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## Adaptation of pre-service teacher form of the parental involvement survey

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### Abstract

Teachers are considered to play a vital role in students' achievements. However, without parental support, teachers can not provide for all needs of the students. Indeed, Epstein & Becker (1982) stated that the job of teaching could not be accomplished without programs that involve parents. In a study, McBride (1991) nevertheless found that pre-service teachers thought they had little preparation for implementing parental involvement strategies. In this study, the aim was to adapt The Parental Involvement Questionnaire to Turkish. The questionnaire, adapted by McBride (1991), examines the opinions of preservice teachers about parent involvement. This questionnaire was originally developed by Epstein and consists of 82 Likert type scale items, 6 open-ended questions, and 10 demographic questions. Therefore, preservice teachers' ideas about parental involvement were compiled by means of a questionnaire based on Epstein's framework of five dimensions of parental involvement. The research was conducted with 266 university students from the Educational Faculty of Kastamonu University, Turkey. The confirmatory factor analysis is used to investigate the factor structure of the questionnaire. In addition, Cronbach alfa is used to describe the reliability of the items. The results showed that the survey is appropriate for Turkish university students.

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### 1. Introduction

In addition to the fact that both parents and society are important in a child's development and education, the society, school and parents should collaborate in specifying children's interests and responsibilities, and in creating a better program and opportunities (Epstein, 1995). This approach, which underlines parents' involvement in education, emphasizes how parents would participate and are supposed to contribute to children's education during their educational process. A variety of models attempt to aid in the description of parental involvement in various aspects of education, explaining content, purposes and participants' tasks during the process (Hoover-Dempsey, Sandier, 1997; Epstein, 1995). According to Epstein (1995), parents are one of the four (the others being instruction, curriculum and setting) key components of better and more developed education. The model suggested by Epstein stands out as the one which deals with parental involvement in all the aspects and is the most referred to model in the literature. This model is based on the idea of creating surroundings which would support children's learning while also enabling the school to develop as a whole. Epstein (2007) stated that parental involvement cannot be

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restricted to a specific period of time or a certain group of activities, but should continue throughout the children's entire education. This model addresses the applications of parental involvement in 6 dimensions: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at home, Decision making and Collaboration.

The studies indicate that parents' educational backgrounds (Epstein, 1995; Lewis & Forman, 2002), their lack of time (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005, Epstein, 1995, McBride, Bae and Blatchford, 2003), professional characteristics (Castro, Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg, Skinner, 2004; Epstein, 1995) and their cultural backgrounds (Salas, Lopez, Chinn, Menchaca-Lopez, 2005) affect their levels of involvement. Although parents obviously play a great role in a child's education, it is stated that teachers and school administration are the ones who are primarily responsible for parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansron, Van Voorhis, 2002; Bhering, 2002; Tichenor, 1995). Moreover, Bayrakçı (2009), Uludag (2006), Ramirez (1999) and Tichenor (1995) noted the importance of parental involvement in the process of education in their studies and emphasized that the subjects related to parental involvement in teacher training should also be involved in instructional curricula.

The curricula at universities and faculties of education in Turkey have been investigated in this study in order to specify whether parental involvement, which is emphasized in parallel to innovations and developments, is actually reflected in the course contents at the faculties which educate teachers in this country. According to the research conducted in 78 education faculties, while compulsory courses remain consistent throughout the faculties, elective courses and several subjects in course contents may show diversity according to the particular faculty. With respect to the information obtained from the websites of universities, it has been found that no course which directly involves parental involvement exists in the curricula. But to develop the curricula, it is necessary to redefine the pre-service teachers' opinion on parental involvement. Thus, it an aim was to adapt a scale regarding perceptions of pre-service teachers on parental involvement.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Sample*

Data was collected from 401 pre-service teachers who were studying in the Turkish Teacher Education Program and the Elementary School Teacher Education Program. The pre-service teachers were at various levels in the education program: 225 of the participants were fourth grade and 176 of them were first grade. However, the first grade students were taking courses including Introduction to Education and Introduction to Educational Psychology in the first year of their education. Among the participants, 273 were female and 128 were male.

### *2.2. Instrument*

The questionnaire was first adapted by McBride (1991) to examine the opinions of pre-service teachers about parent involvement. This questionnaire was originally developed by Epstein and consists of 82 Likert type scale items, 6 open-ended questions, and 10 demographic questions based on Epstein's framework, with five dimensions of parental involvement. These dimensions are; basic obligations of the parents; basic obligations of the schools; parent involvement at school; parent involvement in learning activities at home; parent involvement in governance and advocacy. In addition to these five dimensions, some of the questions in this survey also correspond with parental involvement in general (Epstein, 1988). McBride (1991) reported high internal consistency for five of the six dimensions, with Cronbach Alphas ranging from 0.65 to 0.86. Although the Cronbach Alpha level of Type 5 dimension, which measures opinions toward parental involvement in the governance of schools, was found to be low, these dimension items were retained in order to maintain the integrity of the original instrument.

### *2.3. Procedure*

The scale was translated into Turkish by two experts. One of the experts was an English teacher who held a Masters degree in English literature from an English-medium university in Turkey. The other expert was an English

teacher working as a translator in a company. To ensure an accurate translation of the survey, the best combination was selected from among the two translations. It was subsequently back-translated by one of the researchers who is a bilingual Turkish–English speaker. Data was collected in classes by researchers at the end of the year in order to ensure that participants had taken certain specific courses.

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed in two steps. Firstly, inter-item correlations and internal reliability were examined. In the original survey, it was not analyzed for validity, only reliability analysis was undertaken. In this research, a confirmatory factor analysis, to examine how well eight factor models fit the data, was computed using the survey scores. In the original survey, the amount of factors was six. Two more factors were defined in this research: Using volunteers at school, and Opinions about different type of families' involvement.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was calculated as 0.91. The Cronbach's alpha values and other statistics related to the factors are given in Table-1.

Table 1. Previous And The Current Studies's Reliability Scores

Factors	Number of items	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach Alpha Current study	Cronbach Alpha * McBride, 1991	Cronbach Alpha * Tichenor,1995	Cronbach Alpha * Uludag, 2006
I	12	20,59	6,02	0.87	0.80	0.80	0.82
II	13	25,32	5,30	0.72	0.69	0.72	0.73
III	5	10,50	2,80	0.67	0.69	0.76	0.72
IV	13	23,54	6,55	0.87	0.86	0.86	0.84
V	2	4,83	1,23	0.35	0.47	0.21	0.44
VI	8	25,27	3,34	0.71	0.65	0.62	0.63
VII	10	23,09	5,09	0.75			
VIII	9	19,36	3,76	0.64			

#### 3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The chi-square value calculated for the model-data concordance in the confirmatory factor analysis was found to be meaningful.  $\chi^2$  (sd=2456)=5263,03  $p < .01$ . Table 2 presents the goodness-of-fit statistics for the tested measurement model.

Table 1. Concordance Statistics of the Scale and Model Consistency

	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2 / df$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	GFI
DFA	5263.03	2546	2.06	.05	.06	.95	.73

The ratio of  $\chi^2$  to df is necessary for a good fitting model. The ratio between  $\chi^2 / df$  is 2.06. The fact that this ratio is between 1 and 3 indicates that it is a good value (Kline, 2011). The RMSEA value is 0.05. This index receives a value 0-1 and 0 indicates perfect fitting. The SRMR was found to be 0.06 in the analysis. When the SRMR value is equal to or below 0.08, it is described as being an indicator of a good fitting model (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The CFI value is scattered between 0 and 1. When this value is over 0.95, it is an important determiner of a good fitting model (Hu and Bentler, 1999). In this study, the CFI value was found to be 0.95. Finally, the GFI value was specified as 0.73. This value is, however, expected to be over 0.90 (Ullman, 2001). The standardized coefficients which indicate the relations of items with factors vary between .28 and .68, and all of these are meaningful at .01 level.

#### 4. Discussion

It is stated that parental involvement is associated with students' success, attendance at school, disciplinary problems and social skills at all levels of education today. In the primary and high school curricula implemented in Turkey since 2005, the importance of the collaboration of schools and parents has been emphasized and the collaboration of schools and, accordingly, of teachers with parents is therefore supported. Nonetheless, in many studies so far conducted, it has been observed that teachers do not feel adequate or they have negative attitudes about dealing with this issue. Therefore, it is considered that educating teachers on parental involvement will have positive effects in both their activities at school and in the changing of attitudes about parental involvement. Very few studies were found, either on a world-wide scale or specifically in Turkey, which deal with pre-service teachers' knowledge of and attitudes toward parental involvement. The curricula of all education faculties in Turkey have the standard content determined by the Higher Education Council. However, no course or course content on parental involvement was encountered, except for a few elective courses in some faculties. In this study, a scale aiming at specifying prospective teachers' opinions on and attitudes towards parental involvement was adapted to Turkish. During the adaptation stage, both the reliability and the validity, which was not analyzed for the original scale, were analyzed. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed it to be a good fitting model. Moreover, the fact that the GFI value is below the critical value does not mean it did not measure the covariance matrices in the sample. The fact that this value is low is considered to be tolerable since it did not greatly affect the general study. The reliability coefficient calculated for the scale scores was specified to be .91. Although reliability is low in some factors, they were not excluded from the study since they supported the theoretical structure (McBride, 1991; Tichenor, 1995; Uludag, 2006).

As a result, the utilization of the Parent Involvement Scale for Pre-service Teachers is appropriate in determining Turkish university students' opinions on and attitudes towards parental involvement.

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