



# Double the Effort: How Counselor-Parent Partnership Encourages Child Development

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# Introduction

The participation of parents in their children's educational environment is a dynamic process which has become very significant to the study of education and child development.

This process has been addressed by Friedman and Fisher (2003) who argued that parents' involvement creates a mutual trust between the school and family and a higher level of respect felt towards the school.

Moreover, Rapp and Duncan (2012) also argued for a model that would consider the child's socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender in order to maximize the benefits of the parent-teacher partnership. The role of the educational Counselor in this sense is to ensure a sustainable partnership with the parents in order to create the best possible educational environment (Wenglinsky, 2007)



# Introduction

Parents' involvement is multidimensional; consist of a variety of behaviors, attitudes and expectations. Parent's perception divided into two categories, the first is the positive effect of parental involvement on the educational climate, and the second is the negative impact. Parental involvement has a direct impact on educational climate depends on the level of it, its nature and the willingness to cooperate effectively.

When the involvement is in its right dosage and according to known and accepted goals on both sides, educational staff and parents' influence will be positive. When the involvement is excessive and over-mixed, the effect will become negative. The parents' socioeconomic, intellectual level, parents concern for their children's success and parenting styles; are factors that led to the findings that dictate parental involvement in Arab society. Another component is the factors related to school; the principle's position, the educational staff and school policy. Third, the factors related to the child, which are usually negative factors that force parents to become involved.



# Parental Involvement in Arab Society

One of few researchers to examine the parental involvement in Arab Society is (Abu Yunis, 2007) who argued that parental involvement in Arab society is lower than that of parents among Jewish society, and this stems from several factors;

a difference in parents' perception of parental roles, it's important to fulfil parenting requirements.

Another factor, affects the level of low parental involvement is the perception of Arab society by the role of the teacher as having more knowledge and expertise than they have, which impairs their active involvement in educational activity (Abu Yunis, 2007).



# Methodology

## The purpose

The purpose of this research was to describe and analyze the perspective of 12 educational counselors Arab elementary teacher, 11 of them were female and one male, towards parents' involvement and the effect it has on the educational environment of the child.

The main research tool was semi-structured interviews of twelve Arab advisors. After collecting the data through categories, the interviews analyzed according to the stages proposed by (Givton, 2001).



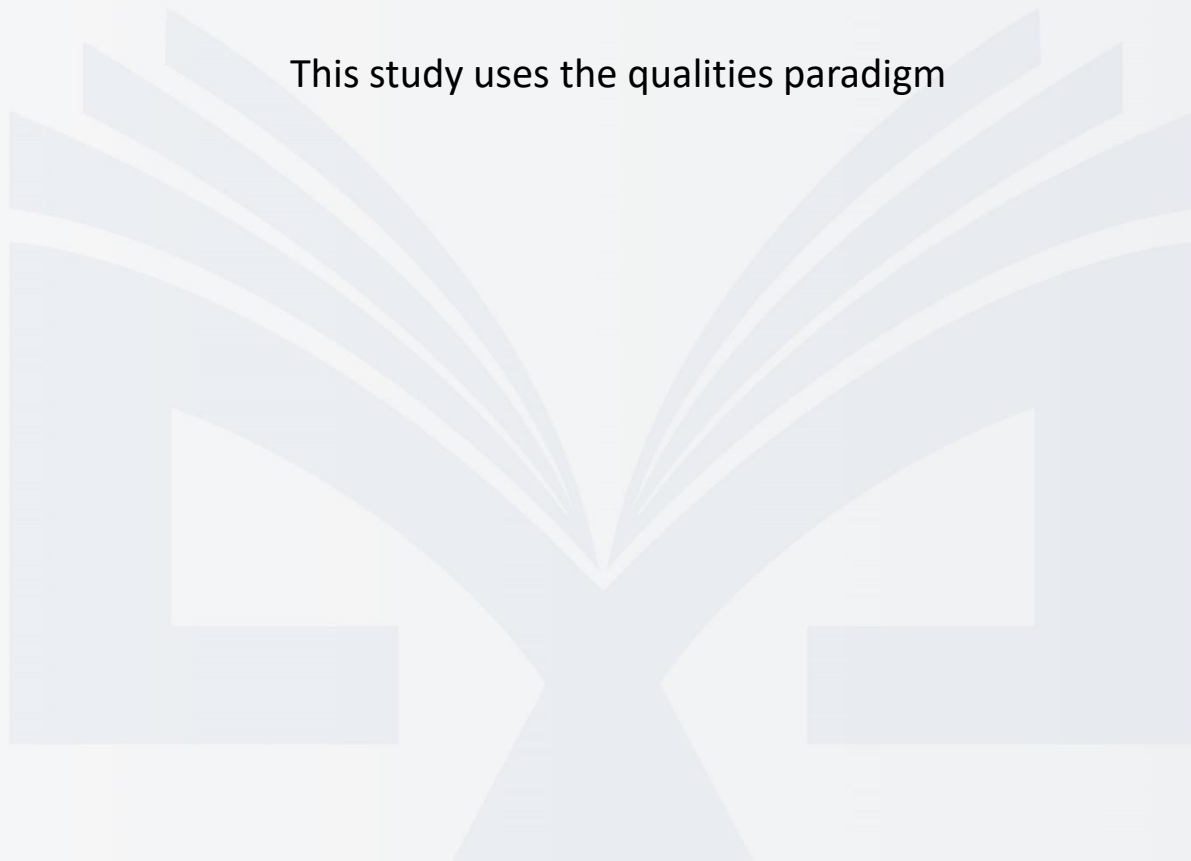
# Research question

The question at the center of this study is therefore what effect does parents' involvement in their children's schooling have of the educational environment in the Arab community? And more specifically, whether that effect is positive for the environment of the child.



# Research Paradigm

This study uses the qualities paradigm





# Findings

The data collection process, which based on the consultants' interviews, analyzed based on respondents answered by group, according to category. In the end, the main findings summarized.

## **Perception of Parental Involvement in School**

The counselors' point of view included reciprocal relationship between the educational staff and parent who is on the behalf of the child. They saw parental involvement as a legitimate and necessary right. In summary, interviews indicate that parents are involved in the perception of educational counselors, including cooperation and interaction between educational staff and parents on behalf of their children.





# Findings

Most interviewees noticed that parents' involvement in schools is low to moderate, and summarized in in the parents' work of committee, scholastic achievements and school activities. It does not focus on substantive matters but is limited to problems, achievements and activities that parents invited to. School's attitude in Arab society nowadays encourage parental involvement. This usually done at the staff and management's initiative, limited to social rather than pedagogical issues. Giving an important role to the educational counselor in developing a relationship of involvement and cooperation between parents and schools.



# Findings

All interviewees noted that there is a significant role in developing parental involvement at school, by encouraging it through activities, workshops and seminars, which contributes to the educational climate and the wellbeing of students. According to the data, the advisor is responsible for maintaining relationships and connections with parents, for both, the safety of students and the optimal educational climate. These all can happen by fostering parent-teacher meetings, consulting with parents, encouraging parental visits by nurturing the training system between school and parents.



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# Discussion

- An educational climate is supposed to give the learner the goal for which the school held a sense of security, respect and caring. The literature describes the school's climate as the final product of the group's activities, in which student, teachers and principals work together to achieve a balance between the organizational, personal and systemic aspect of school. Such a balance includes shared values, social beliefs and social standards (Friedman, 2010). When schools have an optimal educational climate, they are considered to be a place where students can develop and advance in situations of stress and cope with obstacles by acquiring values of tolerance, interpersonal communication, and the ability to learn and develop best (Erhard, 2001).



# Discussion

- It was found that parental involvement in school is minimal among Arab society. This, poses difficult questions for the Arab education system, which supposed to be innovative and leader. If the system is not aware of parents' awareness of what is going on in school, express and respond to the needs of the society through the processes, structure and policy, then there will be no one who will lead a process of change for the sake of more parental involvement in school work and advancement (Majadli, 2005).



# Discussion

- Despite the gloomy picture, counselors believe that in Arab society, schools are undergoing a process of change in relation to parental involvement and its importance to school. In Israel, in the Arab society in particular, it was understood that partnership would only advance the society and the individual achievement of both, the individual and the public.



# Discussion

- Therefore, educators and community members in Arab society are trying to develop participatory processes and develop frameworks of cooperation based on educational models that define areas of partnership among students and pave the way for them to ensure long-term success. In the counselors' point of view, in order to avoid negative effect of involvement; effective parental involvement is required in the one hand, and training for the optimal interaction and positive attitude between teachers and parents in order to bring about effective involvement between school and parents in the other hand.





# Discussion

- It was found that counselors are aware of the contribution of effective parental involvement, because it contributes greatly to strengthening the status and strengthening self-image and confidence when the children's parents intervene and participate in the educational process with school (Bar-Lev, 2007). For the students' sake, and in order to create a positive school climate (Bar-Lev, 2009).



# Discussion

- Counselors note that children of mixed parents have a higher level of self-confidence, have an interest to stand out and satisfy their parents, which prepare the area for their self-realization. They believe that reciprocity distinguishes between self-image and parental involvement. A mixed parent contributes to strengthening the personal self-image, and this reflects on the child and his personality. Counselors also believe that school principals have an important and even decisive role in the level of involvement.



# Discussion

- They spend a lot of their time establishing relationships with community leaders, parents and organizations within and outside school community. These relationships may promote school's goals and meet many needs. Such as, obtaining diverse counseling, locating information, locating sources of school support, identifying new trends relevant to school functioning. According to counselors' point of view, a change in school's perception needed in order to achieve success and improvement in the student's achievements and improving school's organizational climate.



# Discussion

- This depends very much on school's principal who is considered a pedagogical leader, who is committed to formulating an educational vision for effective parental involvement. That vision is an expression of the school's worldview, and the central purpose for which it exists. It is a "glue" connect people to each other and to the organization. It creates feelings of mission and hope, and establishes daily activity on moral positions. (Sergiovani, 2002).



# Discussion

- Moreover, a counselor may lead to parent groups that serve school as a quality resource. He also directs parents to discuss child related issues.
- In addition, counselor develops and organizes conferences in cooperation with parents, who run parent-training programs to encourage social, emotional and personal growth of students during every stage in their development (Friedman & Benson, 1997).



# Discussion

- To conclude, in the Arab society, there is a phenomenon of parental involvement, but it is still at an insufficient level, which requires school to plan a strategy for effective involvement under the supervisor of an advisor. Counselor plays an important role in increasing the involvement in the positive direction, so he is required to give the management an action plan for parental involvement.



# Recommendations

- The Counselor must bring to the management a goal-oriented cohesive and agreed-upon program from teachers, in order to increase parental visits for the achievement of school goals.
- In addition, it should instruct educators on how to bring about effective parental involvement. There should be many conferences between teachers and parents that the contribution of these conferences will only bring profit to both sides and deepen the partnership and quality of student's education process.



# Thank you