

Parental Self-Efficacy in Educating Elementary School Children

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5

Abstract. The main purpose of this study was to explore the belief that parents were able to perform or to manage tasks effectively related to parental involvement in educating elementary school children. 60 parents of elementary school children participated in this study, consisting of 20 fathers and 40 mothers. They were selected randomly from two public elementary schools and fulfilled informed consent showing they participated voluntarily in the study. The Parents Self Efficacy Scale which has been tested for validity and reliability administered to the parents. This self-report instrument, which consists of 68 questions asked parents to respond six aspects of the scale, namely the ability to parent children, communicate with the school/teacher, help children learn at home, become school volunteers, make decisions, and collaborate with the community. The results showed that parents have a high level of efficacy in all six aspects. However, among the six aspects, the higher level of parental self-efficacy was parenting children, communicating with the school/teacher, helping children learn at home. Meanwhile, parental self-efficacy of becoming school volunteers, making decisions, and collaborating with the community were lower than the first three.

Keywords: parent self-efficacy, parental involvement, elementary school

INTRODUCTION ~ Parents, as the first and main educators, play an important role in the success of children's learning. They can facilitate children learning providing a conducive learning environment so that they are successful in school. Parents of children aged 5-12 mainly face various challenges in fostering children's development. Socio-cultural changes, changes in family configuration, and the rapid development of information technology have an impact on family life and the way families educate children so that it is not surprising understanding of the family and the role of parents in the family is always developing (Collins, Madsen, & Susman-Stillman, 2002; Martin, 2018).

Duvall and Miller (1985), pioneers of family development studies, specifically identified one of the tasks of parental development when the eldest child began attending elementary school, which was encouraging educational attainment.

Failure to carry out this developmental task will have a negative effect when the family enters the next developmental task.

The implication of this statement is that parents are expected to be fully involved in children's education. A number of studies, such as Voorhis et al (2013), Caño et al (2016), Park and Holloway (2017), Hashim et al (2018), and Marti et al (2018) show the role of parents in their involvement in children's education has a positive impact on their academic achievement.

Although parental involvement promises good news for children schooling, as reported by Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017), teachers, parents, and community members had different perceptions of types of parental involvement practices. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, and Simon (1997) intensely studied parental involvement and suggested six types of involvement, namely parenting, learning



ICEE-2

at home, communication, volunteering, decision making, and collaboration work. Their concept received positive response and is implemented in many countries. Study by Yosef et al (2018) showed that teachers and parents of elementary school children have positive perception in all type of parental involvement suggested by Epstein et al above. However, not all types of parental involvement considered significant. Barge and Loges (2003), for example, identify forms of parental involvement in education that are considered important by children, namely helping with homework, giving encouragement, and interacting with school. This finding can be interpreted that teachers need collaboration between home and school, and children need parental engagement in order to help them to keep with school works.

The meaningful involvement of parents should be marked by the eagerness of parents to mobilize all capabilities to facilitate children education. Referring to Bandura (1994), these capabilities are labeled as self-efficacy. As expressed by Bandura, self-efficacy related to a person's beliefs about his ability to produce a specified achievement. It determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave accordingly. In this sense, self-efficacy can be seen in various contexts where the doer and the context in which an effective behavior is displayed. In term of parental involvement in education, self-efficacy is considered as an important predictor of the functioning of parents in it.

Moreover, it can be the target of intervention in order to increase their involvement in children's education.

Parental self-efficacy can actually be a sign of the possible intensity of parental involvement in children's education. Pennel et al (2012) tried to describe the relationship between the sources of parental self-efficacy, parental self-efficacy expectations, and parental behavior, with the understanding that parenting behavior was an outcome of parental self-efficacy expectations, and parental self-efficacy expectations were sourced from perceived self-efficacy.

It is assumed that strong parental self-efficacy will make them a time of confidence in helping children's learning within their limits. Such parents will approach difficult tasks as a challenge that must be mastered and not a threat that must be avoided. Such an effective view will foster intrinsic interest and deep involvement in various types of involvement, for example their involvement helping children learning at home. Parents will set challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to their involvement in children's education. They are able to increase and sustain efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recovered their confidence after experiencing the failure in question. Parents who have strong self-efficacy can approach threatening situations with the assurance that they can control themselves.



ICEE-2

Teachers are aware that schools will benefit from parental involvement. Parents can share their capabilities to help children learning in their schooling as well as school as educational institution. Not every parent is able to do all parental involvement activities. But when they do, something must be done with confidence. For elementary school whose want to involve parents intensively and programmatically in education, firstly it should know the level of parental self-efficacy in such types of involvement. Since parents mostly consist of father and mother and they are actually different person and parents send their children to different schools, e.g. public and private elementary school, for some reasons, school should pay attention to such differences. In other words, a holistic understanding of the level of parental self-efficacy will facilitate school in designing effective parental involvement programs, otherwise, school will be failure to arrange parent involvement that are profitable for children and school itself. Unfortunately, researches that lead to such understanding comprehensively are still limited so that study of this field is a must. This research is addressed to answer question what is the parental self-efficacy level to involve in education of elementary children.

METHOD

This objective ⁵ of this descriptive study is to describe the parental self-efficacy level to involve in education of elementary

children. The research respondents consisted of 60 parents whose children were registered at Sekolah Dasar Negeri 17 (a public elementary school) and Auladi Elementary School (a private elementary school). Both elementary schools are affiliated schools of Sriwijaya University. Respondents were chosen randomly from each school. The number of respondents returning research instrument from the first school consisted of 9 fathers and 21 mothers, while from the latter were 13 fathers and 17 mothers. Each respondent was one parent of a parent couple, either father or mother.

Data collection was carried out using an instrument named the SEDO (Skala Efikasi Diri Orang Tua or Parent Self Efficacy Scale). These 67 items self-report instrument was developed by referring to the types of parent involvement of Epstein et al (1997) and the concept of Bandura's self-efficacy (1997), which measures the self-efficacy of parenting children (12 items), communicating with the school/teacher (9 items), helping children learn at home (15 items), volunteering (11 items), decision making (10 items), and collaborating with the community (10 item). The SEDO asked parents to rate their self-efficacy to involve themselves in education of elementary school children by score of 0-100 (0=cannot do at all and 100=highly certain can do). Testing the SEDO by using correlation formula of Pearson showed a validity coefficient reached .72, while the level of reliability according to Cronbach's alpha = .75. The SEDO was administered



ICEE-2

directly to parents and they returned it in a sealed envelope to the researcher team two days later.

Table 1 displays the mean and standard deviation of parents' self-efficacy scores in six aspects: parenting, communication, learning at home, volunteering, decision making, and collaboration

Findings and Discussion

Table 1. Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the SEDO

Aspect of Self-Efficacy	Public School n=30		Private School n=30	
	M	SD	M	SD
Parenting	87.67	10.03	87.08	8.41
Communication	81.78	12.54	82.09	9.55
Learning at home	86.64	9.76	86.05	9.06
Volunteering	77.47	14.96	76.31	10.43
Decision making	72.44	14.34	75.68	13.04
Collaboration	70.64	16.95	75.31	14.12
Grand Means	79.44	15.18	80.42	11.88

The findings revealed that the grand means of respondents of both elementary schools are slightly different. Parent self-efficacy scores of private' school slightly higher than public school scores in three aspects, namely self-efficacy in communication, decision making, and collaboration. Meanwhile, scores of parental self-efficacies of public school were higher in parenting, learning at home, volunteering aspects. However, in term of comparing the standard deviation of both group parents, score variation of private school parents is better than the public schools.

Among six aspects of parental involvement between both groups of respondents, there unique similarities. All parents rate their efficacy in parenting, communication, and learning at home aspects higher than volunteering, decision making, and collaboration aspects. They believe to have strong capabilities in

doing activities associated directly with children such parenting and learning at home. In another hand, they perceive less efficacy in involvement activities that are not directly to support children. The data also show parents of private elementary school more capable in doing decision making and collaboration with community compared to their counterpart of public elementary school. They seem more active to help their children school compared to parent of public school. It

It is more interesting if self-efficacy of fathers and mothers is compared, in spite of the number of both groups participated in this study are not equal. The rationale of comparing them is father and mother to some extent have different preferences in treating children, for example in research by Tavassolie et al (2016). Table 2 show mean scores and standard deviation of father and mother in the SEDO.



ICEE-2

Table 2. Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Father and Mother for the SEDO

Aspect of Self-Efficacy	Public School				Private School			
	Fathers n=9		Mothers n=21		Fathers n=13		Mothers n=17	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Parenting	84.07	13.23	89.21	8.52	88.22	9.58	86.20	7.59
Communication	76.23	15.25	84.15	10.74	84.80	9.63	80.02	9.23
Learning at home	83.41	11.84	88.03	8.68	87.38	9.31	85.04	8.99
Volunteering	76.67	16.33	77.81	14.75	76.37	10.43	76.26	11.31
Decision making	71.89	17.46	72.67	13.27	78.85	16.26	73.25	9.77
Collaboration	69.83	17.14	70.99	17.69	76.85	18.32	74.12	10.31

Data of Table 2 are more detail in showing parental self-efficacy level differences of both sexes. At public elementary school, mean score of father self-efficacy is lower than mothers, inferring mothers are more capable than father in doing involvement. The interesting finding is in communication aspects, where the difference mean score of both groups are very significant (M=76.23, SD=15.25 and M=84.15, SD=10.74). The spread of father scores wider than score of mothers indicates that their capabilities in doing communication more powerful than fathers. Vice a versa for private elementary school, the mean score of father is higher than mothers in all aspects. It seems fathers have capabilities in parental involvement compared to mothers.

Parents, commonly consists of father and mother, have a positive influence on the success of the children learning. The influence will only appear if they feel capable to do various tasks associated to such learning. Study of Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) concluded that parental involvement was more important to children's academic success than their

6 family's socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or educational background should inspire parents not to hesitantly engage in education of their children.

Despite score differences between father and mother self-efficacy to parental involvement, current study shows clearly that parents believe they are more capable in parenting, communication and learning at home than other types of involvement. This finding is not in harmony with study by Kadar-Satat, Szaboki, and Byerly (2017). Their finding indicates that fathers did not perceive themselves as equally knowledgeable about child education, compared to mothers. This perception might be understood, for example, in term of time spent by fathers with their children is less with mothers or mothers are more care than fathers. This sort of finding has two 3 meanings. First, parents have capabilities to be involved in children education at home and communicate with teachers. Second, parents actually have capabilities, but they, as suggested by Berger (1994), need encouragement in order to involve in various school involvement activities such



ICEE-2

as be school volunteers, be school committee members, or connecting school to community.

The present research show that parental self-efficacy is higher in the first three of parental involvement. This finding is similar to study of Goshin and Mersalova (2018) di Russia where the popular involvement was addressed to parenting, communicating, and learning at home. In opposite side, the lowest popular of involvement was collaboration with community and decision making. Study of Zong, Zhang, and Yao (2017) supported part of these finding where parents more confidence in doing home-based involvement. It means parents enjoy their self-efficacy related to home-based involvement activities than school-based. these studies can explain why the score of the last three of parental self-efficacy is lower than the others.

Findings from the recent study should be considered in light of some limitations. First, the number of parents participate in the study is small, only 60 parents from two schools. A small sample size will not give very clear picture of parent self-efficacy. Next research ideally encompasses more schools and more parents so the conclusion will be more confidence. Second, this study has not distinguished characteristics parents according to children grade level, e.g. lower and upper. As mentioned by Lawson (2015), as children get older their ability for independence increases, for this reason, at the younger, elementary grades a

higher level of parental involvement is expected by children and teachers. This study has not compared parental self-efficacy of lower and upper graders. Further study has to address this limitation.

CONCLUSION

Parental involvement in elementary education has potential effects on children learning across the ages. Elementary schools have an interest to involve parents in education since they can share their expertise of first and main educator in in home and school setting. Since parents of elementary children have various level on their self-efficacy, teachers who ask for parental involvement in their school should figure out such level so that program addressed will be right on target. The present study has several interesting findings which indicate parents have strong belief to involve themselves in their children education. Even though parents have medium to high level self-efficacy in six types of parental involvement, they are more confidence to engage in activities related to at home-based involvement, parenting children, communicating with the school/teacher, helping children learn at home. Simultaneously, their belief to involve themselves as school volunteers, participate in making decisions, and collaborating with the community are in medium level. In term of gender differences of parents, mothers seem to have higher self-efficacy than fathers. The last conclusion, although inconsistency data exist in part between father and



ICEE-2

mother self-efficacy, self-efficacy of public school parents and private school parents are alike, explaining they are have similar belief to their capabilities.

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ICEE-2

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ICEE-2

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