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Parents' Participation Types in School Education

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to identify parental involvement types and determine what type of parental involvement the parents of middle school children prefer. Moreover, it is aimed to examine the parental involvement types with regard to the parents' gender, their educational background and the socio-economic status of the school. The population of the study comprises the parents of the six grade students study in 29 middle schools during 2018-2019 academic year in Denizli province in Turkey. The sample of the study consists of 243 volunteer parents in three different schools with low, medium and high socio-economic level based on their residential area according to the information obtained from the National Education Directorate. According to the data obtained from the scale, it was seen that parents were more likely to use parenting, learning at home and decision-making as parent involvement types; on the other hand they used 'collaborating with community' the least. Parental involvement types did not differ significantly according to gender. Whether parents are female or male did not affect the types of participation. This may be related to parents' trust in school. It may be stated that the school, which had a higher social status, met the expectations of parents and did not require active participation. Parental involvement types varied significantly depending on the parents' educational background.

Keywords: Parental participation, types of parental participation, secondary school.

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Introduction

Education is to create desired behaviours in an individual. These desired behaviours are defined in accordance with cognitive, affective and social gains. It is desirable that they become a permanent trait in the individual and a quality of his/her personality. The aim of schools where formal education is carried out is to establish these desired behaviours in the individual. There are three components that play an active role in this process; school, teacher and parent. The process of creating a permanent, desired behaviour in the individual can become effective through the cooperation of these three key factors.

Schools and teachers are fundamental in achieving the desired individual characteristics. Especially the teacher is the key factor in the realization of schools' role of establishing a healthy community and a developed country since the teacher is the authority that can have an influence on the student directly (Bozkurt-Bostanci & Yolcu, 2011). However, another factor namely "parents" can have as much effect as teachers in achieving the gains. It can be suggested that the family of the individual is a powerful factor in educational process. As Erden (2005) and Unal and Ada (2007) stated in their studies, if the knowledge, attitude and skills that an individual learns from his/her parents support what they have learned at school, then the individual is more successful at school. Therefore, cooperation between schools, teachers and parents is an essential factor for the child to be a successful individual at school. The concept of parental involvement signifies parents' interest in school actions or their personal attention to the child's academic learning. When the relevant literature is examined, it is defined as the participation of parents in their children's educational activities at home or at school (Zembat & Polat-Unutkan, 1999; Sahin & Unver, 2005). Parental involvement includes parents' participation in class and school activities, their communication with teachers, recognizing the school program, being active in the parent-teacher association or school protection association, helping their children with

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their homework and encouraging their children in terms of school attendance (Haack, 2007; Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). National Coalition for Parental Involvement (NCPI) defines parental involvement as the regular participation and cooperation of parents in both academic and school activities of the child (National Coalition for Parental Involvement, 2004).

The child is always with the family starting from the birth and grows up with the teachings of the family. Together with the involvement of school into the child's life, he/she starts to have new experiences. When the experiences with the family and the experiences at the school are parallel, the child's development can be healthy. Therefore, parental involvement is significant in the educational process of the individual. There are studies in the literature indicating that parental involvement or school-family collaboration is an important factor for children to have correct personality traits and be successful (Boult, 2006; Can, 2009; Epstein, 2010; Erden, 2005; Lawson, 2003). Besides, parents' participating in school activities and being in communication with the students about school activities demonstrate that parents give importance to education (Boult 2006; MEB, 2005). The fact that the knowledge, attitude and skills that the child has learned in the family support what they have learned at school increases the likelihood of child's being successful at school. If there is a contradiction between what the school and the family teach, the child's academic achievement may be negatively affected (Erden, 2005; Unal & Ada, 2007). Therefore, the participation of the family ensures continuity in the learning of the child, increases its permanence and supports the child's personal development (Swap, 1993).

Parental involvement in education can be in many different ways. To illustrate, there may be different types of involvement such as caring about child's lessons and assignments at home, playing educational games, attending parent-teacher meetings, being in contact with teachers, watching school demonstrations, attending school trips and playing an active role in the school's decision-making process. The role assigned by parents for themselves and the school determines the type and the level of involvement in the activities in children's educational process (Saban, 2011). Epstein (2010) identified six different types of parental involvement while Fantuzzo, Tighe and Childs (2000) discussed parental involvement in three dimensions as school-based, school-family collaboration-based and home-based. Fantuzzo, Tighe and Childs (2000) described school-based involvement as parents' involvement in school and class activities; school-family collaboration-based involvement as parents' being in contact with teachers; and home-based involvement as parents' providing a suitable study environment for their children and helping them with their homework. In the literature, family participation types were determined based on these variables. For example, six types of parental involvement by Epstein (1995) are *parenting* requires parents to have the necessary equipment and home environments to support their children's education, *communicating* requires parents to communicate with the authorized people in the school, *volunteering* requires parents to participate in different activities organized by the school, *learning at home* requires parents to monitor the child's education at home, *decision making* requires parents to have a say in decisions concerning their children's education at school, and *collaborating with the community* requires parents to cooperate with community organizations outside the school for their children's education.

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which parents participate in their children's education. As Binicioglu (2010) also stated, in terms of a healthier school-family relationship and parental involvement, it is essential to know what parents perceive from the concept of parental involvement in primary education and what means they use in school-family communication. With this purpose, in this study, it was aimed to determine the participation level of the parents of sixth graders and what kind of participation they prefer. The sample consisted of the parents of the students in the second year of four-year middle school education since it was believed that the parents who were trying to get used to the new system in the first year of middle school would not have enough information about the school and the environment. On the other hand, the last two years are the exam preparation period, and it was thought that parents would like to keep themselves away from school activities. As a result, only the parents of 6th graders corresponding to the second year of the secondary school were included in the study.

The Aim of the Study: The aim of this study is to identify parental involvement types and determine what type of parental involvement the parents of middle school children prefer. Moreover, it was aimed to examine the parental involvement types with regard to the parents' gender, their educational background and the socio-economic status of the school. For this purpose, the following research questions were studied:

1. What types of involvement do parents prefer in their children's education?
2. Do the involvement types preferred by the parents change according to
 - a) the parents' gender,

- b) the school their children attend,
- c) their educational background.

Methodology

In this section, information about research design, population and sample, data collection tool, data collection process and data analysis is presented.

Research Design

In this study, survey model was benefited to determine the level of parental involvement of the parents of the 6th graders studying at middle school, and the types of participation they prefer. Survey models are research approaches aiming to describe a situation in the past or at present as it is (Karasar, 2006).

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprises the parents of the six grade students studying in 29 middle schools during 2018-2019 academic year in Merkezefendi district of Denizli province in Turkey. The sample of the study consisted of 243 volunteer parents in three different schools with low, medium and high socio-economic level based on their residential area according to the information obtained from the National Education Directorate. Demographic features of the parents who participated in the study were given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Features of the Parents

Variable	Value	f	%
Gender	Female	117	48
	Male	126	52
Educational Background	Primary School	80	33
	High School	74	30
	Undergraduate	89	37
Socio-Economic Status of the Schools	Low	73	30
	Medium	94	39
	High	76	31
	Total	243	100

According to Table 1, 48% of the parents were female, and 52% were male. 33% of the parents were primary and secondary school graduates. 30% of the parents were high school graduates, and 37% were undergraduates. Schools were divided into low, middle and high socio-economic levels based on data from national education. 30% of the parents were in the low socio-economic level school, 39% were in the middle and 31% were in the high socio-economic level school.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, Parental Involvement Scale developed by Saban (2011) was used to collect data. The data collection tool consists of two parts: Demographic Information and Parental Involvement Scale.

The first part of the data collection tool contained demographic information including the gender and educational background of the parents who participated in the study.

The second part of the data collection tool covered Parental Involvement Scale developed by Saban (2011). The scale was developed considering Epstein's (2010) framework of six types of involvement. In the scale, parental involvement could be evaluated on the basis of parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, making decisions and collaborating with community.

The scale was comprised of 48 items and 6 dimensions. It consisted of 10 items related to parenting, 11 items for communication, 5 items for volunteering, 9 items for learning at home, 9 items for decision making and 4 items for collaborating with community. The reliability coefficient of the scale was $\alpha = 0.925$ by Saban (2011). In this study, the reliability coefficient was found to be $\alpha = 0.90$.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed by independent groups' t-test and one way ANOVA using SPSS 16.0. LSD test was used to determine the source of the difference between the groups.

Findings

In this part of the study, the findings presented whether the parental involvement types and the type of participation the parents prefer differed according to gender and educational background of the parents and the type of school their children attend.

Findings on the Involvement Types Preferred by Parents in the Education of Their Children

In this section, the lowest and the highest score values, mean, standard error of arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the Parental Participation Scale applied to the parents were examined.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviation, Lowest and Highest Score Values Obtained from Parental Involvement Scale

Involvement Level	N	Lowest	Highest	Mean	SD
Parenting	243	10	27	18.45	3.56
Communicating	243	8	27	16.35	3.59
Volunteering	243	4	16	10.22	2.72
Learning at Home	243	11	30	19.98	4.11
Decision Making	243	9	28	16.40	4.25
Collaborating with Community	243	3	11	6.64	2.05
Total	243	58	145	99.0	18.35

According to Table 2, the lowest score of the parents was 58, and the highest score was 145. It was seen that while the parents used the parental involvement types namely learning at home, parenting and decision making more than the others, they preferred collaborating with community the least.

Findings on the Involvement Types Preferred by Parents in the Education of Their Children According to Gender

In order to test whether the involvement types preferred by the parents in the education of their children differed according to gender of the parents, t-test was used.

Table 3. T-Test Results of Parental Involvement in the education of their children by gender

Dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	p
Parenting	Female	117	18.64	3.24	.776	.439
	Male	126	18.28	3.84		
Communicating	Female	117	16.54	3.79	.806	.421
	Male	126	16.17	3.40		
Volunteering	Female	117	10.38	10.38	.874	.383
	Male	126	10.07	10.07		
Learning at Home	Female	117	19.68	19.38	1.10	.268
	Male	126	20.26	20.26		
Decision Making	Female	117	16.51	16.51	.386	.700
	Male	126	16.30	16.30		
Collaborating with Community	Female	117	6.58	6.58	.411	.682
	Male	126	6.69	6.69		
Total	Female	117	99.57	18.03	.397	.692
	Male	126	98.63	18.71		

*p<.05

According to Table 3, there was no significant differences ($p > .05$) in the types of parental involvement types according to gender variable.

Findings on the Involvement Types preferred by Parents According to their Children's School Type

One-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was performed in order to test whether the types of participation preferred by parents in their children's education differed according to the social status type of school their children attend and the results were given in Table 4.

As seen in Table 4, as a result of One-Way Analysis of Variance carried out to determine whether the scores obtained from the scale showed a significant difference according to school type variable, it was found that the difference between the arithmetic means of the groups was statistically significant ($F = 13.43$; $p < .005$). Homogeneity of variances was checked first to determine the post-hoc technique to be conducted with the aim of determining the sources of differences. As a result of the analysis, the variances were homogeneous ($LF = 2.37$; $p > .05$).

Table 4. ANOVA Test Results of Parental Involvement According to the School Types

Dimensions	Types of School	N	\bar{x}	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	Significant Difference
Parenting	Low	73	20.34	3.74	Between Groups	371.67	2	185.83	16.503	.000	LowMedium Low-High
	Medium	94	17.70	3.33	Within Groups	2702.62	240	11.26			
	High	76	17.57	2.96							
Communicating	Low	73	18.67	3.59	Between Groups	635.69	2	317.84	30.56	.000	LowMedium Low-High
	Medium	94	15.95	3.15	Within Groups	2495.87	240	10.39			
	High	76	14.61	2.92							
Volunteering	Low	73	11.04	2.80	Between Groups	76.46	2	38.23	5.35	.005	LowMedium
	Medium	94	9.69	2.60	Within Groups	1714.08	240	7.14			
	High	76	10.10	2.62							
Learning at home	Low	73	21.38	4.90	Between Groups	215.37	2	107.69	6.65	.002	LowMedium Low-High
	Medium	94	19.62	3.63	In-groups	3885.58	240	16.19			
	High	76	19.09	3.51							
Decision Making	Low	73	17.72	4.43	Between Groups	196.83	2	98.41	5.64	.004	LowMedium Low-High
	Medium	94	16.09	4.20	Within Groups	4187.64	240	17.44			
	High	76	15.51	3.87							
Collaborating with community	Low	73	7.36	2.14	Between Groups	61.15	2	30.57	7.62	.001	LowMedium Low-High
	Medium	94	6.15	2.02	Within Groups	962.41	240	4.01			
	High	76	6.55	1.82							
Overall	Low	73	107.90	20.58	Between Groups	8213.07	2	4106.53	13.43	.000	LowMedium Low-High
	Medium	94	95.98	16.75	Within Groups	73346.10	240	305.60			
	High	76	94.44	14.92							

The parental involvement types varied significantly depending on the type of school the children attend. Scheffe test was used to find out in which groups there were differences in terms of school types. The relationship between each dimension of the scale was examined. In all of the six dimensions, the difference was found to be $p < .05$ in favour of the schools with lower social status compared to the schools with medium and high level of social status. It can be said that as the social status level of schools increases, parental participation levels decrease.

Findings on the Involvement Types preferred by the Parents according to the Parents' Educational Background

One-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was conducted in order to test whether the types of participation preferred by parents differed according to their educational background and the results were given in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA Test Results of Parental Involvement According to the Parents' Educational Background School Types

Dimensions	Educational Background	N	\bar{x}	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	Significant Difference
Parenting	Primary School	80	19.27	3.64	Between Groups	136.66	2	68.33	5.58	.004	Primary-Undergraduate
	High School	74	18.70	3.43	Within Groups	2937.63	240	12.24			
	Undergraduate	89	17.51	3.41							
Communicating	Primary School	80	18.18	3.80	Between Groups	573.13	2	286.56	26.88	.000	Primary-High School Primary-Undergraduate
	High School	74	16.58	2.61	Within Groups	2558.42	240	10.66			
	Undergraduate	89	14.51	3.22							
Volunteering	Primary School	80	10.48	3.02	Between Groups	18.77	2	9.38	1.27	.282	-
	High School	74	10.37	2.74	Within Groups	1771.77	240	7.38			
	Undergraduate	89	9.86	2.37							
Learning at home	Primary School	80	20.95	4.92	Between Groups	149.78	2	74.89	4.54	.012	Primary-Undergraduate
	High School	74	20.05	3.63	Within Groups	3951.17	240	16.46			
	Undergraduate	89	19.06	3.48							
Decision Making	Primary School	80	16.92	4.55	Between Groups	107.61	2	53.80	3.01	.051	-
	High School	74	16.89	3.72	Within Groups	4276.86	240	17.82			
	Undergraduate	89	15.52	4.29							
Collaborating with community	Primary School	80	6.91	2.03	Between Groups	9.99	2	4.99	1.18	.308	-
	High School	74	6.62	2.24	Within Groups	1013.56	240	4.22			
	Undergraduate	89	6.42	1.90							
Overall	Primary School	80	103.9	21.1	Between Groups	4634.29	2	2317.14	7.22	.001	Primary-Undergraduate
	High School	74	100.4	15.4	Within Groups	76924.8	240	320.52			
	Undergraduate	89									

As shown in Table 5, as a result of one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the scores obtained from the scale showed a significant difference according to the educational background variable, the difference between the arithmetic means of the groups was statistically significant ($F = 7.22$; $p < .005$). The Parental Involvement types varied significantly depending on their educational background. Scheffe test was used to find out the differences in terms of the educational backgrounds. The relationship between each dimension of the scale was examined. In terms of educational background, there was a significant difference between primary and undergraduate status in favour of primary school graduates in parenting and learning at home dimensions. In communicating dimension, there was a significant difference between primary-high school and primary-undergraduate groups in favour of primary school graduates. There was no significant difference between the groups in terms of volunteering, decision making and collaborating with community. In general, it can be said that the parents with primary school education participate in their children's education more than the parents with high school and undergraduate education.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, it was aimed to determine which types of involvement parents prefer in the education of their children; whether their preferred types of involvement differ according to the gender and educational level of the parents and the type of school their children attend. For this purpose, parental involvement scale was applied to the parents.

According to the data obtained from the scale, it was seen that parents were more likely to use parenting, learning at home, and decision-making as parent involvement types; on the other hand, they used 'collaborating with community' the least. Parenting and learning at home are related concepts in the parental involvement types. The parenting factor includes items for parents to have the necessary equipment and home environment to support the education of their children. The learning at home factor includes the items related to the monitoring of children's education at home and carrying out studies to support this. Both of these factors are related to the best use of the opportunities available to parents for the success of children. Therefore, the study explains the reasons why the parents preferred these factors more. Carneiro (2008) emphasized the importance of the home environment for the education of the child and

emphasized the learning factor at home. Learning at home is controlling children's homework, recognizing their shortcomings and helping them. According to the 2005-2006 education program in Turkey but also to the parents in the performance of homework students have responsibilities too (Yilmaz & Benli, 2011). It can be said that parents contribute to the homework of their children in their parenting roles, and that the performance assignments in the 2005 education program triggers this function, and that parents contribute more to the learning factor at home.

The decision-making factor includes the items that necessitate parents to have a say in the decisions taken on issues concerning education at school. It can be said that parents want to act with the school together about the decisions related to their children, and they desire to carry out their duties in order to perform learning activities at home. However, the factor of collaborating with community was found to be at the lowest level. We can say that parents were reluctant to cooperate with community organizations except for the school. Tumkaya (2017) claimed the reason for this was that parents' involvement in education was limited to more traditional activities such as attending parent-teacher meetings. Thus, we can express that parents do not need to cooperate with different organizations other than traditional activities. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) concluded that voluntary work at home and school (Parenting) and assisting with homework (Learning at Home) activities were at the forefront and defined these factors as the behavioural dimension of parental involvement. Similar to this study, Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) concluded that parents prefer participation tasks which are more suitable for performing in the home environment. The 'No Child Left Behind' legislative regulation, which is applied in the United States in connection with the decision-making factor, aims to provide family participation by introducing obligations to parents such as attending school meetings (Crites, 2008). The involvement of parents in Turkey is provided by the parent-teacher association application. In this study, we can assert that the reason of parents' preference for 'decision making' was that school-parent association practices were effective.

Parental involvement types did not differ significantly according to gender. Whether parents were female or male did not affect the types of participation. This finding coincides with the studies of Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Brissie (2010), Shaw (2008), Tumkaya (2017). In the study conducted by Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013), there was a statistically significant difference in favour of mothers in terms of supporting the homework and studies of the child, but no significant differences regarding the gender variable were found in the other dimensions of the scale. In the literature, there were studies in which parental involvement differs in favor of mothers (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Manz, Fantuzzo & Power, 2004; Sliwka & Istance, 2006; Saban, 2011). The involvement types of the parents varied significantly depending on the type of school their children attend and the relationship between each dimension of the scale was examined. In six dimensions, the difference was found to be in favour of the school in lower social status compared to the schools with medium and high level of social status.

It can be noted that as the social status of schools increases, parental involvement levels decrease. This may be related to parents' trust in school. It may be stated that the school, which has a higher social status, meets the expectations of parents and does not require active participation. There were very few studies dealing with the type of school in studies including parental involvement. Few studies using the school type variable discussed the difference between public and private schools. One of the two studies was the thesis study of Saban (2011), in which there was no significant difference between public and private schools. In another study by Sliwka and Istance (2006), the interpretation was made based on the number of members of the school-parent association between the state and private schools. According to this, it was concluded that the number of members of the school-parent association in private schools was high but the parents in the public school were more active. Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) did not examine the type of school variable but the social status of the parents. In their study, it has been found that family participation increases as the level of parental income decreases similar to the findings of some dimensions in this research. There were different studies in the literature regarding the educational level and socioeconomic status of families. According to these studies, as the educational level and socioeconomic status of families decreased, their participation in education decreased (Keith et al., 1993; Keskin & Sezgin, 2009; Kotaman, 2008; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Senler & Sungur, 2009; SuiChu & Willms, 1996).

Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) explained that there was not a single dimension of family participation and that parents with different socio-economic characteristics could undertake appropriate tasks in terms of participation in their children's educational processes.

Parental involvement types vary significantly depending on the parents' educational background. In terms of educational background, there was a significant difference between primary and undergraduate level in favour of

primary school graduates in parenting and learning at home dimensions. In communicating dimension, there was a significant difference between primary-high school and primary-undergraduate groups in favour of primary school graduates.

There was no significant difference between the groups in terms of volunteering, decision making and collaborating with community. In general, it can be concluded that the parents with primary school education participate in their children's education more than the parents with high school and undergraduate education. This finding did not coincide with the results of some other studies in the literature (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Kotaman, 2008; Saban, 2011; Shaw, 2008; Tumkaya, 2017). This difference may be due to different sample groups. In this study, this finding was consistent with the school type variable. In this study, the findings of the school type variable and the educational status of the parents were consistent. When the demographic information was examined, the education level of the parents in the lower and middle social status category was at primary and high school education levels, while the parents of upper social status had high school and undergraduate education.

Suggestions

In the study, the parents' preferring collaborating with community as a type of parental involvement was low. For this reason, The Ministry of National Education should produce projects that will enable parents to cooperate with other educational institutions outside the school. In the current system, The Ministry of Education in Turkey has started to make different implementations in order to improve children's artistic and sporting activities outside the school. However, the results of this study showed that parents need to be more informed about this issue.

In particular, activities and seminars should be organized for the participation of parents who are at upper level socioeconomically, and who graduated from high school or higher education. Parents should be given guidance and be informed about the importance of being in cooperation with the school (family participation) in improving the academic success and happiness of their children.

This study was conducted only with the parents of the 6th graders. Studies can be conducted with parents at all levels of education and comparisons can be made between levels. Also, the findings can be supported by interview technique which is one of the qualitative methods.

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