

# Teachers and Parents' Needs for Parental Involvement in Elementary Education

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# Teachers and Parents' Needs for Parental Involvement in Elementary Education

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**Abstract:** *The objective of the study was to explore teachers and parents' needs for parental involvement in elementary education. 36 teachers and 144 teachers of elementary schools were involved as respondents. Data for the purpose of answering the research questions were obtained through administering questionnaires to teachers and parents. In addition, selected teachers and parents were interviewed to obtain the context of determining parental involvement. Researchers analyzed the data by comparing score variance using t test and describing teachers and parents' perspective on the context of determining parental involvement. The findings showed that teachers and parents have relatively similar needs for parental involvement across types parenting, communication, learning at home, volunteering, decision making, and collaboration. It suggests that elementary schools should establish programmatic effort across types of parental involvement based on the needs assessment. Required supports system from the education authorities such as government in district level and province level. The support system is addressed to training program for teachers and parents*

**Keywords:** elementary education - parental involvement - teachers and parents

## 1. Introduction

Parental involvement in education activities will vary according to the needs of teachers and parents. Study of McNeal Jr (2014) finds that parent-child discussion activity has a significant effect on student attitudes, behaviors, and achievement. Yet there are more valuable parental involvement activities are perceived important. The work of Epstein has supported the meaning of parent involvement and identified the premise stating that parent involvement should go beyond school and home, inviting a partnership between homes, schools and communities (Wright, 2009). By referring to six types parent involvement (Epstein, 1997), a study by Yosef et al (2017) to students majoring in elementary education in Philippines and Indonesia shows that almost the six types of parent involvement are perceived valuable by them. As mentioned by Hakyemez (2018), parent involvements is definitely significant for students' academic achievement and behavior problems, but they still believed that schools are responsible for schooling.

Involving parents of elementary children seems more needed than middle and high school students. Study by Von Voorhis (2013) indicates that family involvement is important for young children's literacy and math skills. Similar study by Caño 2016) and Park (2017) find that parental involvement in education has positive effect on children's performance. They encourage teachers to serve and apply extension program akin to parenting education in a chosen community as a mission in the institution. Khajehpour and Ghazvini (2011) found that the accumulated evidence supports the importance of parental involvement in children's education.

Gaining insight from such researches, future research will have materials to develop the effective programs for parental involvement in education. Reflecting previous researches either in Philippines or Indonesia, recently there is limited information of how teachers and parents of elementary schools have common needs of parental involvement in education. Studying this topic is urgent in order to develop a

suitable program of parental involvement, a program that fulfills teachers and parents' needs. A deep understanding of how teachers and parents needs for parent involvement in education will be a cornerstone to predict continuity of education effort between home and school.

As continuing effort of understanding parental involvement in education that has been recently initiated by researchers of Sriwijaya University, where it merely focuses on students' perception, this proposed study will understand more widely parental involvement according to teacher and parent perspectives. Results of the research are needed in order to support the implementation of new curriculum named the Curriculum 2013 which required teachers to involve parents in teacher learning. Specifically, the objective of the study is to describe the needs of Indonesian teacher and parents for parental involvement in elementary education.

## 2. Methods

To achieve the objectives, this study chose descriptive research as its design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). Three affiliated elementary schools of Sriwijaya University selected randomly participated in this research. All schools were public elementary schools (Sekolah Dasar Negeri: SDN). They consisted of SDN 21, SDN 157, and SDN 238 in Palembang, Indonesia. Each of affiliated school was represented by teachers and parents who were selected randomly. The number of teachers and parents participated voluntarily were 36 and 154.

A questionnaire for teachers and a questionnaire for parents were developed in order to gather data of teachers and parents' needs for parental involvement in education. The questionnaires were developed based on Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement. They were written in Indonesian. The researchers measured the validity and reliability of both questionnaires. Questionnaire validity and reliability was tested by referring to Gregory (2007). The

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validity and reliability coefficient of teacher questioner were .69 and .73. Meanwhile the validity and reliability coefficient of parent questioner was .69 and .72.

Data of parental involvement needs of the participants was displayed quantitatively in term of calculating mean and standard deviation of scores obtained from questionnaires. The comparison between score variance of teachers and parents were calculated by using *t-test* formula.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Overall, the findings of this research show that there are slight differences between the needs of parental involvement for teachers and parents across the types as shown on below table.

Descriptive statistics regarding the needs of parental involvement are provided in following Table 1.

**Table 1:** The Needs Parent Involvement for Teachers and Parents

Types of Parental Involvement	Teachers		Parents	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Parenting	3.68	.50	3.82	.49
Communication	3.92	.54	4.13	.47
Learning at home	3.92	.29	4.14	.42
Volunteering	3.98	.39	3.84	.52
Decision making	3.79	.38	3.79	.52
Collaboration	3.91	.43	3.82	.51

Among six types of parental involvement, learning at home and communication are rated higher by both teachers and parents. Meanwhile, decision making is type rated similarly by teachers and parents. Teachers choose volunteering as preferable type compared to other types, in another hand parents rated it lower. The mean scores of parents in 1-5 scale reaches 3.93 and teachers are 3.89 indicating that their needs for parental involvement are relatively similar.

In closer look at each item, the data for parents is surprising, where the lowest mean scores of parenting type e.g. "teacher to do home visits at transition points to grade level" only reaches 2.97 (SD=.91). The data indicating that the need of teachers to do home visit is in average level. It means that not all teachers are happy to meet parents at their home. In contrast, to teachers, their mean scores of 4.44, indicating that teachers have high motivation to meet parents at their home in first days of academic years. It may be related to teachers not having opportunity to do home visit even though from similar question parents are welcome teacher to do home visit.

Although the main concerns of this research are describing and comparing of parental involvement on teachers and parents, it is certainly appropriate to note that the finding reveals many potential benefits for schools and for parents themselves when parents become involved in their children's learning. Schools benefit from the improved communication that generally assumes greater parent involvement. This communication is expressed by some parents by choosing option of willingness to contact teachers or be contacted by teachers.

The findings also reveal that parental involvement is needed to help children learning at home. Although it is not easy for parents to spare their time to accompany their children doing homework or related school tasks, parents actually have high concern to their children learning. It is normal for parents who often start their involvement doubting and lack of confidence that their participation will bring about much difference, and they may be reluctant to identify what an important contribution they are able to share. In this circumstance, where teachers and parents are in agreement of the need learning at home, it is important for teachers and parents to be aware that parental involvement supports students' behave, learning motivation, and achievement regardless of factors such as parents' education level, social status, family configuration, and incomes. That is, the involvement of parents in this type will works well and being successful only by their willingness to involve and get involved. Teachers as partner of parents in teaching their children will be agent of change that motivates parents to improve their involvement.

One of the endeavour of encouraging the needs of parental involvement among parents themselves is to convince that such involvement is a must. Parents are motivated to provide a support network for children, which is particularly important when they face academic, personal, or social difficulties. A considerable number of researchers have presented compelling proof that must have positive results for children. For example, Mante (2015) have proved that the involvement of parents in the academic activities of the children of primary school affects their academic performance.

This research has proved that teachers and parents have needs of parental involvement across types, e.g. parenting, communication, learning at home, volunteering, decision making, and collaboration. In spite of such attainment, there is a limitation found in this research. It is difficult to make wide generalization since the number of respondent are limited and only encompasses teachers and parents of affiliated elementary schools. Future research ideally includes more teachers and parents of non-affiliated elementary schools so information the needs of parental involvement will be more comprehensive.

### 4. Conclusion

The results of the current study enhance the understanding of parental involvement in elementary school level. First, teachers perceive that parental involvement is needed in order to make children education successful. Second, parents also perceive the importance parental involvement in educating children. Their needs for parental involvement encompass parenting, communication, learning at home, volunteering, decision making, and collaboration. Third, there are slight differences between the needs for parental involvement of teachers and parents. Forth, although all of parents perceive parental involvement as important needs, there is slight difference between the needs for parental involvement of parents in the education of elementary children in term of the order of preferable needs. Fifth, all teachers and parents participating in present study have

logical reasoning to the importance of parental involvement in education.

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There some recommendations that may be followed up. First, present study indicates that parental involvement has been perceived positively by teachers and parents. Since parental involvement has potential effect on reach out effective school, it suggests that elementary schools should establish programmatic effort across types of parental involvement based on the needs assessment. Second, parental involvement in order to be successful requires supports system not only from schools themselves but also from the education authorities such as government in district level and province level. The support system is addressed to training program for teachers and parents regarding how to make parental involvement in education as public movement in each country.

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