



The Influential Factors of Parents' Involvement in Early Childhood Education: Study of Children 4-6 Years Old

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui pengaruh status sosial ekonomi terhadap keterlibatan orangtua, pengaruh kompetensi sosial guru terhadap keterlibatan orangtua, pengaruh iklim sekolah terhadap keterlibatan orangtua, dan pengaruh status sosial ekonomi orangtua, kompetensi sosial guru dan iklim sekolah terhadap keterlibatan orangtua dalam program Pendidikan anak usia dini khususnya pada Lembaga Taman Kanak-kanak di Kota Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode *ex post facto*. Sampel dalam penelitian ini sebanyak 203 orangtua dari 89 Taman Kanak-kanak yang ditentukan dengan teknik *purposive sampling*. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan angket dan dianalisis dengan analisis deskriptif dan analisis regresi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan dari status sosial ekonomi; tidak terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan dari kompetensi sosial guru terhadap keterlibatan orangtua; terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan dari iklim sekolah terhadap keterlibatan orangtua; dan terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan secara bersama-sama antara status sosial ekonomi, kompetensi sosial guru, dan iklim sekolah terhadap keterlibatan orangtua.

ABSTRACT

This research aimed at identifying the influence of socio-economic status towards parents' involvement, the influence of teacher social competence towards parents' involvement, the influence of school climate towards parents' involvement, and the influence of parents' socio-economic status, teacher social competence, and school climate towards students' involvement in early childhood education, specifically in kindergartens located in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara. This quantitative study was designed using *ex post facto* research method. There were 203 parents of 89 Kindergartens chosen to be the research sample determined by using *purposive sampling* technique. Questionnaires were used to collect the data which was then analyzed using descriptive analysis and regression. The

result of study reveals a significant influence of socio-economic status; no significant influence of teacher social competence towards parents' involvement; a significant influence of school climate towards parents' involvement; and a simultaneously significant influence of socio-economic status, teacher social competence, and school climate towards parents' involvement. Finally, in order to improve parental involvement, education policymakers have to consider socioeconomic status and school climate.

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1. Introduction

In Indonesia, Early Childhood Education (ECE) was firstly juridically held in 2003 and governed by Law on the National Education System No. 20 of 2003 (Undang-Undang Sidiknas 2003). In its development, the stakeholders, in which the society, has shown its high concern and endorsement of ECE and actively participates on it which is shown by the increasing number of ECE every year in national scale. Indonesian government has established the standard of implementation of ECE in order to generalize the quality of its implementation in Ministerial Regulation of The Minister of Education and Culture No. 137 of 2014 about National Standard of Early Childhood Education. Indonesian Central Agency on Statistics recently reported that the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of participation and awareness of the society related to ECE in 2020 was 37,52; higher than in 2019 which was only 36,93; but in two years later in 2021 and 2022 has decreased in number 35,59 (2021) and 35,28 (2022) due to Covid-19 pandemic. Regardless the pandemic situation, the data has illustrated that the awareness and the participation of society related to ECE has positively grown that results directly to the optimal development of Indonesian children. More specifically in East Nusa Tenggara Province, the GER also exhibits the comparable numbers: 30,87 in 2019, 32,72 in 2020, 32,59 in 2021, and 32,46 in 2022. The data also confirms the positive result of awareness and participation of society, in the capital cities including Kupang City, that increases in time to time. On the contrary to the data, the high number of awareness and participation does not fit to parents' involvement in Early Childhood Education which is not only shown in terms their willingness to put their children in ECE. The previous study showed that parental involvement in child learning and schooling is importance (Hedlin, 2019). There are six type of parental involvement, not only at school but also creating communication and activity that support school learning program. The six types of involvement is parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2019). The intense and important parental involvement should be undertaken by parents by creating such kind of family life that constructs and support learning activity. Activities in home and environments and becomes an extension of the learning in schools which cooperatively supports children's early development. It is assumed that, if parents more involve in school, children will get better achievement, the presence ratio will be increased, the students' attitude and behavior will be more positive, the students will graduate with a better result and have a better higher academic achievement (Park & Holloway, 2016). By involving parents in their children's education, parental involvement gives schools an essential opportunity to improve the current school programs (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). Parents can interact with teachers or practitioners to make a conducive environment for children to learn and develop. Parental involvement in the early childhood context exemplifies the interaction of two micro systems (the home and the early years setting), the environment, routines, and people in a home build possibilities for natural learning, which should be a feature of all early childhood environments (Hayes et al., 2017).

Based on the collected data in preliminary study through observation, it is identified that parents' involvement of Early Childhood Education students in Kupang City, signified by their child's attendance in the first school year meeting, is still low. It is as revealed by the data of four ECE schools that only 18 of 31 parents attend in first meeting of a school year and only 17 of 31 parents confirm their presence in attending the meeting just to receive students' academic report. Another ECE school only has 25 of 32 parents attending the meeting. Others have 34 of 60 parents and 40 of 61 parents. The preliminary data shows explicitly the low parents' involvement in meeting with the teachers in early childhood education.

There are several factors that hinder parental involvement in school: socio-economic status (Magwa & Mugari, 2017; Park & Holloway, 2018; Qasem, 2018), teacher's social competence (Jafarov, 2015; Sari, 2020) and school climate (Berkowitz et al., 2021; Ekinci-Vural, 2021; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). The previous study affirms that parents' socio-economic status has some indicators like education, occupations, and earnings and savings. Social status in the society as well as the wealth (Marin & Bocoş, 2017; Paik et al., 2019), highly influence parents' involvement. Some problems of parents' involvement are also emerged due to the low of teachers' social competence such as teachers' communication style and socialization method and teachers' expectation of parents' ability (Jafarov, 2015; Williamson, 2019). Moreover, other preliminary studies also prove that school climate can possibly be a crucial factor that affect to parents' involvement, such as school hospitality, boring meeting, etc (Gedfie et al., 2020).

Based on the previous explanation, this study is viewed to be important to elaborate deeply the influential factors that impact to parents' involvement, especially in ECE schools in Kota Kupang. The factors include the socio-economic factors, the teacher's social competence, and the school climate. By identifying these factors, the school and parents will enable to overcome the problem of parents' involvement in ECE schools by improving or minimizing the influencing factors, in order that the parental involvement becomes optimal and the teachers-parents collaboration, which has an impact on optimizing child development.

2. Methods

This study is a quantitative study using ex post facto method. The method was conducted due to the fact that the independent a variable is unable to be manipulated and the result of the study can be directly and explicitly seen through the ongoing process or event. The population of this study is 412 students' parents from 89 Early Childhood Education Schools in Kota Kupang. The sampling technique used in this research was simple random sampling to make sure that every member of population has the same chance to be chosen as the sample which will be helpful to present the true condition of population for the generalization. The result of sampling technique, measured by using Slovin formula, is that 203 of the total population were chosen as the research sample.

Before collecting the data, the instruments were validated by two expert judgements. There are four instruments used in this study: the instrument for parents' involvement (Y), socio-economic status (X1), teacher's social competence (X2), and school climate (X3). Each instrument is presented as the questionnaire which has the parents as the respondents to measure the level of parents' involvement, socio-economic status, teacher's social competence, and school climate, scaled in Likert Scale 1-4 (1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Often; 4=Always)

The gathered data was then analyzed using descriptive analysis, partial regression and multiple regression. Before conducting regression analysis, the data had been tested for its normality, linearity, heteroskedasticity, and multicollinearity. The partial regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of each independent variable towards the dependent variable.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

The questionnaires were distributed to 203 parents of ECE students in 89 ECE Schools so there were 203 data to be analyzed using descriptive analysis and regression analysis. The result of descriptive analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of each variable

Category	Parents' Involvement (%)	Socio-economic Status (%)	Teacher's Social Competence (%)	School Climate (%)
Very high	2.5	0	71.4	3.9
High	16.7	7.4	28.6	36
Average	51.2	41.9	0	48.8
Low	26.1	43.8	0	11.3
Very Low	3.4	6.9	0	0

It is figured out from table 1 that the highest percentage of parents' involvement is in "average" category (51.2%), meaning that the parents' involvement in ECE Schools has not been optimal according to parents. The highest percentage in the variable of socio-economic status was in "low" category (43.8%), implying that most of the parents are in the low category of socio-economic status. Meanwhile, the highest percentage in the variable of teacher's social competence is in "very high" category (71.4%) stating that according to the teachers themselves, they possess very high social competence to run their job in schools. Finally, the highest percentage in the variable of school climate is in "average" category (48.8%) which confirms that the school climate needs to be more developed.

Furthermore, all the result of prerequisite tests allow the data to be used in regression analysis. First, the data was normally distributed in which all four variable's level of significance were higher than 0.05 (> 0.05). Second, the linearity test also shows that the linear relationship of the dependent variable to all four independent variables with the value of the level of significance of each variable was higher than 0.05 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$). Third, the data of independent variables is found to be free from multicollinearity which is proved by the result of VIF value of each variable was lower than 10 (VIF value < 10). Fourth, the data of independent variables is also free from heteroskedasticity with the significance level was higher than 0.05 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$). Knowing that the prerequisite tests allow the data for the next step of data analysis, the partial regression (t test) and multiple regression (F test) analysis were then conducted which have the result as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The result of parsial and multiple regression analysis

Independent Variable (X)	Dependent Variable (Y)	R ²	Sig < 0.05
Socio-economic Status (X1)	Parents' Involvement	0.084	0.000
Teacher's Social Competence (X2)	Parents' Involvement	0.000	0.984
School Climate (X3)	Parents' Involvement	0.203	0.000
Socio-economic Status (X1) Teacher's Social Competence (X2) School Climate (X3)	Parents' Involvement	0.241	0.000

Based on the table 2, it is identified that parents' involvement in their children's learning process can be influenced by socio-economic status and school climate. It is shown by the significance level of the two variables which is lower than 0.05 ($\text{sig} 0.000 < 0.05$). On the contrary, the regression analysis shows no significant contribution of teacher's social competence to parents' involvement. It is found out from the level of significance of that variable which is higher than 0.05 ($\text{sig} 0.984 > 0.05$). Then, from the value of R², it is known that socio-economic status of the family gives contribution for 8.4% to the parents' various involvement while the rest of it, 91.6%, (100% - 8.4%) is effected by other factors. R² value of school climate variable is 0.203 which means that 20.3% of parents' various involvement can be reasonably affected by school climate and the rest of it, 79.7% (100% - 20.3%), is due to other factors. Other than that, the result of multiple regression analysis shows that parents' involvement has been simultaneously influenced by socio-economic factor, teacher's social

competence, and school climate with the significance level lower than 0.05 (sig. $0.000 < 0.05$) and R2 value is 0.241 signifying that 24.1% of parents' various involvement can be explained by the simultaneous contribution of socio-economic status, teacher's social competence, and school climate. The rest of it, 75.9% (100% - 24.1%) is contributed by other factors.

3.2 Discussion

The findings suggest that parents' involvement in children's learning process in ECE schools is influenced by their socio-economic status and school climate. Even though it only gives 8.4 of contribution, socio-economic status has become one of the factors that impacts directly to the improvement and degression of parents' involvement in their children learning process. The socio-economic status meant in this study has a close relationship with their education, occupation, income, social status, and wealth as also supported by several previous studies (Treviño et al., 2021; Aute, 2020). Which states that parents' socio-economic status correlates positively and significantly to parents' involvement in their children learning in schools and in their home. As to exemplify the study finding that the family who has low socio-economic status tends to perform low involvement of the parents in students learning in school or home (Gedfie et al., 2020). There are differences of academic achievement between parent involvement, the high and medium involvement have higher score academic achievement (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). Whereas, those who have high socio-economic status with high educational background tend to encourage to involve in school activities both in cognitive activities and the extracurriculars, attend more frequently in meetings in school, actively give critics and suggestions, and actively scaffold their children in doing their homeworks (Şengönül, 2022). Nevertheless, sometime parents who have high socio-economic status in terms of their occupations neglect their responsibility to involve in their children learning activities as well as their health development, it's come because parent due to their difficulties in managing time (lack of time due to schedule or work) (Liu & Gao, 2022). Except for this, viewed from their income parents with high and low socio-economic status tend to be motivated to involve in children's learning process (Rangel & Peck, 2022)

Another factor that contributes to parents' engagement in children's learning process is the school climate. Though only gives 20.3% of contribution compared to the socio-economic status, the school climate is also able to influence parents' involvement especially in schools. This result is affirmed by previous studies stating that school climate and culture can positively affect to parents' involvement and the society (Berkowitz et al., 2017). The influence of school climate on parents' involvement can be revealed from several previous studies that confirm that school behaviour, in this case the principal, teachers and another educational staffs can impact directly to parents' involvement. For instance, teacher who are not comfortable with overprotective parents tend to ignore parents' involvement, unfriendly environment can make parents to feel refused by the school, and the negative behaviours and complicated systems can also be the cause created by the schools that make parents not accepted to be engaged in taking care their children's learning process (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Syahril & Hadiyanto, 2018). Another previous study that also support the high influence of school climate towards parents' involvement is also presented by Cayak, he found that the school which is so productive to execute qualified programs can encourage parents' involvement (Çayak, 2021). On the contrary in his research finding, in the order study exhibited that the decrease in parents' involvement can also be affected by schools' programs and strategies. In relation to school programs, which also implies the school climate (Bala et al., 2020). Many previous studies have proved that it has a significant influence, whether to improve or to decline, the level of parents' involvement, such as including parents in decision making, partnership program, and character building of education (Berkowitz et al., 2021; Epstein & Sheldon, 2019; Gibbs et al., 2021).

From the questionnaire of school climate measurement, an important note is also stated as the reason behind the parents' attitude not to be involved much in their children's learning process. They argue that the schools do not allow parents to involve too much in the class to encourage students to be independent. The parents become less excited to involve in school. Parents also note that the schools do not have a parenting program that enables them to see their children's development in schools, allows them to be involved in their children's activities, and plays with them in the classroom. This should be a crucial point to be improved by ECE schools in Kota Kupang so that there will be the transformation of more effective parenting programs and more parental friendly.

Except for the result of partial regression analysis, table 2 also presents the result of multiple regression analysis of all the independent variables (socio-economic status, teacher's social competence, and school climate) that simultaneously influence the level of parents' involvement. It is figured out that in the same time, the variable of socio-economic status, teacher's social competence and school climate gives 24.1% of contribution to the improvement and the degression of parents' involvement in their children's learning process, especially in schools even though the partial regression does not see the contribution given by teacher's social competence. The result of this study is supported by the previous study of (Oranga et al., 2022), finding that the intra-factor and the inter-factor of school can influence parents' involvement. The intra-factor used in this context is related to school invitation, perception, and management. Whereas the inter-facto concerns the knowledge and readiness to involve in school, socio-economic status, and cultures of parents. This emphasizes the finding of this study that socio-economic status, teacher's social competence, and school climate can simultaneously be the factor that influence parents' decision to or not to involve in their children's learning development in school. The interrelationship between the variable of socio-economic status and school climate is also proposed (Orange, 2020) in her study that she proposes that parents with low income feel less accepted in schools their suggestions are always neglected and less respected so they choose not to express their involvement in schools. The result of descriptive analysis shows that most of the parents are in "low" socio-economic status, most parents choose the school climate in the "average" category, the level of parents' involvement in the "average" category. This result indicates that parents with the "low" socio-economic status view on schools as the place they have not felt comfortable enough to engage themselves, shown by "average" category of parents' involvement, so that they do not show their involvement in schools.

Out of the three independent variables, it is only the variable of teacher's social competence performs no contribution to be the major factor that influences parents' involvement in schools. It can be caused by some factors of instrument validation, the subjectivity of the respondents which are the teachers themselves, or their choice of alternative answers. These factors are left to be seen as the limitation of this study which can be more elaborated by upcoming researchers in this topic. Not to mention these suspected limitations, this study has affirmed explicitly that teacher's social competence is not one of those factors to influence the improvement or the decrease of parents' involvement specifically in Early Childhood Education Schools in Kota Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara.

The results of this study ultimately lend support to a number of earlier studies that demonstrate how the socioeconomic status of parents and the environment at their children's schools affect parental involvement. Other research findings, however, contradict earlier findings by demonstrating that social competence of teachers has no impact on parental involvement. However, when considered collectively, socioeconomic status of the parents, school climate, and social competence of the teacher all affect parental involvement. This supports previous studies.

4. Conclusion

The findings and analysis above lead to the conclusions that the socioeconomic status of the parents and the environment at the child's school are the main determinants of parental involvement in ECE. The findings demonstrate that parental involvement is significantly influenced by socioeconomic status of the parents and school climate (Sig. 0.000). However, parental involvement with sig scores is not influenced by the teacher's social competence factor (Sig. 0.984). The parents' socio-economic status, school culture, and teacher's social skills have a significant impact on parental involvement, with sig. 0.000.

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