

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

Testing the relationship between perceptions of parental involvement and academic achievements in Israel through international assessment tests (TIMSS)

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ABSTRACT

Numerous studies reveal the positive, significant contribution of parental involvement in improving pupils' learning achievements. Similarly, earlier studies found that pupils who perceived their parents' involvement as important, were high achievers. Nevertheless, many teachers view parental involvement with reservations, and avoid initiating parental involvement in the school.

In this study the attitudes of pupils, teachers and principals toward parental involvement in the school were examined, and their relationships with pupils' mathematics achievements. Also examined was the relationships between these attitudes and the pupils' background characteristics (the school's socio-economic status, parents' education, pupil's country of origin and gender).

This is the first study of its type in Israel of its scope, on the subject of attitudes toward parental involvement in education (151 schools, 4699 pupils, 508 teachers, and 151 principals). The data were gathered from the TIMSS study (2011), an international study for evaluation of knowledge and skills of eighth graders in mathematics and sciences. Multilevel SEM Analysis yielded several main findings:

First, unexpectedly, there is a negative association between pupils' attitudes toward parental involvement and those of teachers and principals. Thus, the more important the pupil views his parents' involvement, teachers and principals view it as less important. Second, in accord with the study's hypothesis, there is a positive relationship between the pupil's attitude toward his parents' involvement and his educational achievements. In other words, the more importance the pupil attaches to his parents' involvement, the higher his scholastic achievements. However, apparently due to the differing views of parental involvement between teacher and pupil, as noted in the first finding above, there is a negative relationship

between attitude toward parental involvement among teachers and the pupil's scholastic achievements. In other words, the more important the teacher regards parental involvement, the lower the pupil's achievements.

Finally, several relationships were found between the pupil's background characteristics and his attitude toward parental involvement and his scholastic achievements: girls were found to view their parents' involvement as more important compared to boys, but there are no gender differences in their scholastic achievements. Even so, the pupil's achievements are positively related with parents' education, as it is perceived by the pupil. Thus, the higher the parents' education, the higher the pupils' achievements. Furthermore, in contrast to earlier studies, it was found that new immigrants have higher achievements as compared to native Israelis. Finally, in accord with the study's hypothesis, there are negative associations between socio-economic status and the child's attitudes toward parental involvement and his scholastic achievements. Thus, the greater the proportion of pupils from lower SES, the lower the parental involvement and the scholastic achievements.

The current study's contribution is in attributing importance to implementation of programs for parental involvement in the schools, primarily in low-achieving schools, in order to improve pupils' achievements and regarding teachers' view of the contribution of parental involvement.