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Research Article

Epstein's model of parental involvement: Parent perceptions in urban schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of frequency and effectiveness regarding parental involvement among various demographic groups (ethnicity, education level, socio-economic status, number of children in the home) based on Epstein's (2007) six typologies of parental involvement. Parents were asked to reflect on the degree to which their child's school carried out the activities informed by the six parental involvement typologies of Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement (i.e., parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community). Findings indicated that parents in this study had significantly different views regarding the implementation of effective parental involvement behaviors by schools. Results from the study will provide districts with knowledge on how to better serve parents as well as close the gap in communication between home and school.

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Epstein'in ebeveyn katılımı modeli: Kentsel okullarda ebeveyn algıları

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Epstein'in (2007) altı ebeveyn katılımı tipolojisine (etnisite, eğitim düzeyi, sosyo-ekonomik durum, evdeki çocuk sayısı) dayanarak çeşitli demografik gruplar arasında ebeveynlerin ebeveyn katılımına ilişkin sıklık ve etkinlik algıları bakımından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olup olmadığını tespit etmektir. Ebeveynlerden, çocuklarının okulunun, Epstein'in Ebeveyn Katılımı Modelinin altı ebeveyn katılımı tipolojisi tarafından bildirilen faaliyetleri (ebeveynlik, iletişim, gönüllülük, evde öğrenme, karar verme ve işbirliği yapma gibi.) gerçekleştirme derecesini ifade etmeleri istenmiştir. Bulgular, bu çalışmadaki ebeveynlerin etkili ebeveyn katılımı davranışlarının okullar tarafından uygulanmasına ilişkin olarak oldukça farklı görüşlere sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçlar bölgelere, ailelere nasıl daha iyi hizmet edeceklerinin yanı sıra ev ve okul arasındaki iletişimdeki boşluğu kapatmak konusunda bilgi sağlayacaktır.

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Anahtar kelimeler
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Introduction

There is robust research about the different factors that influence student achievement. While teacher skill and communication is important, there are a number of influential factors for student success that happen outside of school. In fact, research shows that supportive behavior from parents or guardians correlates with student achievement (Scharton, 2019). However, not all researchers agree with this theory as not all parental ethnic groups, nor all parental socio-economic groups, have reported that they feel welcomed by school. The challenge to engage parents remains for most school districts in the United States (Hayes, 2013).

Although researchers disagree on the benefits of parental involvement for all age groups (Ferrara, 2015; Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams, & Keating, 2009), most researchers agree that parental involvement is academically beneficial for children (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). The educational needs of students have increased along with testing standards, state expectations, and graduation requirements (Allen & Mintron, 2010; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Craft, 2003). Jeynes (2007) noticed, "When families, community groups, and schools work together to support learning, children tend to stay in school longer, do better in school, and like school more" (p. 85). Jeynes, along with Epstein (2007), Garrett (2008), Gordon and Louis (2009), and Hornby (2011) reported that students who had regular parental involvement earned higher grades and test scores, enrolled in higher-level programs, attended school more regularly, earned credits to be promoted, had better social skills, showed improved behavior, and adapted well to school resulting in graduation. With these facts in mind, research was warranted on the benefits of parents' perceptions of parental involvement.

Most research on parental involvment suggests that it will positively affect student attendance, behavior, and success (Jeyne, 2007). Other researchers, such as Comer (2005), Desimone (1999), Epstein (2001), Garrett (2008), and Zellman and Waterman (1998), studied parental involvement and its effects on the educational process and concluded that parental involvement was the core of a successful adolescent. Although research shows the importance of having parents involved, many families are overwhelmingly faced with unpredictable schedules such as juggling school, sports, family, and other responsibilities, which allows minimal time to provide support to anyone given area (Swap, 1993). When parents are absent in the academic process of their children, the gap of communication becomes more significant between the school and the home. However, much remains unknown regarding the perceptions parents concerning parental involvement (Barge & Loges, 2003). The need for further research on parental involvement derived from a rising acknowledgment of the important role of parents and the home-school partnership. When this partnership is formed, improved levels of achievement and a higher overall quality of the educational experience can be attained (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009). Most parents perceive a distinct boundary between the role of the home and that of the school. Therefore, parents expect the school to be the principal educator of their children while they play a relatively minor, but crucial, supporting role (Russell & Granville, 2005).

The significance of this study is surrounded by the assumption that if perceptions of the parents can be ascertained and the data used to inform the positive practices of schools, the

academic achievement of students could potentially be increased (Allen & Mintrom, 2010). The purpose of this study was to explore parent perceptions regarding school efforts to increase parental involvment and to investigate those perceptions as they relate to various demographic groups (i.e. ethnicity, education level, socio-economic status, and number of children in the home).

Statement of the problem

Growing national concern over failing schools and the fear that American students continue to lag behind students in other industrialized nations have generated strong interest in parental educational involvement among researchers and school reformists (O'Bryan, Braddock, & Dawkins, 2006). Research suggests that parental engagement practices go together with many positive child outcomes, such as an increase in academic performance, social competence, and student motivation (Epstein, 2005; Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Jeynes, 2005). Though the definition of practices that constitute parental engagement remains an area of debate, studies of parental engagement practices within the home and school settings consistently produce positive relationships between involvement, academic, and behavioral outcomes (Crosnoe, 2009; Finn, 1998; Jeynes, 2005).

As a result of the positive implications of these practices, schools are finding and creating more ways to support home-school partnerships (Allen & Mintrom, 2010; Blatz, 2014; Catsambis, 2001). These types of partnerships allow for encouraging messages regarding the value of schooling and prosocial behavior to be echoed in multiple environments, which strengthen their influence. Partnerships such as these encompass parents and school staff working together to foster similar goals, behavioral norms, and expectations for children. Staff members within school districts, teachers, and administrators utilize a variety of efforts to increase these partnerships (Comer, 2005; Davis, 2016; Epstein, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Jeynes 2010). Approaches include school-to-home communication practices such as newsletters that inform parents of upcoming school events as well as psychoeducational programs that provide training on parenting strategies that support academic learning and promote problem-solving skills (Epstein, 1995; Jones, 2010; Boser, 2014).

School districts use several methods to support parental engagement although not all these strategies are met with success (Amatea, 2007; Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Clay, 2005). According to research, that has looked at parental involvement in education, there are many possible barriers suggested for involvement (Allen & Mintrom, 2010; El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Jones, 2010). Parents' perceptions of contextual factors shape their belief about their role in their child's schooling. Included in these are limited skill sets or knowledge base to assist their child or contribute to their learning, access to certain activities, lack of time, and perceptions of the invitations they receive that are designed to encourage their involvement (Addi-Raccah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009; Epstein, 2005). As it relates to home and school, each of these perceptions may impede their involvement. Some parents possess alternative ways and unconventional views of how they should engage in their child's education (Benson & Martin, 2003; Jacobson, 2005). Cognitions such as these may, in turn, influence the number of forms of behaviors or practices ultimately chosen by parents to engage in (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Parents who represent lower socioeconomic classes may view schools as institutions that "fix" their children, creating a safe place for children to learn behavioral expectations and appropriate academic expectations that will mold them into productive members of society (Bernard, 2008). At the same time, parents may perceive their ability to assist in their child's behavioral development and academic performance as minimal and unhelpful. This leads to decreased interest and limited participation in activities that require contact with their child's school (Herrell, 2011; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Mannie, 2016; Mapp & Henderson, 2012).

Although many of these perceptions may not be communicated specifically to school staff, these varied experiences and connotations related to schools may be held by parents regarding parental engagement practices which differ from those currently held by school staff. On the other hand, this may be expressed through minimal engagement in activities promoted by the school as adequate engagement practices (Comer, 2005; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Lawson, 2013; O'Bryan, Braddock & Dawkins, 2006).

Some researchers argue that studies indicating that parents from low-income households have limited engagement in schools present a narrow perspective on the definition of parent engagement rather than the inability or disinterest in parent participation (Boser, 2014; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1995; Lawson, 2003). Parents from low-income communities are often viewed from a deficit perspective regarding parental engagement and middle-class values (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Drummond & Stripek, 2004; Jacobson, 2002).

As it relates to studies that adhere to a rigid definition of parental engagement, parents who reside within low-income environments are more likely to be perceived as uninvolved or disengaged, as they are less likely to participate in practices that are performed and promoted by parents from middle-class communities (Rothstein, 2014). In spite of the NCLB mandate, the challenges of closing the school-parent partnership still exist to a degree (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1997). It was not until 2015, when key lawmakers decided that a change had to come.

Not all of the problems with parental involvement stem from the parents themselves. Sometimes issues arise as a result of obstacles or school-related factors (Loop, 2018). While schools might provide plenty of opportunities to volunteer in the early years, as students reach upper elementary and middle school, those types of opportunities often dissipate (Loop, 2018). According to a study done by Hill (1998), nearly one-third of students say their parents have no idea how they are doing in school. Not only do students feel like their parents have no idea, but also about one-sixth of those students report that their parents do not care whether they make good grades in school or not, and more than 40% of those students never make the appropriate grades to be promoted to the next grade level (Gentry, 2011).

Purpose of the study

Research suggests that parental involvement fosters positive attitudes towards school, improves homework habits, reduces absenteeism, decreases students' risk of dropping out of school, and enhances academic achievement (Allen & Mintrom, 2010; Bandt, 1989; Comer, 2005; Epstein, 2005; Garrett, 2008). Thus, developing strategies to increase parental involvement is seen as a vital component in building not only academic success, but the overall child (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009; Epstein, 1983; Fan, 2001).

Research has identified a number of factors that have been consistently demonstrated to influence levels of parental involvement, including the gender of parents, race/ethnicity, family socioeconomic status (SES), and parent's educational attainment. Earlier theories present family and school responsibilities as distinctly separate, shared, or sequential. The separate perspective basically portrays schools and families as separate entities that achieve their goal independent of one another (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Zhou, 2014). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine if there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of (a) frequency and (b) effectiveness of parental involvement among various demographic groups (i.e. ethnicity, education level, socio-economic status, number of children in the home).

Conceptual frameworks

The family systems theory by Von Bertalanffy (1969) describes the way school staff interact with parents, which in turn, affect children's academic achievement. Von Bertalanffy (1901-1972), discussed the ways parts of a system interrelated to form a whole, which offered the world of the mid-twentieth century a different way of viewing science. Instead of the mechanistic models of the time, Von Bertalanffy's general systems theory argued that organisms are complex, organized, and interactive. Von Bertalanffy (1969) stressed that all organisms, from machinery to simple plants, were complex, and each individual part of the whole should be considered when analyzing the unit. Components of this theory guided the researcher who looked at how school staff members communicated with parents to impart news of their children's school activities.

In addition, this study explored how the children relayed correspondence from the school staff to their parents as well as how parents communicated with the school staff. It is important to consider parts of the whole, which consisted of other elements unrelated to communication, such as the income level, native language, and education level of the parents; whether the parent group was intact or not; and how many hours each week the parents worked, among other variables. Various researchers have used Von Bertalanffy's (1969) family system theory to explain the interplay within groups of people. Titelman (2014) used this theory in his work with school counselors and parents. Sexton and Alexander (2015) used the Von Bertalanffy's family system theory with their work with social workers to explain the interplay between and among different family members. In a study on the psychosocial approach to the family, Hess and Handel (1959) used this theory. Hess and Handel sensitively explore the dynamics of family life in five narrative case studies. By simultaneously studying each family as a small group and as a set of individual personalities, the authors were able to capture the interplay between personality and family as each group worked out its own special way of coping with its problems. Benishek et al., (2016) used the family system theory as the framework for research on school-based training and development for school staff to help them work with parents.

Epstein (2007) created a framework that focused on the family, the school, and the community, with the child being at the core. In 1995, Epstein established the National Network for Partnership Schools to assist in connecting research, policy, and practices in education (Epstein et al., 2007). Epstein et al. (2007) created a framework of six typologies of involvement that included different challenges, practices, a redefinition of terms, and possible

results for parents, students, and schools for each type. Since many schools may use the six typologies of parental involvement as a guide, each one of the schools must choose which practices they would benefit from in student achievement as well as meeting the goals within the school and families (Epstein et al., 2007). Epstein listed the six typologies of involvement as:

- Parenting: Helping and assisting families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level.
- Communicating: Communicating with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
- Volunteering: Improving recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.
- Learning at home: Involving families with their children's learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.
- Decision making: Including families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.
- Collaborating with the community: Coordinating resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, in other groups, and providing services to the community. (Epstein et al., 1997, p. 23)

Methodology

This quantitative study utilized a perception survey designed to seek answers to the following question: *Is there a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of frequency and effectiveness of parental involvement efforts of schools among various demographic groups (ethnicity, education level, socio-economic status, number of children in the home)?* The study was designed by the researcher based on the six previously mentioned typologies of Epstein's model of parental involvement and captured data from parents. The *School Effectiveness Survey* was specifically adapted from the School-Family-Community Partnership survey created by Epstein (2002) to be taken by parents. The same items were utilized from the original survey; however, the verbiage was adjusted so that the items related to perceptions of parents regarding the frequency and effectiveness of behaviors carried out by schools. Data were collected regarding attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behaviors as exhibited by school as they relate to increasing parental involvement. The survey incorporated a 5-point Likert-scale in which participants were asked to rank items with a score of 5 (Always) to 1 (Never), based on their perceptions of effectiveness and frequency. Regarding perceptions of value, participants were asked to score on a range from 5 (Very Much) to 1 (Not At All). The researcher determined internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients for the teacher and parent surveys range from questionable 0.70 to 0.86.

Target population and sample

The target population for this study was comprised of parents from public elementary, middle, and high schools in an urban school system located in the southeast United States during the 2016-2017 academic school year. Availability sampling was used in this research study, which is considered a non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection

from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study (Creswell, 2008). Three elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools within a Mississippi school district, which served 3,021 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The target population consisted of all parents and guardians associated with the students served in the district. The final sample consisted of 670 parents. Little research has determined the exact sample size required for non-parametric tests such as the Kruskal-Wallis *H* used in this study. However, Lehmann (2006) determined that non-parametric tests never require more than 15% additional subjects, thus researchers should compute the sample size required for a parametric test and add 15%. Power analysis for an ANOVA with 2 groups was conducted in G*Power to determine a sufficient sample size using an alpha of 0.05, a power of 0.80, and a large effect size (f = 0.40) (Faul et al., 2013). Based on the aforementioned assumptions, the desired sample size is 52. This study consisted of a final sample size of 670 participants, significantly higher than the suggested sample size of 60. Tables 1 provides the demographics of the final parent parent.

Table 1. Parent demographics

Variable		Frequency	%
Gender			
	Male	222	33%
	Female	448	67%
Ethnicity			
	Black	440	65.70%
	Caucasian	204	30.40%
	Hispanic	21	3.10%
	Other	5	0.80%
Education Level			
	GED/Some H.S.	83	12.30%
	High School Diploma	80	11.90%
	Some College	161	24%
	AA	179	26.70%
	BA	58	8.70%
	Masters+	109	16.40%
Children in the Home			
	1-2	285	42.50%
	3-4	275	41.10%
	5+	110	16.40%
Income Level			
	$0-20,000	130	19.50%
	$21,000-50,000	326	48.60%
	$51, 000+	214	31.90%

Procedures for data collection and analyses

Before data collect began, approval from the IRB at the researcher's university was granted. The researcher then mailed a letter to the associated superintendent for the school system involved requesting permission to conduct research within that system. Permission was obtained from the district to conduct the research from August until mid-September of the 2016-2017 school year. The parent questionnaires were mailed to the schools and sent home

with the students. Each questionnaire was delivered in a sealed envelope along with a consent form explaining the intent of the study and the importance of completing the questionnaire. Parents were asked to complete the questionnaire between August 22nd and September 19th. A collection box was placed in the office at each school for parents to return the completed questionnaire. Parents were also asked to return their questionnaires during the first district open house event. The building principals collected the sealed envelopes and returned them to the researcher. The researcher then typed all of the data from the surveys into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and coded data numerically for data analyses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The research question sought to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of frequency and effectiveness of parental involvement efforts of schools among various demographic groups (ethnicity, education level, socio-economic status, number of children in the home). Data were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test which is the nonparametric equivalent to the ANOVA and appropriate for between subjects' design when the data are not normally distributed (Bordens & Abbott, 2011; Jackson, 2012).

Findings

Effectiveness based on race

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in parents' perception based on race ($x^2(2) = 4.903$; $p = .086$). Table 2 presents the results for the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 2. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of effectiveness based on race

Race	*N*	Mean Rank
African Am.	445	339.21
Caucasian	204	319.93
Hispanic	21	408.11
Total	670	

Test Statistics Effectiveness of Race	
Chi-Square	4.903
Df	2
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.086

Effectiveness based on educational levels

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perception based on educational level ($x^2(5) = 24.851$; $p = .000$). Table 3 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of effectiveness based on educational level

Ed. Level	*N*	Mean Rank
GED	83	393.44
High School	79	372.22
Some College	161	293.54
A.A.	179	351.43
B.A	58	326.90
M.A+	109	302.11
Total	670	

Test Statistics Effectiveness Educational Level	
Chi-Square	24.851
Df	5
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Effectiveness based on socio-economic levels

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there were statistically significant differences in parents' perceptions based on socio-economic levels ($x^2(2) = 21.532$; $p = .000$). Table 4 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of effectiveness based on income

Income	*n*	Mean Rank
$0-20,000 (low SEC)	130	269.80
$21,000-$50,000 (middle SEC)	326	357.72
$51,000+ (high SEC)	21	341.56
Total	670	

Test Statistics Effectiveness Income	
Chi-Square	21.532
Df	2
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Effectiveness based on children in the home

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there were statistically significant differences in parents' perceptions based on the number of children in the home ($x^2(2) = 95.912$; $p = .000$). Table 5 presents the results for the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of effectiveness based on children in the home

Children in the home	*n*	Mean Rank
1-2	285	271.00
3-4	275	348.10
5+	110	471.10
Total	670	

	Test Statistics Effectiveness Children in the Home
Chi-Square	95.912
Df	2
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Frequency based on race

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference in parents' perception based on race ($x^2(2) = 2.346$; $p = .310$). Table 6 presents the results for the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of frequency based on race

Race	*n*	Mean Rank
African American	445	330.10
Caucasian	204	341.91
Hispanic	21	387.71
Total	670	

	Test Statistics Frequency of Race
Chi-Square	2.346
Df	2
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.310

Frequency based on educational levels

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perception based on educational level ($x^2(5) = 56.931$; $p = .000$). Table 7 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of frequency based on educational levels

Educational Level	*N*	Mean Rank
GED	83	450.80
High School	79	303.94
Some College	161	299.09
A.A.	179	366.91
B.A	58	277.03
M.A+	109	300.82
Total	670	

Test Statistics Frequency Educational Level	
Chi-Square	56.931
Df	5
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Frequency based on socio-economic levels

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perception based on socio-economic levels ($x^2(2) = 56.931$; $p = .000$). Table 8 presents the results for the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of frequency based on income

Income	*n*	Mean Rank
$0-20,000 (low SEC)	130	330.10
$21,000-$50,000 (middle SEC)	326	341.91
$51,000+ (high SEC)	21	387.71
Total	670	

Test Statistics Frequency Income	
Chi-Square	2.346
Df	2

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.310

Frequency based on children in the home

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perception based on children in the home ($x^2(2) = 103.079$; $p = .000$). Table 9 presents the results for the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test.

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis H results of parents' perceptions of frequency based on children in the home

Children in the Home	*n*	Mean Rank
1-2	285	304.15
3-4	275	303.18
5+	110	497.51
Total	670	

Test Statistics Frequency Children in the Home	
Chi-Square	103.079
Df	2
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Discussion

Frequency and effectiveness based on race

The findings revealed there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of African American, Caucasian, or Hispanic parents in regard to how frequently and how effectively schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies. This finding contradicts research conducted by Banerjee, Harrell, and Johnson (2010) which stated that Caucasian parents perceived schools were doing a better job at providing a well-rounded platform where parents felt welcomed and a part of the school operations, whereas African American parents perceived schools were doing a subpar job of providing parents with the basic necessity to play a major part in their students' academic success (Bernard, 2008). The mean rank for frequency was high for all surveyed races, which indicated that all parents perceived that schools communicated well, allowed for volunteering, assisted with parenting, assisted with learning at home, provided decision-making platform for parents, and established collaboration with the community. Additionally, the mean rank for effectiveness was between 319-408, which represented the mid-range and indicated that parents perceived that schools were implementing the six typologies but they were not being implemented to the highest degree.

Frequency and effectiveness based on educational level

Findings revealed there were statistically significant differences in the perceptions of parents in regard to how they perceived how frequently schools incorporated Epstein's six

typologies based on educational level. Furthermore, parents who held a GED had the highest mean rank, which indicated they perceived schools were implementing Epstein's six typologies more effectively than any other group. A study conducted by Noel et al (2013) indicated that parents with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved in their children's schools. Additionally, this study reflected on the fact that parents, with a high school diploma, often viewed schools as a safe haven for their students thus believing that schools were doing a great job of keeping them informed on a regular basis. Noel et al's study suggested that parents with a high school diploma felt this way because they were frequently absent from most school events; therefore, were unaware when and if things were changing. In their opinion, the mere fact that some information was provided served as confirmation to the parent.

Frequency and effectiveness based on socio-economic level

Findings suggested there were significant differences in the perception of parents in regard to how they perceived the frequency at which schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies based on the parent's socio-economic level. These findings suggested that parents with high socio-economic levels perceived schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies more frequently than parents with a middle socioeconomic level and low socio-economic level. This contradicts previous research findings which indicated that parents who had a higher education did not necessarily perceive that schools were doing better. However, a recent study conducted by Houle (2014) indicated that parents, who have chosen pathways, not including four-year degrees but technical backgrounds, can make just as much money as a parents with Master's degree. Additionally, research conducted by Noel et al (2013) indicated that parents of students living in a household with income above the poverty level are more likely to establish a positive home-to-school connection than parents of children living in a household at or below the poverty line.

Furthermore, findings suggested there were significant differences in the perception of parents in regard to how effectively schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies based on the parents' socio-economic level. These findings suggested that parents, who were in the middle socio-economic level, perceived schools were effectively implementing Epstein's six typologies more than lower and higher socio-economic parents perceived. Research conducted by Ipatenco (2016) indicated that most parents from a middle-class socio-economic level have students that are normally high performing and have less behavioral issues, meaning they do not normally spend much time at the school outside of volunteering. This fact may have been a factor that resulted in these particular parents perceiving that schools were effectively implementing the six typologies of Epstein's model as they were visually observing the success of their child, which normally results in a perception that everything is ok.

Frequency and effectiveness based on children in the home

Data revealed there was a statistically significant difference in the perception of parents in regard to how frequently schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies based on the number of children in the home. This finding indicated that parents, with five or more children in the home, perceived that schools were frequently implementing Epstein's six typologies at a higher rate than parents who had 1-2 and 3-4 children. This aligns with a study Hutchings (2013)

conducted that looked at the demographics of children in the home with regard to parental involvement. The findings of Hutchings' study suggested that one of the biggest reasons that parents with multiple children are so involved is that they have a support system with teachers that stems from the youngest child to the oldest.

Additionally, data from this study revealed there was a significant difference in the perception of parents in regard to how effectively schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies based on the number children in the home. These findings indicated a significant difference between the three groups, which, according to research by Epstein (2005), can be a direct reflection as to why parents did not volunteer often and had a lack of communication with schools. A study by Epstein (2005) suggested that parents who have less than three children in school at the same time normally rely on schools to provide them with information about upcoming events and activities whereas parents with more than three children in school rely more on the siblings to provide information on what may be going on in the school setting.

Conclusion

Epstein et al. (1997) referred to the school-family-community partnership model, and emphasized how the school, the family, and the community could work collaboratively to influence the development and learning of children as overlapping spheres of influence. This theory suggested that educators provide family-like schools, families create school-like homes, and communities encourage school-like opportunities and family-like services. When schools, families, and communities work collaboratively to promote student academic success, they are conveying the importance of education and informing students of the importance of their success not only within their school and their family but also within their community.

The failure of one party to meet the expectations of the other is a source of tension between schools and parents (Hourani, Stringer, & Baker, 2012). Schools cannot provide all the support that students need to be successful without a sound partnership with parents. The purpose of this study was to measure parent perceptions of the effectiveness and frequency of how schools incorporated Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement based on various demographics. Parents that had higher degrees, such as Masters and above, had low perceptions of schools in regard to how frequently and effectively they implemented Epstein's six typologies. Additionally, those parents with five or more children in the home and those with higher socio-economic status also had low perceptions of schools in regard to how frequently and effectively Epstein's six typologies were being implemented. By being made aware of the differing and similar views among parents, the school district surveyed and other surrounding districts may develop more effective parental involvement practices, increasing effective communication between the home and school to improve overall student achievement.

Barriers such as lack of time, education, and economic status have created a need to examine possible solutions to assist parents with becoming more involved in their children's educational journey. To assist with these barriers, further research should be conducted to address how to deal with these barriers. This study also provided a snapshot of the viewpoints of urban parents from one district across all grades, however, a similar study including a different urban settings as well as a mixed-methods approach to include interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrators would provide a broader understanding of parental involvement to address positive change.

This study along with future students are vital because, despite stringent state standards, urban district students are still falling behind the rest of the nation, standing last in a school performance evaluation (Wright, 2014). Knowing that there is a significant lack of parental involvement and a gap between what parents perceive and school efforts, this study and others may provide (a) a platform for conversations and actions to ensure students are getting support not only at school but also at home and (b) information for school districts when planning partnership programs. Data such as this may potentially improve communication between parents and educators to ultimately increase student success.

Suggestions

Regarding the data from this study, it is noted that educational success should be emphasized throughout schools, homes, and communities. To ensure effective parental involvement, schools may have partnership programs in place that continually develop, implement, evaluate, and improve plans and practices encouraging family and community involvement. Based on the findings, the following are recommendations for education stakeholders regarding future practice:

1. The study suggested that Hispanic parents had the highest perceptions of how effectively Epstein's model of parental involvement was being implemented. In contrast, research has shown that schools, unknowingly or knowingly, can marginalize parents from different cultures by creating involvement opportunities around specific customs and knowledge or by sending out important memos in English to parents who speak little or no English. Knowing this, schools should look to equity and access to involve parents from other cultures. Schools must work to involve parents of other cultures in equal ways, and must ensure non-English speaking parents have the access they need to relevant materials.
2. According to this study's findings, parents with higher degrees and more children had lower perceptions in regard to how effectively strategies connected to Epstein's model of parental involvement were being implemented by schools. To increase visibility of these strategies to these parents, schools should provide monthly curriculum meetings where personnel (a) address what the school is offering, (b) reflect on current data, and (c) explore an overall view of the current state of the school. Additionally, schools should offer flexible opportunities for involvement for parents that have multiple children in the home by offering meetings multiple times of the day and providing a resource community room that is open to the public or bi-weekly community service projects for parents and scholars.

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