

Principals' and Teachers' Practices about Parent Involvement in Schooling^{*i}

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Abstract Parent involvement has an influence on children's educational engagement for all school levels. The objective of this study was to examine public school principals' and teachers' practices for improving parent involvement in schooling. This study used a mixed method to identify the school administrators' and teachers' perceptions about parent involvement in schooling. Data was collected from 64 public schools' administrators and teachers of elementary, middle and high schools. Six hundred and sixty one (55%) of surveys returned from 28 elementary schools, 27 middle schools, and 9 high schools. Data was analyzed with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). For qualitative part, phenomenological research method was used to investigate principals' and teachers' experiences to promote parent involvement. Findings indicated that school levels and teachers' education levels had a statistically significant impact on combined factors of parent involvement. No significant differences were found in parent involvement among principals and teachers who are from different major, gender, and seniority groups. This study showed that educator' attitudes is the most significant factor on parental involvement in schooling. Additionally, this study claimed when principals offer different time schedule for parent and teacher meetings, parent involvement is increased. One of parents is selected by Parent Teacher Organization for each grade so parents might use social media for all of meetings, offers, events, and announcements.

Keywords Parent Involvement, Teacher Attitudes, Schooling, Principals' Practices

1. Introduction

Educational researchers have been interested in how parental involvement affects on students' academic achievement and success [23]. Studies have shown that

parent involvement increases students' academic achievement and self-esteem [12,25] while decreasing absenteeism and behavioral problems [21,33]. Children learn from their families, teachers, peers, relatives, part-time employers, and other adults in the community, so relationship among home, school, and community are very significant [17]. Michael et al., [33] said that if family and community involve in schooling, students' academic achievement and school attendance might increase, and it improves school programs and quality.

Epstein [17] clarified the following points: 1) many parents need more information from schools to be productively involved in their children's education; 2) learning at home, at school, and in the community is very important for students; 3) peers, families, and the organization of activities in schools and classrooms promote students achievement positively or negatively; and 4) community-based programs might be supported to increase home, school and the community collaboration. Principal, teachers, school council and parents who are accountable for their plans and work might design these activities [17]. Epstein conducted research over several decades using a model of parent involvement [14,15]. She categorized parent involvement into six major types: (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with the community.

Parenting is to have information about student needs and interests, as well as families' responsibilities for child growth and development [20]. Communicating is to increase two way communications from home to school and from school to home in order to develop understanding and cooperation between school and home [20]. Volunteering is that parents share their time and talents to help schools, teachers, and students. They might assist schools in the library, playground, and cafeteria for after school activities, celebrations, sport activities and other events [20]. Learning at home activities guide parents to help their children for homework and prepare a study field at home [20]. Decision Making is that parents involve in the decision making process about school programs, activities, support students for post-secondary school selection [20]. Collaborating with the community is

to help cooperation among schools, families, organizations, community groups, and agencies [20].

Parents' demographic characteristics and parent involvement directly affect student achievement in schooling [1,7,8,10,13,19,27,38]. Rosenberg and Lopez [35] claimed that families support children's learning and growth from cradle to career. Many studies have investigated how parental involvement affects student achievement. In addition, many studies carried out that school administrators and teachers need to provide parent involvement.

However, investigations about educators practices and attitudes towards to parent to increase their involvement in schooling is minimal in Turkey. Erdener[24] said that the extant knowledge about cultural influences on Turkish parents' perceptions of their involvement in schooling is limited. In his previous study, parents said that teachers' attitudes affect their involvement, and teachers might guide parents how to involve their children schooling. Therefore, this study analyzed school administrators and teachers practices about parent involvement in schooling.

Many studies have shown that parent involvement in schooling affect students' academic achievement [16,17]. Determining the effective level of parent involvement may be associated with educators' attitudes. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate what public school principals' and teachers' practices for improving parent involvement in schooling in Turkey. The second purpose of this study was to explore which school level parent involvement is appropriate in schooling. Thirdly, this study examined the differences of teachers' attitudes among their major (administrators, early childhood and elementary teachers, science, and social science) about parent involvement in Turkey. Understanding principals' and teachers' perceptions about parent involvement may help to see the weaknesses and strengths of the relationship among home, school, and the community. Therefore, school administrators and teachers may more effectively promote parent involvement in schooling. For this purpose, the following problems and sub-problems were questioned:

- What is the difference among principals' and teachers' perceptions when grouped their education level, seniority, major, gender and school level on Epstein's six factors of parent involvement as described (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community) in public schools?
- What major factors contributed or limited to the success of your school's parental involvement?
- What are the practices of principals and teacher about parent involvement?

One of the key components for students' academic success is parent involvement in education [24]. Many studies claimed that there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement [17,31,36]. The significance of this study was to examine the perceptions of school principals and teachers regarding effective parental involvement in public schools based on Epstein's [16] six

types of parental involvement. Therefore, this study's results may indicate more effective means of parental involvement for practices of principal and teachers in schooling progress. The findings of this study provided significant information that will extend knowledge about the phenomenon of parent involvement in Turkey.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory and Epstein's Overlapping Spheres theory drove this study. Bronfenbrenner [3] stated that the changing environment affects human development. Bioecological Theory [3,4] included five systems: 1) Microsystems, 2) Mesosystem, 3) Exosystem, 4) Macrosystem, and 5) Chronosystem [3,4]. The child is at the center of the systems and each system directly and indirectly affects the learning of individuals. The relationship existing between the family and the school is a powerful factor affecting the capacity of a child to learn in the classroom [4]. One of the processes of child development in social and educational environments is parent involvement. Furthermore, Epstein's [18] overlapping spheres of influence model demonstrates the relationships of the school, family, and community about child development. Epstein [18] said that the child is at the center as the focus within the family, school, and community. Child has interactions with his/her families, schools, and the communities [16]. Families, schools, and the communities influence a child's academic achievement and success[16], and each component of the external structure of the overlapping spheres also might act and interact with others so these actions influence student learning and development [18].

2. Method

2.1. Instrument

This research study used a mixed method to identify the school administrators' and teachers' perceptions about parent involvement in schooling. The researcher adapted a survey that is developed by Epstein et al. ([20], p. 324-329). The survey included Epstein's six categories of parental involvement with an additional category of the school administrators' and teachers' expectations. The survey contained 51 parent involvement statements distributed among six categories of parental involvement. The survey questions were based on 5-point Likert scale for perceptions ranging from a low score of 1 (*never*) to a high score of 5 (*frequently*). Additionally, the instrument included a section on participants' demographic information. This section helped the researcher investigate the differences between teachers' school level, majors, seniority, education level, and gender and their perceptions about parent involvement as measured by Epstein's model of parent involvement.

2.2. Participants

The targeted populations in this study were public school

administrators and teachers of elementary, middle and high schools in Turkey. One thousands and two hundred paper copies of survey were sent to 64 public schools. Six hundred and sixty one (55%) of surveys returned to the researcher. Two hundred thirty three (35.2%) participants were from 28 elementary schools, two hundred sixty (39.3%) participants were from 27 middle schools, and one hundred sixty eight (25.4%) participants were from 9 high schools in the city of Bursa, Turkey. Participants were not required to provide any identifying information. The anonymity of the subjects strengthens the validity of the instrument and the study. The means and standard deviations of participants demographic are represented in Table 1.

In this study, there were three hundred and forty two (51.7%) male participants and three hundred and five (46.1) female participants. Nevertheless, fourteen (2.1%) participants did not specify their gender. Sixty four (9.7%) participants had some college degrees, 567 (85.8%) participants had bachelor's degrees, and 30 (4.5%) participants had graduate degrees. One hundred sixty three (24.7%) participants have taught between 0-5 years; one hundred and twenty (18.2%) participants have taught between 5-10 years; one hundred thirty one (19.8%) participants have taught between 10-20 years; one hundred and fifteen (17.4%) participants have taught between 20-25 years; and one hundred and thirteen (17.1%) participants have taught between 26 and more years. Nineteen (2.9%) participants did not state about their seniority. Seventy seven (11.6%) participants were school administrators; one hundred and twenty four (18.8%) participants were social science teachers; two hundred and fifteen (32.5%) participants were early childhood and elementary teachers; one hundred seven (16.2%) participants were science teachers; and one hundred twenty seven (19.2%) participants were teaching other courses. Nevertheless, eleven (1.7%) participants did not explain their majors.

2.3. Data Analysis

After surveys were returned, qualitative data analysis followed. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Lisrel 8.5 to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) [37] to conduct Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). Factor analysis provided the researcher with the ability to reduce and cluster the complexity of the variables, so it was easier for the researcher to investigate the question [30,32]. Mertler and Vannaatta [32] said that confirmatory factor analysis is usually applied to test a theory about latent processes that might occur among variables. As such, Davidov and Beuckelaer [11] suggested that the researcher

needed to evaluate the reliability of the survey instrument. There were six dependent and five independent variables in this study, so MANOVA included many dependent variables in the same analysis [26] and incorporated two or more dependent variables in the same analysis with nominal and ordinal independent variables [32]. For qualitative part, phenomenological research method was used to investigate principals' and teachers' experiences to promote parent involvement. Phenomenological research emphasizes a focus on participants' subjective experiences and interpretations about phenomena[6]. The authors clarified that primary goal of phenomenological research method is to return to embodied, and experiential meanings of participants.

3. Results

The data were collected from 661 elementary, middle and high school teachers in Turkey. Confirmatory factor analysis was to confirm Epstein's survey that explains the six types of parental involvement factors by using LISREL 8.5 that is the analytical computer program. Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the study; the reliability was 0.968 of 51 items. After Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted, the factors were determined according to Epstein's typology labels. Factor 1 was labeled Parenting, and contained seven items. The reliability of the Parenting factor was 0.841 of 7 items by using Cronbach's alpha. Factor 2 was labeled the Communicating, and contained fourteen items. The reliability of Communicating factor was 0.880 of 14 items. Factor 3 was labeled the Volunteering, and contained eight items. The reliability of the Volunteering factor was 0.890 of 8 items. Factor 4 was labeled the Learning at Home and contained seven items. The reliability of the Learning at Home factor was 0.898 of 7 items. Factor 5 was labeled the Decision Making, and contained eleven items. The reliability of the Decision Making factor was 0.891 of 11 items. The last factor was labeled the Collaborating with the Community and contained four items. The reliability of the Collaborating with the Community factor was 0.880 of 4 items.

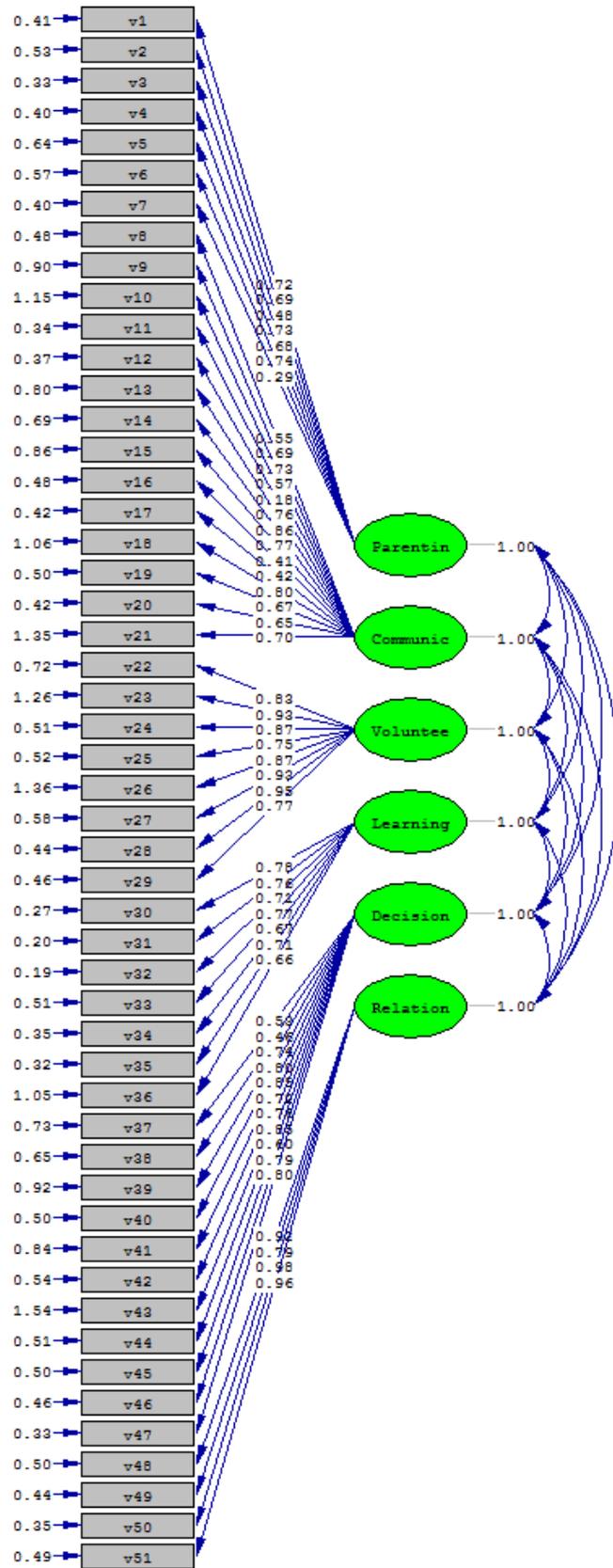
Büyüköztürk, Şekercioğlu and Çokluk [5] described that factor analysis patterns factors by using existing model and variables. There are different good fit indexes about the decision of the good fit indexes of models. For this indexes, the values are excellent and acceptable ([2,29,39]). The figure of the survey's confirmatory factor analysis is shown in Figure 1 and the results of the survey's confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic

		School	Major	Gender	Education Level	Seniority
N	Valid	661	650	647	661	642
	Missing	0	11	14	0	19
	Mean	1.90	3.13	1.47	1.95	2.84
	SE of Mean	.030	.050	.020	.015	.057
	Median	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00
	Mode	2	3	1	2	1
	SD	.773	1.264	.500	.374	1.436
	Variance	.598	1.597	.250	.140	2.062
	Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
	Maximum	3	5	2	3	5
	Sum	1257	2033	952	1288	1821

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Good Fit Indexes

	Good fit Values	Results	Decision
χ^2		3265.97	
sd		1139	
χ^2/sd	<3= Excellent	2.867	Accepted
GFI	>.95= Excellent	0.84	Acceptable
AGFI	>.90 (AGFI).95< = Good fit	0.81	Acceptable
CFI	>.95= Excellent	0.99	Accepted
NFI	>.95= Excellent	0.98	Accepted
NNFI	>.95= Excellent	0.99	Accepted
SRMR	<.05= Excellent	0.057	Accepted
RMR	>.05=RMR<.081= Good fit	0.067	Accepted
RMSEA	<.05= Excellent	0.053	Accepted
RFI	>.95= Excellent	0.98	Accepted
IFI	>.95=Excellent	0.99	Accepted



Chi-Square=3265.97, df=1139, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.053

Figure 1. The Path Diagram of Parent Involvement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) presented that the results of the values for good fit indexes of parent involvement survey were excellent or acceptable. According to the good fit indexes, the model is practical. Then, the full Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The output interpretations begin with the results of Box's test [32]. The results of the Box's test of equality of variance, $F(588, 15479.3) = 1.158, p = 0.006$. The Box's test was significant and the groups were unequal, so the Pillai's Trace was chosen. A violation of this assumption of homoscedasticity will not prove fatal to analysis; despite this, a more robust multivariate test statistics, Pillai's Trace, was used to interpret the multivariate results [32].

The results of the multivariate test of the perceptions of school administrators and teachers about parent involvement indicated that school level [Pillai's Trace = 0.054, $F(12, 994) = 2.316, p = 0.006$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.027$] is significantly affecting the combined dependent variables of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community. Education level of participants [Pillai's Trace = 0.043, $F(12, 994) = 1.810, p = 0.042$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.021$] is significantly affecting the combined dependent variables of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community. Education level by Gender interaction [Pillai's Trace = 0.06, $F(12, 994) = 2.541, p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.030$] is significantly affecting the combined dependent variables of Parent Involvement. Education level by Seniority interaction [Pillai's Trace = 0.087, $F(30, 2500) = 1.473, p = 0.047$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.017$] is significantly affecting the combined dependent variables of Parent Involvement. Major by Gender by Seniority interaction [Pillai's Trace = 0.190, $F(66, 3006) = 1.489, p = 0.007$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.032$] is significantly affecting the combined dependent variables of Parent Involvement. Major, Gender, and Seniority do not statistically affect the combined dependent variables of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community. The results of multivariate test of the perceptions of school administrators and teachers about parent involvement are presented in Table 3.

A Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted as a follow-up test. Education by Gender interaction $F(5, 501) = 4.483, p = 0.012$, significantly affects the Parenting. A post-hoc analysis was conducted using the Tukey procedure, to determine where the differences were within the parent involvement factors for education level and school level of public school administrators and teachers. Post-hoc test compare significant differences between the high school level, middle school level and elementary school level on parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and the community collaboration. There are no significant differences between the high school level, middle school level and elementary school level on parenting, and decision-making. Nevertheless, communicating of parent involvement scores is higher on high school administrators and teachers than middle school and elementary school administrators and teachers. Moreover, volunteering and learning at home of parent involvement scores is higher on elementary school administrators and teachers than middle school administrators and teachers and also volunteering is higher on middle school administrators and teachers than high school administrators and teachers. Furthermore, the post hoc comparison yielded a significant difference between high school level, middle school level and elementary school level, with the community collaboration scoring higher on high school administrators and teachers than middle school and elementary school administrators and teachers.

There are no significant differences between the education level of school administrators and teachers on parenting, and learning at home. In addition, the post hoc comparison yielded a significant difference between the education level of school administrators and teachers, with the communicating, volunteering, and decision-making scores higher on school administrators and teachers who have some college degrees than school administrators and teachers who have Bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, communicating, and the collaboration with community of parent involvement scores is higher on school administrators and teachers who have Master's degrees than school administrators and teachers who have Bachelor's degrees.

Table 3. Multivariate Test

		Multivariate Tests ^a							
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^d
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.865	530.28	6.000	496.000	.000	.865	3181.679	1.000
School	Pillai's Trace	.054	2.316	12.000	994.000	.006	.027	27.795	.963
Major	Pillai's Trace	.055	1.160	24.000	1996.000	.268	.014	27.842	.895
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.009	.728	6.000	496.000	.627	.009	4.367	.290
Ed. Level	Pillai's Trace	.043	1.810	12.000	994.000	.042	.021	21.724	.894
Seniority	Pillai's Trace	.058	1.230	24.000	1996.000	.203	.015	29.523	.917
Gender *	Pillai's Trace	.060	2.541	12.000	994.000	.003	.030	30.490	.978
Ed. Level	Pillai's Trace	.087	1.473	30.000	2500.000	.047	.017	44.176	.986
Seniority * Ed. Level	Pillai's Trace	.087	1.473	30.000	2500.000	.047	.017	44.176	.986
Major * Gender * Seniority	Pillai's Trace	.190	1.489	66.000	3006.000	.007	.032	98.286	1.000

Note. Computed using alpha = .05

4. Conclusion and Discussion

After Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied, the six factors of parent involvement were confirmed as (1) parenting, (2) communicating (3) volunteering (4) learning at home (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with the community. Epstein et al., [20] described the parent involvement factors as the following: parenting is an awareness of every step of child growth and development so parents might be supported with more information from teachers about parenting. In addition, parent should attend school activities as a volunteer to increase relationship with teachers and principals so parents might be a part of the decision-making process for school programs, events and their children career plans. Moreover, teachers might support parents to be aware of their child's talents, skills, and abilities. In this manner, parents monitoring and discussing the schooling process at home with their children.

The six factors were used as dependent variables to conduct the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). The findings indicated that school level and administrators' and teachers' education level significantly affected the combined parent involvement factors of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the community. On the other hand, major, gender and seniority of administrators and teachers did not significantly affect the combined dependent variables of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the community. Child's cognitive development and academic achievement are affected by parents [28].

The interaction between education level and gender significantly affected the combined dependent variables of parent involvement. Also, the interaction between seniority and education level significantly affected the combined dependent variables of parent involvement. In addition, the interaction among major, gender and seniority significantly affected the combined dependent variables of parent involvement. Moreover, the results of the follow-up test, the Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), indicated that the interaction between gender and education level of independent variables affected the Parenting factor. The profile of plot is also going to be presented about the significant interaction between gender and education level on parenting factor. According to the plot, female teachers who have some college degrees and male teachers who have masters and doctoral degrees are more likely effective on parenting of parent involvement factors.

According to Creswell [9], qualitative research method focuses on an essential phenomenon and is established via participants' perceptions. Yıldırım and Şimşek [40] said that data analysis in phenomenological study represent participants' background and experiences. In this study, quantitative questionnaire was not enough to explore the perspectives of principals and teachers about parent involvement, so it was supported by qualitative part with

phenomenological research questions. According to principals and teachers, the primary factors which contribute parent involvement are parent education level, parents' perspectives about schooling, students' choice of profession, teachers' attitudes and willingness about collaboration with family, communication, and social & cultural activities. In addition, participants also emphasized that student achievement, community where family lives, child growth and development, well-educated teachers, communication among family members, income and school community are other factors to increase parent involvement in schooling. Parent education level is highly stressed by principals and teachers. Erdener [24] carried a research out about parent involvement by collecting data from 578 parents and found that educated parents and society affect student achievement because these groups of people have better communication with teachers and principals. They were attending school activities and events. Educated parents are involved in the decision making process about their children's post-secondary education plans, career plans [24].

On the other hand, principals and teachers said that the primary factors which limited parent involvement are low income, parent education level, indifference about schooling, family disturbance, unsuccessful students, teachers' attitudes, heavy workloads of both parents or single parents, and Turkish education system. Moreover, participants explained that intolerance, prejudice of families about school and teachers, social media, and bullying are other factors to limit parent involvement in schooling. Teachers said that income is most important factor for families, because schools budgets are not enough and they need family support to increase education quality. Low income families have to work lots of hours, so they are not involved social events at school. They have not even attended parent-teacher meeting yet. The finding is consistent with previous studies indicated that parents who work in minimum wage jobs and long hours might not be involved in many school activities because they lack the time [7,25,27,34]. Turkish education system is changed a few times and some educators think that the changes are not planned very well. The Ministry of National Education is the biggest government department which has more than a million employees and 18 million students. For this reason, the education system might require professional development for the school administrators and teachers about increasing parent involvement in their children's schooling.

Finally, principals and teachers said that they make effort to increase parent involvement. Parent-teacher meetings, home visiting, communication, guide families about schooling and social-cultural activities like reading, drama, celebrating national days, tea hours, and festivals are arranged by schools. Principals sometimes use different time schedule to increase parent attendance. Because, the attendance rate usually is not higher than fifty percent (50%). Educators stressed parents' guidance to monitor students' activities, growth and development. By the way, teachers make student coaching which are described as to guide

individual learning methods, abilities and skills for each student. In addition, reading activities with parents and students together help to promote parents willingness for schooling process and increase communication among teacher, parent and student. Principal especially remark the importance of seminars about home, school and the community collaboration.

Note

*The abstract of this paper was presented at 2nd International Conference on Lifelong Learning and Leadership for All (ICLEL-16), in Liepaja on July, 21-23, 2016.

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ⁱ The study is supported by Balıkesir University: BAP Project No: 2015/001