financial capital*. This refers to the income and the

[65] Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty," 7–8; Lewis, *The Children of Sanches. Autobiography of a Mexican Family.*, Introduction xxiv.
[66] Herbert J. Gans, *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy* (Basic Books, 1995), 11, 53.
[67] Douglas S. Massey et al., *The Source of the River: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Selective Colleges and Universities* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 205–206.
[68] Janet S. Philipp, "Education for Learning and Democracy: Frameworks and Models," in *Education and Minorities*, ed. Chris Atkin (Continuum, 2012), 14–15.

more general financial situation of the family, he explains.[69] The second is *human capital*, which refers to the education, skills and abilities of the parents and the family, which can provide intellectual stimulation to the child to develop his or her skills, Massey and Philipp argued.[70] Moreover, Massey adds, those parents who have more human capital are in a better position to assist, advise and support their children on the road of their acquisition of human capital.[71] The third type, *social capital* means the value of being integrated into a certain social structure: friends, acquaintances, social connections and network membership of the family, as Massey and Philipp put it, provides the child with an "improved position in society", and it will very probably be converted into other forms of capital.[72] Lastly, *cultural capital* refers to the accepted norms, behaviour and conventions that govern social life in a particular social context that children learn from their family.[73]

The role of the latter two, social and cultural capital, are emphasized also in Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction.[74] The lack of cultural capital and the concept of social reproduction, introduced by him, are important factors responsible for the lower educational performance of ethnic children. According to him, schools are dominated by a middle class culture. The language skills, knowledge and behavior of middle class families represent a cultural capital that is naturally possessed by middle class children,

[69] Ibid., 15.
[70] Ibid.; Massey et al., *The Source of the River*, 5–6.
[71] Massey et al., *The Source of the River*, 5.
[72] Philipp, "Education for Learning and Democracy: Frameworks and Models," 16; Massey et al., *The Source of the River*, 6.
[73] Philipp, "Education for Learning and Democracy: Frameworks and Models," 16.
[74] David Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 178, 202–203.

whereas low status children do not have it.[75] Schools evaluate children based on middle class cultural standards that are easily met by middle class children, but for Roma children it is almost impossible to meet these requirements.[76] This is how the socioeconomic status and culture and educational level is passed on in the family from one generation to the other.

5.2. Multicultural education

Teachers in the USA face challenges in classes that became increasingly heterogeneous in terms of students' ethnicity, skill level, and cultural and socioeconomic background. Multicultural Education Theory was developed to respond to these challenges. The current Hungarian context, defined by the challenges of teaching integrated classes of children from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, with different skill levels, is similar to the situation in the USA. Therefore, the Theory of Multicultural Education is used in this thesis to explain and provide guidelines how teaching methodology and pedagogy play an important role in integration programs to help teachers teaching mixed classes successfully. Banks, one of the most prominent theorists of the field, explains that multicultural education has the main goal to *"reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social groups will experience quality education"*.[77] Nadelson argues that this can be fostered by appropriate teaching methodology and pedagogy that enable teachers to teach

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 203.
[77] James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice," in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2004), 3.

diverse classes in terms of race and class successfully. [78] He highlights the importance of teachers adapting to the diverse needs of students, and that the educational performance of students is, to a large extent, the responsibility of the teacher.[79] He points out that teachers with racist and ethnocentric views towards their pupils often fail to address the learning and socializing needs of their students.[80]

Banks defines five main methodological and pedagogical elements of the theory: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering the school culture and social structure.[81] Out of these, prejudice reduction and equity pedagogy are in the focus of this research. Equity pedagogy refers to treating all students equally, and teaching children to treat each other as equals, Banks explains.[82] Prejudice reduction relates to this closely, according to Banks, meaning that the teacher actively fosters the elimination of stereotypes about certain ethnic groups and fosters the formation of inter-ethnic friendships in the class.[83]

These elements will be used as guidelines for successful teaching methodology based on the fact that multicultural education has already been applied with positive

[78]Louis S. Nadelson et al., "A Shifting Paradigm Preservice Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes and Efficacy," *Urban Education* 47, no. 6 (November 1, 2012): 1183, 1185–1186, doi:10.1177/0042085912449750.
[79]Louis S. Nadelson et al., "A Shifting Paradigm Preservice Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes and Efficacy," *Urban Education* 47, no. 6 (November 1, 2012): 1183, 1185–1186, doi:10.1177/0042085912449750.
[80] Louis S. Nadelson et al., "A Shifting Paradigm Preservice Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes and Efficacy," *Urban Education* 47, no. 6 (November 1, 2012): 1188, 1191, doi:10.1177/0042085912449750.
[81] Banks and Banks, "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice," 4.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

results in Hungary for skill development in integrated classes, according to the findings of Kézdi and Surányi, as it has been discussed in chapter 3 and chapter 6.[84]

It should be noted that there is some tension between multiculturalism and CRT. Multiculturalism was criticized by Critical Race Theory, because, as Ladson-Billings pointed out, the ethnically neutral approach that disregards ethnicity and just intends to treat people of all ethnicity the same way has certain dangers. She argued that this so called colour blind approach can easily lead to discriminatory results in practice.[85] Ladson-Billings argued that Multicultural Education should be complemented with the approach of Critical Race Theory that calls attention to the dangers of the ethnically neutral approach that can have unintended discriminatory results.[86] According to Ladson-Billings CRT is not an alternative to Multicultural Education; instead it is a "theoretical tool" that can be deployed to monitor multicultural education to "uncover many types of inequities".[87] The dangers of the ethnically neutral approach of Multicultural Education will be discussed in the next subsection.

5.3. Critical Race Theory

Why do race and prejudice against Roma students still play an important role in the worse educational attainment of Roma students in Hungary? Why can a color blind approach that disregards the importance of ethnicity lead to discriminatory outcome, as argued by Ladson-Billings? Critical Race Theory (CRT), originally elaborated to explain

[84] Kézdi and Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007.*
[85] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "New Directions in Multicultural Education. Complexities, Boundaries, and Critical Race Theory.," in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education 2*, 2004, 57.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 61.

the marginalized situation of African Americans in the USA, sheds light on how the social and institutional context predetermines members of certain marginalized ethnic groups to fail.

CRT holds that ethnically neutral measures can easily result in discrimination, and therefore, simply denying the importance of race benevolently, as the Theory of Multicultural Education does, will not eliminate discrimination and persistent prejudice in everyday life.[88] It argues that the institutional setup is organized in such a way that members of the African American community are destined to fail, whereas members of the white majority succeed almost naturally. The powerful white majority assigns a marginal, despised position to African Americans in the USA, and to Roma in Hungary. In the case of education, Roma students are stigmatized as less capable and they are assigned to segregated lower quality classes and school. From this position they have little if any chance to achieve success.[89]

The danger of the colour blind approach of multiculturalism lies exactly in the fact the educational performance results all seems to be natural and fair; based on merit and talent, but CRT argues that actually it is not. And although liberalism denies the importance of race benevolently, it fails to realize that in everyday life race does matter, and that ethnically neutral policies can easily result in discrimination, as Delgado and Stefancic rightly pointed out.[90] This is why they challenge the concept of liberal equality and question whether social justice can be achieved by a colour blind approach.[91]

[88] Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (NYU Press, 2012), 35.
[89] Ibid., 3.
[90] Ibid., 35.
[91] Ibid., 3.

Similarly Goldberg argues that the colour-blind, liberal approach to equality does not eliminate discrimination, but it even reinforces it, because it ignores the importance of race in everyday life, and the prejudice and discrimination members of marginalized ethnic groups face.[92]

It can be concluded that although the lack of various kinds of capital is an important factor in educational attainment, as it was pointed out in a previous chapter, race and ethnicity also play a crucial role in it. As it has been discussed in Chapter 4, Roma students in Hungary are stigmatized as less capable than the majority, and are de facto segregated due to residential conditions into separate, "remedial"-like schools and classes that are of a lower quality. Danova argued that children have very low to practically no chance to be reintegrated from these segregated classes and schools to mainstream institutions that provide quality education.[93]This means minority children are denied of equal access to quality education and, therefore, equal opportunity in life. In summary although race does not define the skill level of Roma students, but it defines to a great extent their chances for success in the education success. And due to prejudice against Roma students; their ethnicity and segregation contributes to their lower educational attainment. In the absence of quality education in remedial school the originally low skill level of Roma students is not successfully addressed and it remains lower than that of the majority.

[92] Neda Atanasoski, "Race toward Freedom: Post-Cold War US Multiculturalism and the Reconstruction of Eastern Europe," *Journal of American Culture* 29, no. 2 (2006): 214, http://humweb.ucsc.edu/feministstudies/faculty/atanasoski/atanasoski-race-toward-freedom.pdf; David Theo Goldberg, "The End(s) of Race," *Postcolonial Studies* 7, no. 2 (2004): 211, 219–220, doi:10.1080/1368879042000278889.

[93] Simon Boone, "Stigmata: Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe - ERRC.org," *Roma Rights Quarterly*, *European Roma Rights Centre*, no. 2 (2004): 35, http://www.errc.org/article/stigmata-segregated-schooling-of-roma-in-central-and-eastern-europe/1892.

Chapter 6. FRAMEWORK OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The present research, based on the above, has three pillars. First, it will map out *socioeconomic status (SES), ethnic identity,* and *family background* of students in the selected classes. These tasks are completed by asking students participating in the research to fill out a questionnaire (see Annex A). As the OECD's PISA tests highlighted, SES and family background are the primary determinants of students' educational performance, and their influence is much stronger than that of the school: low SES and poor family background pose serious challenges to the performance of children and the schools that have to deal with them.[94]

SES is assessed in the present research by questions about family activities and free time, educational background of parents, and certain characteristics of students' home. Ethnic identity is assessed by a multiple choice question about the respondents' ethnic belonging: Roma, Roma and Hungarian, Hungarian. Family background, the nature of parent-child relationship, and the quality of parental care will be assessed based on multiple choice questions directly measuring these factors. At the same time, questions about family activities and free time are used also to asses these factors, apart from measuring SES.

As a second task, the research will examine and analyze teaching methodology, the attitude of teachers, and the schools' affective environment. This is needed because of the importance of the role of teachers. Their attitude and personal relationship with students was shown in Hungarian context by the research of Kézdi and Surányi in the evaluation

[94] CERI OECD, ed., *Educating Teachers for Diversity - OECD Online Bookshop* (OECD Publishing, 2010), 21, 28, http://www.oecdbookshop.org/display.asp?K=5KS70MPM8NS3&LANG=EN.

report of the integration program. As discussed in Chapter 3, their research confirmed that while teaching methodology had a moderate impact on educational performance, teachers' increased positive attitude and personal relationship with students in a program school showed correlation with remarkably more developed cognitive and non-cognitive skills. The OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation also highlighted the importance of the changing role of teachers, who have to handle challenges brought about by increasingly diverse classes in terms of SES, ethnicity and skill.[95]

Based on the above, this research will test the teaching methodology and teachers' attitude and relationship with students. To do this, I will visit several classes to assess the attitude of teachers, to examine the interpersonal relationships in the class, and classroom activities. The *teachers' personality* will be evaluated based on how much personal contact they have with students, and how motivated and enthusiastic they are. *Interpersonal relationships* will be assessed by examining how much personal contact the teachers have with students, how much peer cooperation happens during classes, how active and alert students are. *Classroom activity* will be assessed based on the dominant typology of class work whether it is more dominantly frontal, group or individual work. Furthermore, the typology of student work will also be examined: to what extent students are required to exercise reception, application, knowledge construction, representation.

As a third task, the research will gather information on the *non-cognitive skill* level of selected students in the focus group measuring students' motivation, self-esteem and self-efficacy. These three non-cognitive skills are strong predictors of good performance

[95] Ibid.

both in academia and in work, as discussed in Chapter 3.[96] Self-esteem and self-efficacy are measured in the current research by semi-structured focus group interviews and with questionnaire (Annex A).

General self-esteem is measured by the Rosenberg self-esteem (RSE) scale in the questionnaire and by the focus group interview. The RSE scale is a reliable and effective tool to measure general self-esteem: it has been utilized by prominent researchers measuring student self-esteem in researches focusing on educational performance.[97] The focus group interview examined the same skill with an exercise based on a so called projective technique which means participants are shown a short video that provokes feelings and thoughts in the subject of the resarch, and helps kick-start discussion related to self-esteem of the protagonist. Such situations, when they can talk about the self-esteem of a person in a movie, help them to talk more freely about self-esteem and coping mechanisms used in a difficult situation. On the one hand, according to film theories, viewers identify with the protagonist of the movies, so they experience the events of the movie on a high emotional intensity. On the other hand, when participants have to interpret and talk about the feelings of the protagonist, who has to cope with difficulties, they feel safer to talk about their own coping mechanisms, because they do not have to directly talk about themselves. Apart from general self-esteem, specifically

[96] Barry J. Zimmerman, "Self-Efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn," *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, no. 1 (January 2000): 82, doi:10.1006/ceps.1999.1016; Kézdi and Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007.*, 73–74; Heckman and Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills," 145–149.
[97] Massey et al., *The Source of the River*; Ellen Greenberger et al., "Item-Wording and the Dimensionality of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: Do They Matter?," *Personality and Individual Differences* 35, no. 6 (October 2003): 1241–54, doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00331-8; Richard W. Robins, Holly M. Hendin, and Kali H. Trzesniewski, "Measuring Global Self-Esteem: Construct Validation of a Single-Item Measure and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 27, no. 2 (February 1, 2001): 151–61, doi:10.1177/0146167201272002.

educational performance related self-esteem and confidence are also measured by the current research. The questionnaire included questions related to the confidence of students about achieving success in school and in life (Annex A). More detailed information on this is provided in Chapter 8.5-6 discussing research results.

Self-efficacy is examined both in the questionnaire and in the focus group interviews. As in the case of self-esteem, the questionnaire includes a set of multiple choice questions measuring general self efficacy. Apart from this, self-efficacy is measured by the focus group interview. During this, participants are asked to vote for answers provided by the researcher to a question related to self-efficacy. After voting there is a discussion prompted about who voted for which answer and why. This discussion provides deeper insight and more detailed information on students' level of self-efficacy.

It has been highlighted by several sources that self-efficacy, students' belief about their perceived capability predicts their motivation and their educational performance.[98] Finally, students' motivation is measured, on the one hand, by the questionnaire, with open-ended questions related to their future plans. On the other hand, it is measured by another multiple choice question related to motivation. Each answer represents one of the three types of motivation: intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation.[99] Intrinsic motivation refers to going to school because of liking the activity for its own sake.[100] Extrinsic

[98] Zimmerman, "Self-Efficacy," 82–83.
[99] Moisés Próspero, Amy Catherine Russell, and Shetal Vohra-Gupta, "Effects of Motivation on Educational Attainment Ethnic and Developmental Differences Among First-Generation Students," *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 102, doi:10.1177/1538192711435556.
[100] Ibid.; Adele Eskeles Gottfried, James S. Fleming, and Allen W. Gottfried, "Role of Cognitively Stimulating Home Environment in Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation: A Longitudinal Study," *Child Development* 69, no. 5 (October 1, 1998): 1448–1449, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06223.x.

motivation means going to school because it is deemed necessary due to external factors, rewards or punishment.[101] Finally, amotivation means the lack of motivation, and only doing something due to external force.[102] After the voting, participants are asked to join a discussion on how they answered. This discussion is intended to provide the opportunity to have a deeper understanding of the attitude of participants to motivation.

Two public schools were selected in a poor district in the outskirts of Budapest. The area where the two examined schools are located are in a high-rise residential area, inhabited by impoverished families. The "better" school (School B) operates a more intense selection process, whereas the "worse" school (School A) of the area practically admits the rest of children who were not taken by better one, according to he report of the director of the better school.

Both schools take Roma and non-Roma students. However, due to the ethnic composition of the population living in the area, Roma students are overrepresented in both schools compared to their proportion in Hungary as a whole. In School A, the proportion of Roma is around 80-90%, in school B, their proportion is around 40%, according to the estimate of the directors of the respective school. School A, therefore, is effectively segregated.

According to the interviews conducted with the two directors and teachers, the students in School A are from extremely poor families. They live on the margins of society, many of them are receive social aid, and criminality is frequent in families. In school B, on the other hand, students come from a better family background, teachers

[101] Próspero, Russell, and Vohra-Gupta, "Effects of Motivation on Educational Attainment Ethnic and Developmental Differences Among First-Generation Students," 102.
[102] Ibid.

reported. Firstly, criminality is rare and families are in a slightly better financial situation despite living very modestly.

Chapter 7. HYPOTHESIS

The aim of this research is to examine students' level of non-cognitive skills of in the two selected schools. I expect that **teaching methodology, pedagogy, school atmosphere and teacher attitude** will be of a higher quality in School B, the more selective one positioned by teachers as the better school of the area. The hypothesis of the research is that student's level of **non-cognitive skills** will be higher in School B, showing correlation with better quality teaching methodology and pedagogy. A teaching methodology that places more emphasis on the elements similar to that of the methodological and pedagogical tool kit used in the integration program in Hungary, discussed in Chapter 3 in details, is expected to result in higher level of non-cognitive skills.

Moreover, this research aims to prove that the higher level of non-cognitive skills in School B is not only due to a more intensely selected student body. It aims to prove a direct impact of the school on students' non-cognitive skill level. The questionnaire used in the research includes questions that measure general confidence and self-esteem, and school performance related confidence and self-esteem. The comparison of these is expected to shed light on any difference between general and school related self-esteem and confidence.

The research relies partly on the reports of school principals and teachers regarding the differences in the characteristics of students' socioeconomic status (SES) and family background in the two schools. However, at the same time it examines these as well, with the intention of testing the validity of the reports of school principals. The research

hypothesizes though, that the questionnaire results will confirm the reports of teachers, that the SES is lower and family background of students is intellectually less stimulating and less supportive in School A.

Chapter 8. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

8.1. Ethnic composition and ethnic identity

The estimates of school principals and teachers show that the proportion of Roma students in the schools is 80% in School A and 40% in School B are not reflected in the questionnaire results. In School A, 31% identified themselves as 'Hungarian and Roma', no one identified as Roma, and 15% gave no answer. These results are very far from the 80% estimate of the school which indicates high latency: respondents did not feel comfortable revealing their ethnic identity. Some of the participants who gave no answer wrote "Smelly Gypsy" or that they are Croatian. This highlights that respondents were particularly sensitive about their ethnicity, which indicates that they are highly aware of being stigmatized. In School B on the other hand, respondents were more relaxed about their ethnicity: 8% of respondents identified themselves as Roma, and 17% as 'Hungarian and Roma'. This adds up to 25% of students who have a link to Roma ethnicity. In School B, the gap between the estimates of teachers about the proportion of Roma in the school (40%) and the research result (25%) is smaller, 15%, whereas in School A the gap is much bigger: 49%. At the same time, in School B, all respondents answered the question related to their ethnic identity, whereas in School A, 15% refused to answer, which points to respondents hiding their Roma ethnicity.

These results show that Roma students in School A have a problematic relationship with their ethnicity and that shame and stigmatization is part of their everyday life. This was reflected in the comments on the uncooperative Roma respondents' questionnaire who indicated that they were fans of Jobbik, the Hungarian extreme right wing party. At

the same time they included self-deprecating comments like “I am a smelly Gypsy”. These answers show the psychological impact; the frustration and anger of Roma teenagers about stigmatization by the majority society.

To sum up, in both schools there was a gap between the estimate of the school on ethnic composition of the classes and the answers given by respondents about their ethnic identity. However, the difference between the estimate and questionnaire results is much smaller in School B than in School A, which points to the fact that respondents feels more comfortable about their Roma identity in School B. The reason behind this may be that the family background and non-cognitive skill level of respondents in School B is higher, as will be discussed below (in chapter 8.3 and 8.6). Therefore, they may not have such problematic, ambiguous relations to their ethnicity.

8.2. Socioeconomic and educational background of families

In line with the reports of teachers in both examined schools, educational level is lower and socioeconomic conditions are worse in students’ families in School A, findings of the current research confirmed. Questions about leisure time with family were intended to measure socioeconomic conditions and the quality of relationships in the family. In this section, the socioeconomic aspects of the answers will be discussed.

Regarding educational background, the majority of parents in both schools had vocational training or elementary school completion. In School A some respondents reported that their parents had university degrees. These answers turned out to be false, as other answers (like the absence or small number of books in the household) indicated. These students most probably tried to meet supposed expectations and therefore indicated

a higher educational accomplishment to their parents. Students in School B, on the other hand, gave honest answers about the educational level of their parents. Contrary to School A, in School B, none of the respondents refused to answer this question, and none of them indicated they did not know the answer. This indicates better communication and more balanced relationships in the family. At the same time, no one falsely indicated university degree as the educational level of their parents, unlike the respondents of School A. This illustrated that in this school, students are not ashamed about their family and have more positive family relationships than in School A.

Socioeconomic conditions were bad in both schools according to the research findings; however, in School A they were worse. The general lack of financial resources of the families in both schools is shown by that fact that traveling to a family vacation was mentioned only by one respondent in School B, and not mentioned at all in School A. However, families in School B were in a slightly better financial situation. They could afford pastimes that required financial contribution. Respondents indicated going out as a family engagement more often: going to the movies, to a shopping mall, to the zoo, or to the swimming pool. However, many of the students added this seldom happens. Hardly anything of the sort appeared among the answers of School A. This is poignantly illustrated by the answer of a respondent who indicated Aqua Park as his favorite family pastime, but quickly added his family did this only once many years ago. In School A only about half of the students reported having any family time with parents – although many of them added that it didn't occur very often. These occasions most often required very little financial contribution from parents, such as playing football or watching

movies at home. The other half of the class gave either no response, or said it was no one's business, or that they did not know what their favorite family engagement was.

In summary, the research found that in School A socioeconomic conditions are worse and educational level of parents is lower than in School B. Students have extremely limited opportunities to go out and be exposed to environments different from their home area and its proximity. The lack of exposure to different environments found by the current research confirms the findings of Hoff, Heckam and Cunha in the USA, and Kertesi in Hungary.[103] Their respective findings show that low SES families expose their children to a narrow variety of environments and experiences outside of their home area, which could otherwise stimulate the skill development of their children. The current research found similar results. As it has been presented in this section, children in low SES families often don't have access to the stimulating effect of varied environments and activities. In Chapter 8.6, the research findings on the impact of less stimulating family background on non-cognitive skills will be presented. Before that the findings of the current research will be discussed on other factors that effect non-cognitive skill development: family background, teaching methodology and school environment.

8.3. Family background of the examined groups

Questionnaire results and focus group interviews show a mixed picture of the quality of parent-child relationships and family backgrounds. Results show that respondents in School A achieved higher scores than in School B: on average, 5% of the

[103] Hoff, "How Social Contexts Support and Shape Language Development," 60–63; Hoff, "The Specificity of Environmental Influence"; Cunha and Heckman, *Investing in Our Young People*, 2.

maximum points, whereas in School B, the better school, respondents achieved on average -10% of the maximum score. The negative percentage is due to the fact that the question was multiple choice, and with each choice, respondents either achieved negative or positive point, and the summary of these points ended up being negative. These results do not confirm the reports of the teachers. Teachers reported that students in the worse school, School A, had less supportive and caring family backgrounds than in School B, the better school. The effectiveness of the questions examining the quality of parental care in the family can be ruled out. The same questions proved to be effective in a significant research project in the USA conducted on a huge sample that aimed to measure the impact of family background and parent-child relationship on educational attainment.[104]

However, the focus group discussions strongly supported the reports of teachers, contradicting questionnaire results, and indicated less parental care in School A. The group interview, although it did not deal directly with family background, provided some important additional information and revealed the deeply problematic aspect of family background for some students in School A. Participants were asked during the discussion to comment on a situation in which the main character of a movie section had to deal with failures in her professional and private life at the same time. Most participants gave practical answers initially. However, when the discussion turned to the feelings and emotions of the person in the movie, some participants said the person might take sedatives (the exact name of product was mentioned) or get drunk. The comments

[104] Massey et al., *The Source of the River*.

indicate that alcohol and pharmaceuticals must have been seen in their close environment as coping mechanisms in difficult situations.

These findings indicate that respondents in School A tried to show a nicer picture of the relationship with their parents and meet assumed expectations when filling out the questionnaire that *directly* related to their parents' behavior. On the other hand, the answers to the open ended questions about the family activities and the group interview that *indirectly* measured the quality of family life and parent-child relations shed light on the shortcomings of parental care and family background. These questions were included exactly with the intention of obtaining a more detailed picture about the respondents' family.

According to answers provided to the open ended questions about family activities, parents had a better relationship with their children in School B than is School A. Parents in School A spend very little time with their children. Only about 50% of students in School A reported they have *any* common family activities, although some of them added this seldom happens: once a month, once or twice a year. In School B, 75% of respondents reported having some sort of family activities in their free time, 50% higher than in School A. Finally, parents in School B exposed their children to a broader scope of activities outside the family home: going to the swimming pool, going on excursions and to the movies. This means that these parents provide a more stimulating environment to their children and the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the world outside of their home area, which has a stimulating impact on both cognitive and non-cognitive skill development, as it has been argued in Chapter 4.

However, not only the quantity but also the quality of free time differed in the two schools. Visiting relatives was an element in the answers that very often occurred in answers in School B. In School A, in contrast, it never appeared. Another important difference was that in School B, many answers included emphasis on togetherness. This was described by respondents as "being together", or "chatting a lot". One respondent noted, s/he does not have a favorite family activity, but likes "anything if s/he can be with the family". In the case of School A, this emphasis on a warm family atmosphere to which respondents feel being attached to was missing with only one respondent mentioning being at home and chatting as a family program.

Overall, the research revealed that the family backgrounds are better in School B, despite the lower questionnaire scores. As explained above, students in School B answered these questions honestly and did not try to make their relationship with parents appear in a more positive light than in reality, unlike respondents in School A. There were no unanswered questions and no uncooperative participants giving fake answers. On the other hand, the group interview and the questions about family time revealed the shortcomings of family backgrounds in School A: quality family time and programs were extremely rare in this school. Therefore, it can be concluded that students in School B have a warmer and more intimate relationship with their parents and stronger family bonds than in School A. In the absence of good parent-child relationships, students in School A have no support system that helps them through difficulties in school. The lack of emotional support is reflected in the much lower non-cognitive skill level of students in this school, which will be discussed in chapter 8.6.

8.4. Teaching methodology and teacher attitude

The teaching methodology in School B and School A is similar. In both schools frontal teaching style dominates, whereas the time and importance dedicated to interactivity and group work is insignificant. Based on interviews and discussions with teachers in both schools, there are two reasons why teachers are reluctant to give more room for interactivity, group work and generally more room for students as active participants in classes. One is that teachers still share the view that the role of teacher is to transmit information included in the curriculum. They are not trained and not familiar with the view of teaching as a mentor: that besides conveying information, they should also develop skills. This, as many teachers pointed out, is also a necessity, since the determined "output" of any school is a student familiar with a certain amount of information. Therefore, since the output requirements are information-oriented, there is no reason for teachers to place more emphasis on skill development. The other reason why teachers are reluctant to give more room for active student participation, interactivity and group work, is that they are afraid of losing control over the group. Many teachers, not only in the two schools participating in the current research, confirmed that they did not feel confident and had no serious practical training in handling groups. They reported that their training was predominantly theoretical, focusing mostly on the subject of their specialization. They confirmed receiving very little pedagogical and psychological training, and even that was theoretical. Practical training on the field, how to handle difficult situations during class, was simply missing from their training. A young teacher put it this way:

"During teacher training fieldwork and practical training are insignificant. They take you to laboratory classes in elite schools, where students do what they are told. But this is not the reality."

Regarding teaching style, there were no significant differences in the two schools. However, there was a crucial difference in the attitude and the expectations of teachers towards their work and especially their students. The research found that neither of the schools examined places emphasis on equity pedagogy and prejudice reduction. On the contrary, prejudice and low expectation, especially but not exclusively against Roma students is prevailing. An example illustrates this. The principal of School A introduced me to some of the students who initially were reluctant to participate in the research. The idea was that after being introduced I could convince them to participate. We met the students in the corridor, and the principal, after introducing me to them, turned to me, while the two boys were already part of the conversation and said the following:

"You see, they are in that hopeless class I mentioned to you, but they are not as stupid as the rest, they are two of the more intelligent ones."

This anecdote shows the difference between the attitudes of the two schools. In School A, teachers used poor language and swore at children. One of the teachers swore at 2nd grade students (7-8 year-old kids) when queuing up for going out of school somewhere:

"And when we get there, don't shame me, don't be jerks, behave!"

In School A, teachers openly express the low opinions they have of them and do not try to hide their negative opinions. They treat students without even a minimum level of respect. Interestingly, many of the teachers in the same school complained in the interviews that it is impossible to motivate their students to make an effort in their studies and to behave well during classes. And, as it was demonstrated by the group interviews, students are indeed demotivated – not surprisingly. Such low expectations and disrespectful treatment from the teachers diminishes their motivation to make an effort for better educational performance, as it will be discussed in the next sections (8.5-6).

In School B, the attitude of teachers is slightly better. In this school, due to more intense selection, students are less disadvantaged; there are fewer "problematic" students with learning or behavioural issues, family backgrounds are also better, as it has been discussed in sections 8.2-3. Families are more supportive generally, and there are fewer families where members were convicted of any crime. Teachers, therefore, have an easier job and they have higher expectations of their students. Students are treated with more respect in general. The teaching staff is also better qualified based on class participation. There are some teachers who are impatient, and they can talk disrespectfully to their students in class, however, these teachers do not teach primary subjects like grammar, mathematics or history. The teachers who are in charge of these important subjects teach well: they are dynamic and keep the attention of the students. However, similarly to teachers in School A, they do not use interactivity or group work, for the same reasons as in the other school. The attitude of these teachers is better than the others', but they also talk disrespectfully with students sometimes, though to a lesser extent, based on research findings of class participation.

In conclusion, in School A, teachers treat students disrespectfully and share their low expectations about their capacities with them. In School B, the attitude of teachers towards their students is significantly better: they show more respect for their students. However, this is not due to their dedication, but to the less difficult teaching task of a selected student body. It has to be noted that even with this "less problematic" student body, teachers lose patience and they show it. Regarding teaching methodology, in both schools frontal teaching style dominates. In School A teachers do not give any room for interactivity, group work and any other form of active student participation. In School B the situation differs only slightly, the role of active student participation is insignificant.

In summary, qualitative research data from the observation of classes indicates that teachers are very often demotivating for students and classes are often not engaging. This indicates that school is not motivating for students; indeed, it often produces a demotivating atmosphere. The motivational level, the confidence and the self-esteem of students regarding their school related capacities and performance, correlating with the attitude of the school, is low, as it will be discussed in sections 8.5-6. In School A, where the school environment was less motivating, the non-cognitive skill level of students was much lower, whereas in School B, with more motivating and respectful school environment, the level of the same skills was higher. This, however, does not justify causality between these factors.

8.5. Experiences about the school and confidence about capacities to achieve success there

The demotivating character of the environment found by class attendance was reflected in the questionnaire results about school related experiences and confidence of students. School related experiences were more negative in the case of School A and the confidence to achieve success in school was also lower than in School B

Experiences about the school and to achieve educational success were measured by questions on the overall opinion about the school, the greatest success and the greatest disappointment in school, it enquired whether respondents were proud of their achievement in school, and finally how certain respondents are about achieving success in secondary school and life. The overall opinion about the school was significantly more favourable in School B. In this school, 92% of respondents expressed a positive opinion about the school, only 8% had a negative opinion, and all participants responded. In School A on the other hand, only 54% of respondents had a positive opinion, 23% had a negative opinion, and 23% did not respond, respectively.

As for success in school, in School A much fewer respondents felt achieving success in school related things, such as having great grades, winning competitions or having positive feedback from teachers regarding their performance, than is School B. While in School A only 23% of respondents reported achieving success in performance related things, in School B on the other hand, 75% felt achieving success in school performance. In School A, 15% reported not achieving any success, and 31% gave no answer to the question. In School B all participants responded to the same question, and

only 8% reported not achieving any sort of success. The rest of the students in both schools reported social life related accomplishments as success.

Regarding disappointments in school, in School A significantly more respondents experienced educational performance related disappointments than in School B. Respondents in School A, often even denied answering the question, which indicates the traumatic character of these disappointments. In School A, 54% of respondents refused to answer the question, and 38% reported having educational performance related disappointments: altogether 92% of students experience educational performance failure. These were most often failing to pass in one or more subjects, having learning difficulties and performance failures. None of the respondents reported about teacher support in failure situations. In School B on the other hand, much less students (67%) reported performance failure. The quality of these failures also differed from the ones reported in School A. In School B not having the desired grade, or receiving an unexpected bad grade were listed most often as failures. Failing to pass in a subject was mentioned much less frequently in this school; only once.

To the question whether respondents felt being proud of their overall performance in school 45% more students gave a positive answer in School B than in School A. In School B 83% of respondents were proud of their achievements in school, whereas in School A the same figure was significantly smaller, only 38%.

Regarding how certain respondents were about achieving success in secondary school and in life, respectively, two important findings were revealed. One is that respondents in School A were much less confident to achieve success both in secondary school and in life, than in School B. This indicates that confidence and self-esteem of

respondents in School A is much lower. However, interestingly, the other finding, not anticipated by the current research, was that in both schools respondents were much less certain to achieve success in secondary school than in life. This trend dramatically underlines that in both the worse and the better school how little students trust their capacities to achieve success in school. This confirms that the low level of non-cognitive skills of children is only due to poor family background, but school environment directly contributes to it.

In summary, it can be concluded that students in School A suffer much more negative experiences such as shame and disappointment related to their school performance, which is indicated by respondents not giving an answer or saying they do not want to talk about it. These findings correlate with those of class attendance showing a significantly less motivating school environment in School A. Questionnaire results showed that students in both schools receive very little positive feedback about their performance from teachers that would encourage them to make further efforts. The difference was that in School A the environment was more disrespectful and extremely demotivating; unlike in School B. These showed that students in *both* schools trusted their capacities less to achieve success in school than in life. Overall, this leads to the conclusion that school is a place associated with struggle and disappointments, where very little chance is seen to experience success.

8.6. Non-cognitive skill level

Three non cognitive skills have been measured in this research: self-esteem, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation. Self-esteem and self-efficacy were measured both by the focus group interview and the questionnaire, whereas motivation was only measured by the group interview. The findings showed that all of these skills were lower in School A, where both the family background and the school environment were worse. However, the level of self-esteem and motivation was significantly lower, whereas in self-efficacy the difference was quite small. Participants showed much more trust in their capacities to make their life successful and to control their life than to achieve success and to control their performance in school. This indicates that school environment and the attitude of teachers contributes to the lower level of self-esteem, motivation and confidence of students. It proves that there is causality between school environment and non-cognitive skills.

Table 1. Non-cognitive skill levels in School A and School B

	School A	School B	Difference for School A
Self-esteem - Total points (max.20)	49	82	-33
Self-efficacy - Total points (max.12)	39	51	-12
Self-esteem - Average	4	7	-3
Self-efficacy - Average	3	4	-1
Self-esteem - Percentage average	19	34	-15
Self-efficacy - Percentage average	25	35	-10

Regarding ethnic differences, Roma students' non-cognitive skill level was lower in School A than in School B, in line with the hypothesis of the research. However, in School B Roma students' non-cognitive skill level was higher than that of the majority.

In School A, on the contrary, the non-cognitive skill level of Roma students was lower than the majority. This interesting controversy may indicate that Roma children need better than average skills to gain access to the more selective school, whereas in the less selective school the low expectations towards Roma children are reflected in their unusually low level of non-cognitive skills.

Table 2. Non-cognitive skill level of Roma and non-Roma in School A and School B

School A	Roma	Non-Roma	Difference for Roma
Self-esteem - Average	3	4	-1
Self-efficacy - Average	2	4	-2
Self-esteem - Percentage	17	21	-4
Self-efficacy - Percentage	14	35	-21
School B	Roma	Non-Roma	Difference for Roma
Self-esteem - Average	6	7	-1
Self-efficacy - Average	6	4	2
Self-esteem - Percentage	30	36	-6
Self-efficacy - Percentage	50	31	19

Self-esteem

Self-esteem was measured in a direct and an indirect way in the current research. In the questionnaire it was measured directly with the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg SES). The same test was used by the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen conducted by Massey et al. The research aimed to find out the reasons behind the worse educational performance of African Americans and Latinos compared to Asians and Caucasians. They searched for a link between worse educational attainment and family background failures. The Rosenberg SES included a set of multiple choice questions measuring self-esteem directly. The current research allocated points to the chosen

answer in the case of each question. If the indicated answer meant positive self-esteem, the respondent received points, whereas when the answer indicated meant negative self-esteem, the respondent lost points. Respondents could collect a maximum 20 points.

The results were in line with the hypothesis of the research that that in School A, where both school environment and family backgrounds were less supportive, respondents had significantly lower self-esteem than in School B. While in School B the 12 respondents achieved together 82 points, in School A the same figure was 49 points. In terms of percentages, in School B respondents, on average, achieved 34% of the total score, whereas in School A this proportion was 19%, indicating a significant 15% lower general self-esteem in School A.

Self-efficacy

Interestingly, self-efficacy of respondents in both schools was higher than self-esteem. However, while the difference between the level of self-esteem and self-efficacy was very small in School B (1%), in School A on the other it was significant (6%). In School B the total number of self-efficacy points achieved together by the entire group was 51 out of the possible maximum 144 points.[105] In School A, the total number of points achieved by the group was 39 out of the maximum 156. In terms of percentage in School B respondents on average achieved 35% of the maximum points, whereas in School A the same proportion was 25%. The difference between the level of self-efficacy in the better and the worse school in the area is smaller (only 10%) than in the case of self-

[105] The total number of points possibly achieved in this task is 144, because all 12 participants could have collected the maximum 12 points.

esteem (15%). This may be due to the fact that students with such weak family bonds and a lack of supportive family environment learn it very early in their life that they can only rely on themselves. However, future research should test this.

Motivation

The motivation of students in the two schools was measured in a group interview – one for each of the two groups. Participants received two tasks, one that measured their motivation related to school. Students had to vote publicly whether they would go to school if they were in an imagined situation in which they could choose not to go to school. They had three options, each representing one motivation type: a, they would go to school because they enjoy school (intrinsic motivation), b, they go only because they need the education in their lives later (extrinsic motivation), or c, they would not go to school (amotivation). The first answer indicates intrinsic motivation, the second shows extrinsic motivation, and the third one is a sign of amotivation.

The results confirmed the hypothesis that the level of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will be lower in School A than in School B. In School B 25% of the group said they would go to school because they like it (intrinsic motivation), 75% of them said they would go because they will need it (extrinsic motivation), and no one said they would not go at all (amotivation). The group predominantly showed extrinsic motivation, they believed they need school, and school is useful for them. However, there was a vivid discussion among students showing extrinsic motivation about the degree of the school's usefulness. Some of them said the school teaches a lot of useless things, and does not provide enough practical knowledge that is useful in life.

In School A, the motivational level of the focus group was much lower. In this group, no one indicated intrinsic motivation, about 40% of the group showed extrinsic motivation, and the rest of participants showed amotivation. In other words, 60% of participants said they would not go to school if they could choose. These results show that more positive teacher attitude correlates with higher level of student motivation. Although surely family background and SES is the primary determining factor of student performance, as the OECD highlighted, teachers' more positive attitude and higher expectations do have an impact and result in a higher level of non-cognitive skills, similarly to the findings of Kézdi and Surányi.[106]

[106] OECD, *Educating Teachers for Diversity - OECD Online Bookshop*, 13; Kézdi and Surányi, *A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program 2005-2007*.

Chapter 9. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS – CONCLUSION

The present research hypothesized that in the less selective school (School A) the socioeconomic conditions are worse, family backgrounds are less supportive, and the level of all the three non-cognitive skills measured (self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation) is lower than in the more selective (School B). These hypotheses have all been confirmed by the current research data. These findings are in line with previous research results. They confirm the findings of Kézdi and Surányi, that more positive and mentoring attitude of teachers' results in students having higher non-cognitive skill level and a more positive attitude towards school and studying, which is the key to their better educational performance according to Cunha, Heckman, and Rubinstein.[107]

The findings also confirm that more developed non-cognitive skills correlate with better educational performance, as the same authors argued: children's answers in School B, with higher level of non-cognitive skills, reflected that they had less frequent and less severe experiences of educational failure. The answers confirmed what has also been reported by teachers during interviews, that student in School A have a family background that does not provide them with emotional support and intellectual stimulation essential to both cognitive and non-cognitive skill development. This is reflected in students in the less selective school experiencing very little success related to their educational performance. School for them is a place of daily struggle with learning materials they perceive as very difficult, of continuous disappointment, and where

[107] Heckman and Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills"; Cunha and Heckman, "Formulating, Identifying and Estimating the Technology of Cognitive and Noncognitive Skill Formation"; Cunha and Heckman, *Investing in Our Young People*; Heckman and Rubinstein, "The Importance of Noncognitive Skills."

reinforcement from teachers regarding their performance and capacities is extremely rare or non-existent. Furthermore, responses in School A confirmed that students of non-selective schools receive a lower quality education and face extremely low expectations. To make things worse, low expectation and low opinion of teachers about their students are very often bluntly stated to students' faces. Not surprisingly, receiving continuous negative feedback about their performance and capacities, students' intrinsic motivation and trust in their own capacities in School A is very low, and their distrust of any sort of school authority is deep. These findings highlight the importance of teachers' soft skills, and the need for these skills to be developed by professional teacher training. Furthermore, they also highlight the importance of non-cognitive skill development of students in order to increase their overall educational performance. Without motivation and the confidence that they are capable of doing it, both Roma and non-Roma disadvantaged children will not achieve better educational attainment. These findings highlight that mentoring is essential to counterbalance the shortcomings of family background and parenting, and it has a key role in determining the educational attainment of their students. The research shows how government investment into teacher training, with a strong emphasis on mentoring and soft skills that serve students' skill development, can bring positive results in integration programs that aim to close the educational attainment gap between Roma and non-Roma. Moreover, it indicates that attracting high quality teaching staff to schools with more challenging student bodies would be a useful measure to raise the educational attainment of people in impoverished areas and hence contribute to reducing local unemployment.

ANNEXES

Annex A. Questionnaire on socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic background, self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation.

Questionnaire on socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic background, self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation.

Aims:
1. to determine the socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic background of students
2. to map out the nature of the school experience, find about future plans, self confidence, motivation, educational and life expectations

Family:

- What is the highest level of schooling achieved by your mother?

( ) Primary school

( ) Secondary school

( ) Vocational training

( ) College

( ) University

- What is the highest level of schooling achieved by your father?

( ) Primary school

( ) Secondary school

( ) Vocational training

( ) College

( ) University

- Mother's occupation:
- Does your mother have a job right now?
- Father's occupation:
- Does your father have a job right now?
- When was the last time you went to the movies?

- Do you have a room of your own where you can study and relax? Please circle the answer that is true for your case: Yes / No
- Do you have a specific place where you can study without being disturbed? Please circle the answer that is true in your case: Yes / No

- About how many books are there at your home? Please put an X next to the answer that is true in your case.

( ) None
( ) 1-25
( ) 26-50
( ) 51-75
( ) 76-100

- What kind of books they are?

Your habits:

- How many hours do you spend with reading a book/newspaper just **to entertain** yourself?
- How many hours do you spend with watching TV?
- How do you generally spend your time free of work/school **with** your family?
- How do you generally spend your time free of work/school **without** your family?
- What is your **favorite** pastime with your parents/family? **How often** do you do this?
- How many times did you have to stay at home because of being ill in this school year?
- How many times do you eat per day?

- My belonging:

( ) I am Hungarian
( ) I am a Hungarian Roma
( ) I am a Roma

Relationship with parents:

How often did your parents, older siblings, or other adults in your house ……..?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Read to you when you were little?	-2	-1	0	1	2
Check if you'd done your homework?	-2	-1	0	1	2
Help you with homework?	-2	-1	0	1	2
Reward you for good grades?	-2	-1	0	1	2
Punish you for bad grades?	2	1	0	-1	-2
Punish you for disobedience?	2	1	0	-1	-2
Ask you to do household work?	2	1	0	-1	-2
Limit your TV watching time?	-2	-1	0	1	2

School experience:

- What will you tell your best friend about the time you spent in this school?

- If something happened to you in school that made you sad or angry, who would you tell it to?

- What was your greatest success in school so far?

- What was your greatest disappointment/failure/negative experience in school?

- Are you proud of your achievements in school?

Plans after finishing elementary school:

- What are your plans after finishing 8th grade?

- Which secondary school do you plan to enroll in?

- Why did you choose that school?

- Do you think you will be successful in secondary school? Please indicate the answer that is the most similar to what you think:

( ) I am sure I won't be successful there.
( ) I think it is likely that I won't do well.
( ) I may be successful there.
( ) I think it is likely that I will do well.
( ) I am absolutely confident that I will be successful there.

- Do you think you will be successful in life? Please indicate the answer that is the most similar to what you think:

( ) I am sure I won't be successful.
( ) I think it is likely that I won't do well.
( ) I may be successful.
( ) I think it is likely that I will do well.
( ) I am absolutely sure that I will be successful.

About yourself: (purpose: 1. self-esteem, 2. self-efficacy/locus of control)

1. Please underline the word that is true for you:

→ **I think** in school I am:

- Lazy / Hard working
- Intelligent / Unintelligent
- Smart / Dumb
- Talented / Untalented

- Will be successful / Won't be successful

→ **Others think** in school I am:

- Lazy / Hard working
- Intelligent / Unintelligent
- Smart / Dumb
- Talented / Untalented
- Will be successful / Won't be successful

2. This question aims to assess how you feel about yourself. Please tell how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel I am a person of worth, equal to others.	2	1	-1	- 2
I feel that I have a lot of good qualities.	2	1	- 1	- 2
All in all, I am inclined to feel I am a failure.	-2	-1	1	2
I am able to do things as well as most other students.	2	1	- 1	- 2
I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.	-2	-1	1	2
I have a good feeling about myself.	2	1	- 1	- 2
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	2	1	- 1	- 2
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	-2	-1	1	2
I feel useless sometimes.	-2	-1	1	2
Sometimes I feel I am no good at all.	-2	-1	1	2

3. This question aims to assess how you feel about your life. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I don't have control over where my life is going. No one listens to me.	-2	-1	1	2
In life, good luck is more important than hard work.	-2	-1	1	2
Every time I try to get ahead something or somebody stops me.	-2	-1	1	2
When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.	2	1	-1	-2
I feel left out of things going around me.	-2	-1	1	2
If I work hard, I can do well.	2	1	-1	-2

Annex B. Consent form for Participation in Research Study

Consent form for Participation in Research Study[108]

Nationalism Studies Program
Central European University
Nádor utca 9, 1051
Budapest, Hungary

Title of Research: Teaching and educational methodology in the service of equal access to quality education
Name of Primary Researcher: Anna Szaniszló
Name of Supervisors: Luca Váradi, Dr. Szabolcs Pogonyi

A. Purpose and Background
Under the supervision of Professors Luca Váradi and Szabolcs Pogonyi at the Central European University, Budapest, Anna Szaniszló, a graduate student at the Nationalism Studies program conducts research on the impact of primary school education; teaching and education methodology on the skill development of students. The aim of the study is to investigate how different kinds of teaching methodologies affect students' skill development.

B. Procedures
If my parents and I agree for me to participate in this research study, the followings will occur:

1. I will be asked to participate in a group discussion with other students from the school, which will be led and coordinated by Anna Szaniszló. We will be asked to formulate our opinions about the school, the classes we attend and our future plans regarding education and work.

2. Following the group discussion, I will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire about my family, ethnic belonging and my personal future plans (on the field of education and work).

[108] Elena Cristina Balea, "Conceptions of the Good Citizen and Political Attitudes of Children" (Thesis, 2013), 67. Annex 5 of the thesis of the cited author was used as an example for this Child Consent Form.

C. Risks
Participation in this study is not foreseen to bring about any risks for the participating students.

D. Confidentiality
Participation in this study is anonymous. Any responses that are used for this study and any published analysis of this study will remain confidential. Participants will not be required to give their names on any surveys. The data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. Only the researcher and the two supervisors will have access to the data.

E. Direct benefits
There are no guaranteed benefits for the participants.

F. Alternatives
I am free to choose not to participate.

G. Costs
There will be no costs to the participant.

H. Questions
I have spoken with Anna Szaniszló about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have any further questions about the study I can contact Anna Szaniszló by writing to her to at szaniszlo.anna@gmail.com or I can contact Professor Váradi or Dr. Pogonyi, her MA Supervisors at CEU, (Nationalism Studies program, Nádor utca 9, Budapest, H-1051).

I. Consent
I have been provided a copy of this consent form to keep. Participation in this research study is voluntary. I am free to decline to participate in this research study, or I may withdraw my participation at any point without penalty.

Signature: ..... Date: .....
Research Participant (minor)

Signature: ..... Date: .....
Parent or Guardian of Minor Research Participant

Signature: ..... Date: .....
Researcher

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher or her supervisors.

If you have any questions regarding ethical conduct of the study, you may contact the Ethical Research Committee, Central European University, Nádor utca 9, H-1051.

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