



## **LONG ABSTRACT**

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Research Title:

**Attitudes of Teachers and Parents  
Concerning Parental Involvement  
and Partnership in School  
A Case Study**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Parental involvement in schools is an issue whose importance has grown in recent decades globally and in Israel and researchers and practitioners have made many attempts to understand it and its origins. The central hypothesis of this research is that there is great importance in collaboration between schools and parents and its positive contribution, but nevertheless there are difficulties deriving from this partnership, that are likely to lead to tensions and conflicts. It is important to examine this issue from the perspectives of both teachers and parents. The research focused on an examination of parents' attitudes alongside those of teachers' regarding parental involvement in school. It is important to examine both teachers' and parents' positions in the same study.

This is a mixed methods research study. In the first stage of research, Friedman and Fisher (2003) questionnaire measuring parents' attitudes toward school and the extent of their involvement was distributed to a research population of 80 parents of elementary, junior high and high school pupils and 78 teachers of elementary, junior high and high school pupils. The second stage was made up of in-depth semi-structured interviews that examined reasons for attitudes that emerged in the questionnaires and these were analyzed qualitatively to enable understanding of views, thoughts and emotions (Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2016).

The research findings show that there are only slight differences between parents' attitudes and those of teachers (differences were only found in 6 of the questionnaire's questions). In the opinion of both groups, involvement is a necessity, is important both for schools and their progress and for children of involved parents. Parental involvement is likely to be an empowering process for all sides.

On a theoretical level, this research proposed the Optimal Parental Involvement Model (OPIM) and even a partnership escalator, which helps understand the attitudes of both parents and teachers in structuring an optimal partnership between parents and teachers, to exist in schools with all their difficulties and ways of dealing with them. In addition, developing awareness to understand these attitudes will enable all sides to cope better with the difficulties that derive from it. On a practical level, the innovative model developed in this research can serve principals, management teams and teaching staff to help structure optimal parental involvement in schools. The model is a practical

model, which can guide teachers and parents how to practically execute optimal involvement in schools.

**Key words:** parental involvement, pedagogical cooperation, partnership, teachers' attitudes, parents' attitudes, Optimal Parental Involvement Model (OPIM), Partnership Escalator model.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is no dissent about the importance of parental involvement in the lives of children at school. This issue has occupied the Israeli education system in particular and those throughout the world in general in recent years, from my point of view as a researcher who has served as a school principal for the past six years. Thus, my desire to investigate the issue in depth and to study the phenomenon up close. Parental involvement has been examined from different directions and angles. Many studies in the recent years have proven time and again that parental involvement in their children's lives has great importance for their proper development and high achievement. Nonetheless, it is still not known what causes parents to become involved, or what can be done in order to make parents who are not involved in their children's education become more involved. This research attempts to examine teacher's opinions on the subject of parental involvement alongside that of parents, with an aim to identify the gaps that can be bridged and create optimal partnerships between parents and school teachers.

On this subject, parents' and teachers' attitudes on the issue of parental involvement, studies have shown that there is a gap between parents' and teachers' perceptions, the emphases and common areas of action important to both sides. Parents feel that through their involvement they will help improve their children's achievements. Teachers, on the other hand, quite often feel threatened by parents because in their opinion, parents do not understand the border between what is and is not permitted in their involvement in teachers' work (Friedman & Fisher, 2002). In order to prevent or reduce conflict, a balance must be found between principles of involvement. Involving parents is a process fed and nurtured, while dealing with controversial issues, and not by avoiding confrontation. As parental involvement is a growing social phenomenon, it is very appropriate that we learn how to cope with it, to recognize it and try to direct it to the benefit of the entire system.

Various studies have pointed out the importance of collaboration between schools and parents, but also the tensions and difficulties deriving from this collaboration that are likely to harm school climate. Other studies have examined whether it is possible to differentiate between the three concepts of involvement, intervention and collaboration, and what are the various patterns of collaboration between parents and schools (Stein & Harpaz, 1995). Reciprocal relations between these three variables constitute an integral part of understanding the atmosphere, culture, climate and nature of education that distinguish one school from another. This understanding is likely to contribute to optimal collaboration between all those acting in schools, and in any case, to improve the climate, culture and education.

Israeli society is in the midst of a process in which parents demand realization of their rights to influence the education given to their children at school. As part of this framework, the link between the education system and parents has expanded, which has led to parental involvement in schools' work. This involvement can range from passive activity of solely receiving information to including parents in the responsibility for what takes place at school, which may lead to raising the standard of the school and bring about improvement in learning effectiveness.

Lazar, Guttman and Margalit (2000) argued that parental involvement can be expressed in two main areas: the first is activities carried out by parents at home and directly linked to learning processes such as helping with homework, directing and guiding pupils, providing learning tools such as books and computers and the like. The second area is school activity in which parental involvement can be expressed predominantly by actions connected to school policy determination and informal school activities. There is a gap between parents' and teachers' perceptions, the emphases and common areas of action important to both sides. Parents feel that the more they reveal greater interest in homework, tests, assignments and what happens at school, the more they will improve their children's achievements and as such pave the way to a better future (Goldberger, 1996). Teachers, on the other hand, often feel threatened by parents, because, in their opinion, parents do not discern any boundary between what intervention is permissible or not, and they often cross it.

Research literature dealing with the existing relations between school and family systems has focused recently on examining different types of parental involvement in

schools, its frequency and the correlation between this involvement and children's developmental and academic achievements. However, none of them have made it possible to identify either parents' or teachers' attitudes regarding parental involvement, the gap between their perceptions of this subject and the way in which it is possible to promote this involvement. This proposed research is meant to identify teachers' and parents' positions regarding parental involvement in schools and propose ways of promoting this issue at schools.

## **Gap in Knowledge**

Parental involvement in schools is an issue whose importance has grown in recent decades globally and in Israel and researchers and practitioners have made many attempts to understand it and its origins. The central hypothesis of this research is that there is great importance in collaboration between schools and parents and its positive contribution, but nevertheless there are difficulties deriving from this partnership, that are likely to lead to tensions and conflicts. It is important to examine this issue from the perspectives of both teachers and parents. The research will focus on an examination of parents' attitudes alongside those of teachers regarding parental involvement in school. It is important to examine both teachers' and parents' positions in the same study.

No studies examining both parents and teachers attitudes and discussing the gaps in these were found in the literature review undertaken. Recent studies (e.g. Shamai, 2008; Friedman, 2010) reviewed focused on teachers' attitudes, teachers who involve parents in school or solely parents' attitudes and do not discuss the gap between various positions regarding parental participation and involvement. The research will focus on parents' and teachers' attitudes with regard to the question of parental involvement in schools.

## **Research Aims**

- To examine attitudes of parents and teachers regarding parental involvement in primary schools (Ages 6-12), junior high schools (Ages 12-15) and high schools (Ages 15-18).
- To examine whether a difference exists between parents' and teachers' attitudes concerning parental involvement in primary, junior high and high schools.

- To elaborate a work program for successful parents-school partnership based on a belief of creating cooperation as a strategy for educational advancement.

### **Research Questions**

- What are parents' and teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in primary schools (Ages 6-12), junior high schools (Ages 12-15) and high schools (Ages 15-18)?
- Is there a difference between the parents and the teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement in school and if so, what is the difference?
- What principles and values can underpin the best ways to create parental involvement in school?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- There will be a difference between parents' and teachers' attitudes regarding the subject of parental involvement in primary schools (Ages 6-12), junior high schools (Ages 12-15) and high schools (Ages 15-18).
- Parents and teachers will respond differently to the issue of parental involvement.
- Forums discussions between teachers and parents can help to create parental involvement in school.

### **Significance of The Research**

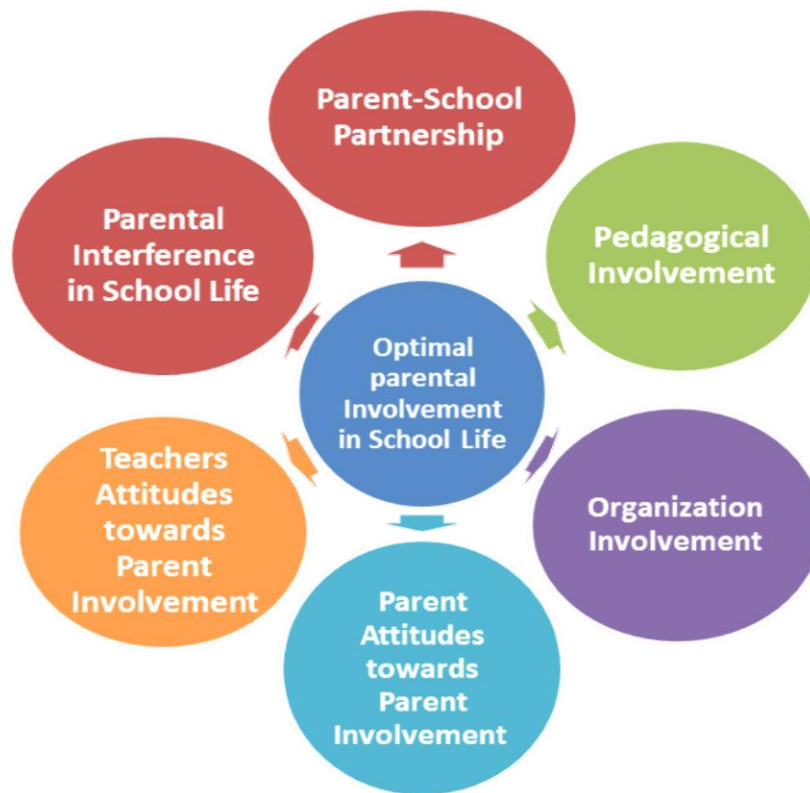
What this **research** is likely to **contribute to knowledge** is an understanding of both parents' and teachers' positions in structuring parents' collaboration and involvement in schools with all their difficulties and how to cope with them. Developing awareness and understanding of these attitudes will enable us to cope with them better. Innovation in this research is examination of parents' positions alongside those of teachers on the subject of parental involvement in one study rather than in separate ones. In addition, the research examines attitudes that have not been studied before and that constitute a factor affecting the phenomenon known as parental involvement. The research is likely to contribute to principals, management teams, teachers and parents. This issue also occupies teachers and parents even at a universal level and will also contribute to them.

The research is likely to add an important level to knowledge in the area of parental involvement and collaboration with schools and can help policy makers in the Ministry of Education, and even professionals in the area and develop programs for successfully involving parents in schools.

## **I. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research draws mainly on theories of parental involvement. Therefore, four related theories were chosen to underpin this research: Epstein's (1997) partnership scale theory, Friedman and Fisher's (2002) identification and alertness theory, Hoover & Dempsey's (2009) influence model theory, and Friedman's (2010) closed door/open door and balance theory. Since this study aimed to develop an optimal model of constructing teachers' - parents' partnerships, seven concepts were chosen to underpin the research. The concepts include optimal partnership in school life; parents' attitudes with regard to parental involvement; teachers' attitudes with regard to parental involvement; parents' intervention in school life; pedagogical involvement; organizational involvement; and parents'-school partnership. Figure I.1 presents a visual representation of the conceptual framework.





**Figure 1.I: Conceptual Framework**

### **Epstein's (1997) Partnership Scale**

Epstein's (1997) partnership scale describes the relationship between schools and parents according to six levels from the basic level of parenthood to the highest level of school, parent and community joint activities. At each level, there are school and family responsibilities.

1. **Parenting** – schools indirectly influence parenting patterns through demands and expectations that children will get help at home: helping children to arrive on time, provide time and space to prepare tasks at home, respond to and support disciplinary rules. This is a one-sided pattern with schools seeking to influence home without giving parents any authority responsibility or influence at school.  
**Family responsibility:** To fulfill basic obligations regarding children's health, education and social development. They must ensure they come to school well rested, fed and clothed. The atmosphere at home ought to encourage adequate behavior and learning.

**School responsibility:** To provide information that will help parents understand child development and create an atmosphere at home that encourages learning and appropriate behavior.

2. **Communicating** – schools maintain formal or informal communication channels with parents such as written updates on what is happening at school, parent meetings, teachers' telephone reception hours, providing parents with teachers' telephone numbers. This is a two-way pattern when both sides can initiate communication, parents have limited influence but neither authority nor responsibility for what occurs at school.

**Parental responsibility:** to share relevant information about what happens at home with schools, information likely to affect a child's learning; to participate in parents' meetings and request information and clarification about matters that do not appear clear to them.

**School responsibility:** To provide parents with basic information about what their children are studying and the school's expectations of pupils, so that parents can help their children carry out class assignments, plan their time and choose groups and activities in which to participate. Schools must use a variety of communication means to inform parents about school plans and programs and their children's progress. Information must be presented clearly and comprehensibly for all parents.

3. **Volunteering** – schools recruit parents to volunteer, such as: accompanying excursions, arranging parties, talks in their areas of expertise. Although this is a two-way pattern, full authority remains in the hands of schools to decide what parents can volunteer to do. Parents are given a limited extent of responsibility for matters they have volunteered to do. This model increases parental channels of influence. In these conditions, it is likely that collaboration will develop between parents who are smallminded pushovers and homeroom teachers who act as if they were "*servant when he reigneth*" (Proverbs, 30:22) or "*I am, and there is no one besides me*" (Zephaniah, 2:15).

**Parental responsibility:** every parent must try and volunteer at school at least once a year. Volunteering can be done by helping in class, training pupils, recruiting resources for specific projects or participating as observers in school events.

**School responsibility:** to provide direct information regarding children's teachers, school role-holders, to propose a variety of volunteering opportunities at different times, so that even working parents can contribute. For parents of young children, school will provide opportunities to supervise them. Every parental contribution must be acknowledged with thanks.

4. **Learning at home** – schools expect parents to be active partners in children's learning at home. There are cases where parents are asked to sign off homework as having been done, to help write personal work, be partners in family roots' learning programs, bar and bat mitzva<sup>1</sup> programs and more. Although this pattern is actually initiated by schools, it requires parental involvement in learning processes. Here a certain authority and responsibility is passed to parents and pupils (for example, choice of personal mini-research work, when it is done, etc.) Of course, there is a call for collaboration providing space for influence, even though homeroom teachers still confine parents' responsibility and authority within narrow borders.

**Family responsibility:** to advise on and help with homework and school assignments. Teaching is the role of teachers, but parents can contribute significantly through encouragement, praise, guidance and conversations with children and creating a suitable environment for them.

**School responsibility:** to provide information to parents regarding achievements expected from children and ways of conversing, supporting and helping children by creating a suitable learning environment for them.

5. **Decision Making** – schools and parents decide jointly and divide roles on issues such as determining non-mandatory curricula, enrichment programs, programs relating to social education. Community schools have an even greater extent of including parents and children, including determining educational policy, disciplinary rules, teacher placement, approving annual budget for events and even activities directed at parents alone. This is a two-way and equal pattern. In this model, perceptions of partnership are wide ranging; the guiding principle for parents, homeroom teachers and children is that the basis of responsibility, authority and right to influence is shared by all. Consequently, collaboration is

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<sup>1</sup> Bar mitzvah for Jewish boys aged 13 and bat mitzvah for Jewish girls aged 12 that mark their passage from childhood into adulthood. After these ceremonies, boys and girls take on all adult Jewish religious responsibilities.

structured acknowledging the roles, knowledge, skills and interests of all parties.

**Parents' responsibility** – they must be committed to being partners in decision making and problem solving.

**Schools' responsibility** – to allow parents to develop leadership and decision making skills, to encourage parents to act in different school frameworks. A system of action balancing the division of authority responsibility and influence between partners.

6. **Collaborating with community** – in these cases, collaboration expands to additional factors in communities, such as residents' associations and organizations. Programs such as: establishing local petting zoos, joint programs for children and the elderly, caring for the environment activities, road safety. This is a multi-sided pattern allowing for initiatives from all sides.

**Parents' responsibility** – despite the fact that educating children is a joint social responsibility, parents must cooperate with schools to ensure links with cultural groups, organizations, businesses committed to children's success. Families must promote these links at every opportunity.

**Schools' responsibility:** to be helped by families in creating communication lines and partnerships with communities and to provide learning opportunities for all children to succeed, to promote parents' access to community services and resources, such as health and welfare services.

Epstein focused on the scale in which schools view reciprocal relations between themselves and parents and communities. Her model enables one to observe and clarify reciprocal relations, but does not provide practicalities to manage partnerships. This is a most general model and is not sensitive to the concurrent existence of different types of partnership, such as teachers working alone on curricula whilst all parties collaborate on social programs.

### **Identification and Alertness Theory (Friedman & Fisher, 2002)**

Friedman and Fisher's (2002) theory, in contrast to the previous theory, relies on the fact that the concept parental involvement is made up of two basic concepts: alertness and identification. Different combinations of these concepts create different levels of parental involvement.

**Identification and alertness** theory (Friedman & Fisher, 2002) explains the creation of potential for parental involvement. According to this theory, parents' tendencies to become involved in the work of their children's schools are formulated by a combination of different levels of parents' identification with schools as educational institutions and what goes on there and their alertness thereof. High parental identification with a school means that parents positively view the values this school is instilling in their children, and that they support the norms that it espouses. In contrast, parental identification with schools means the opposite, when parents do not accept the norms and values that a school wishes to imbue in their children. Alertness – meaning the opposite of indifference – means that parents express a lively interest in what happens at school and its contribution to their children's education, and pay a great deal of attention to what occurs there. These two components create potential for parental involvement, potential that could be realized in certain conditions.

Identification depends on the extent of knowledge that parents have regarding the education system in general and the school in which their children study in particular. Low parental identification with a school means that parents do not accept their norms and values that a school strives to instill in their children, nor do they agree with them. In order to illustrate this, let us remember that in the early 1950's the level of parents' identification with the education system was low in Israeli development towns<sup>2</sup>, with a low level of awareness of what took place there. There were parents who thought that school constituted a waste of time and general waste of economic resources. Many parents preferred for their children to stay at home and could give a hand supporting the family financially. This was particularly blatant with regard to girls. Today, there are very few cases of parents' lack of identification with schools on this basis, even in distressed areas.

Parental alertness of everything related to what goes on at school has grown greatly in recent years amongst many groups of parents (Friedman & Fisher, 2002). Perceived importance of education as a basis for personal success and successful integration into national and international social economies has significantly raised awareness of what occurs in institutions that are supposed to instill the foundations for a successful future.

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<sup>2</sup> Development Towns are settlements that were built in order to provide housing to immigrants, and to ease the pressure on the country's center.

Practical expression of parents' alertness is their practical involvement in what takes place at school. This involvement can be accompanied by identification at different levels and therefore involvement designed to help schools and support them (in the case of high levels of identification) or to prevent schools from acting freely, according to stated principles (in cases of low identification).

Today, one can find different levels of alertness and identification that can be experienced by the following factors:

1. Different perception of educational aims (values, unique education topics and emphases in education).
2. Different perception of methods and approaches in education (treating discipline problems, liberalism versus conservatism, unique teaching methods etc.)
3. Different perception of school and parental contributions to educational processes, and disagreements regarding the extent of desired collaboration.

Based on the concepts of identification and alertness, Friedman (1990) proposed a model to try and explain the levels of parental involvement in their children's educational process. According to this model, parents' tendency to involvement in the work of their children's schools is formulated by different combinations of levels of these two components.

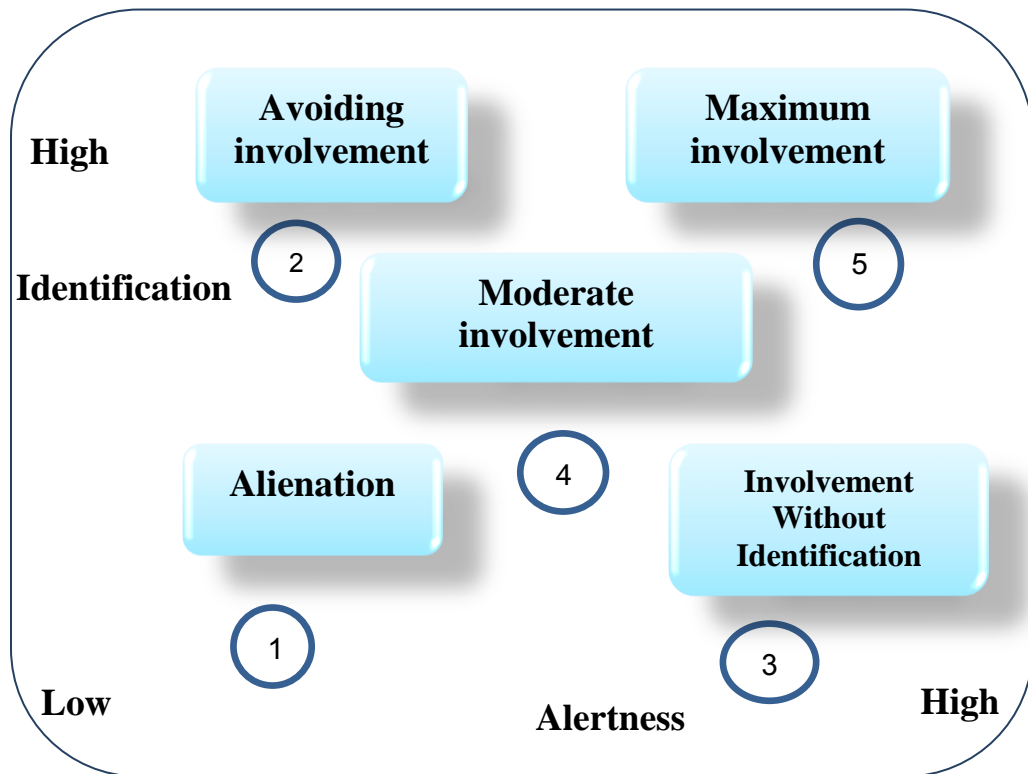
According to the model, known as 'Parental Involvement Potential', the combination between different extents of identification and awareness create five main circumstances in which parents relate to schools. They are as follows (Figure 1):

1. **Alienation** (low level of identification and low level of alertness) – parents are distanced from schools and everything related to them, because they do not acknowledge the importance of their children's education, and take no interest in what happens at school (No .1 on figure).
2. **Refraining from involvement** (high level of identification, but low level of alertness) – parents are very supportive of schools, which serve, in their eyes, a means of educating their children. They recognize the importance of a school's role, but do not pay any attention to what happens there. This is due to a lack of time, a

belief in the school staff's ability or a sense that they are unable to help and maybe even do not understand what school does for their children (No. 2 on the figure).

3. **Involvement without identification** (low level of identification and high level of alertness) - parents are very alert of what occurs at school, but nonetheless they have no consolidated idea about the importance of the educational process for or importance of school to their children (No. 3 on figure).
4. **Moderate involvement** (medium level of identification but high level of alertness) - parents moderately identify with the educational process, but know its advantages and limitations. They believe that they must acknowledge at least some school goings on, but understand that this acknowledgement must be limited (no 4 on the figure).
5. **Optimal involvement** (high level of identification and high level of alertness) – parents identify greatly with the importance of school and educational processes that take place there. They believe that they must be very active in school teachers' work and this in order to help schools achieve their aims, or in order to keep an eye on schools to ensure they achieve their aims (no 5 on the figure).

It is important to emphasize that the identification component is key to understanding parental involvement. Theoretically, different levels of identification and alertness do not depend on each other (Figure 1), but one can assume that high identification levels can be linked to high or low levels of alertness, whereas low identification would generally be linked only to a low level of alertness (Friedman, 1990). The model is presented in Figure 2.I



**Figure 2.I: potential model of parental involvement: The relationship between the dimensions of solidarity and comments and parental involvement**

The current research used an attitudes questionnaire developed by Friedman and Fisher (2003), which includes statements describing attitudes, feelings, thoughts and behavior patterns that characterize parents whose children are pupils at school. Statements that describe attitudes and parents' characteristics behavior patterns, examine, to an extent, parents' alertness and identification with regard to parental involvement, so that it becomes possible to define their behavior with regard to their involvement and the way in which they perceive this involvement.

### **Model of Parental Influence (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2009)**

The model of parental influence developed by Hoover-Dempsey et al. distinguishes categories that pertain to parents' motivation on the one hand, and the factors that influence motivations of staff on the other. They analyzed the factors that influence motivation of staff through drawing parallel lines to those of parents' conduct and found categories that are identical for both parents and staff.



The model of parental influence developed by Hoover-Dempsey et. al. (2009) draws the route of influence of parental involvement starting with motivation for parents' involvement (basic level) and their influence on choosing types of involvement, through mechanisms of involvement used by parents (such as encouragement, setting personal examples and teaching) and ending with the way in which children experience and perceive involvement and the influence of these perceptions on characteristics that help teaching (sense of self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation to learn, strategies of planning and carrying out self-regulation with everything related to relationships with teachers and schools). These, in turn have influence on pupils' achievements. Analysis of the model's basic level, motivation for parental involvement, is enlightening and significant in understanding the factors that influence the extent of parental involvement and type of involvement.

### **"Closed Door", "Open Door" Approaches and Balance Theory (Friedman, 2010)**

Friedman (2010) presented three approaches that represent the social distance between school and the community, starting with the greatest distance ("closed door"), through a balanced relationship between school and the community (Balance theory) and ending with the smallest distance ("open door").

- **"Closed Door" Approach** - represents the largest social and consciousness distance between the school and its community. This approach is based on teachers and headmasters' opinion, who believe that the community's intervention (not to mention interference) in the children's educational process is external, and perhaps even damaging. The assumption is that school can satisfactorily take care of everything connected to the child's education within its premises. Therefore, the community's participation should be minimal, because the parents' presence in school could harm the teachers' ability to perform their roles. Because they lack professional training and have emotions towards their children, parents may be an obstacle to implementation of the process of education and the objective educational and professional judgment. This approach is congruent with sociological theories that deal with the relations and the connection between large bureaucratic organizations and families and groups that live in nearby neighborhood units. In that respect, Max Weber believed that strong family

systems tend to jeopardize rational bureaucracies that are based on skill, talent, and professionalism (Weber, 1974 in Friedman, 2010).

- **"Open Door" Approach** represents a very small social and conscious distance and as such constitutes the opposite pole to the closed-door approach. It assumes that most basic educational processes take place outside school within the family, among friends, and in the neighborhood. Furthermore, the source of motivation necessary for learning in school, is in the pupil's family and daily life. This requires a close relationship between school, home and community. There are only a few social theories that support this approach; nevertheless, this approach is abundant amongst psychologists and practitioners (Bennis, 1966; Fusco 1964 in Friedman, 2010). Many countries, including Israel adopted this approach many years ago, and it was expressed in the "pupil in the center" orientation, which was most common in the 1980's and 1990's.
- **The Balance Theory** - This third approach ascribes certain validity to each of the two previous ones. It assumes that existing intimate relationships between school and community, as well as keeping a social distance, should be balanced on various levels in different situations, in order to optimally reach the desired academic goals. Therefore, the balance theory is a situational theory, which matches behavior patterns (of a relationship between school and parents) and various situations. The theory stems from two possible extreme error conditions. The one - where the reciprocal relationship between school and its community is too close so that the proper professional standards are compromised. The other - where reciprocal relationship between school and its community are too far apart, the required coordination between parents and school cannot exist and the relationship suffers unwanted difficulties. In order to avoid each of these polar situations, the balance theory claims that the optimal social distance is some point on the continuum between these two poles, intimacy and isolation. At such a balance point, the school would be close enough to the parents and the community, so that the required coordination would be possible, but not too close to harm execution of educational tasks at the required professional level.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Paradigm: Mixed Methods Research**

The research paradigm chosen for this study is a combination of the positivist and post-positivist paradigms. My considerations as a researcher for choosing this paradigm were facts regarding the common approach to combining quantitative with qualitative research. In mixed method research, one can measure to a certain extent quantitative data using questionnaires or surveys, tool characterizing quantitative research and whose results can be quantified (Wisker, 2001), alongside qualitative data that will deal with the how and why and are gathered in interviews, a sample characteristic tool of qualitative research. In this study, the attitudes of teachers alongside those of parents regarding parental involvement in schools, were examined. The quantitative part of the research included questionnaires, whose purpose was to measure parents' and teachers' attitudes towards schools and the extent of their involvement, data which can be measured quantitatively and analyzed statistically. The qualitative part included in-depth interviews examining these attitudes, as emerging from the questionnaires, regarding content and interpretation, and were analyzed qualitatively enabling profound understanding of perceptions, thoughts and feelings (Tzabar Ben Yehoshua, 2001). Qualitative research complements the quantitative approach in that it tries to understand the nature of participants' behavior and the way in which they interpret their lives (interpretation is not seen when mapping phenomena), to reach this level of understanding, quantitative research brings researchers to their participants (ibid). Subjectivity exists in both types of research (Wisker, 2001).

Mixed method research includes gathering or analyzing quantitative and qualitative data within the framework of a single study in which data is gathered using various methods simultaneously or sequentially, ascribed different priorities in each research stage and involve integrating the data and one or more stage of the research process. Mixed method research can unite at different research stages multi quantitative measurement techniques (for example: experiments and surveys) with qualitative techniques (Sandelowski, 2000). Mixed method research designs can be structured in one of two key ways: mixed model - mixing quantitative and qualitative methods in every research stage and mixed method - planning a sequential qualitative and quantitative stage in a study.

This research is mixed method - a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools to allow for generalization of research findings and profoundly understand items (Brayman, 2004; Shkedi, 2003). Mixed method research is research that combines two central paradigms in social sciences and education, quantitative and qualitative research in one research framework. As such it intends to neutralize the deficiencies of each research paradigm, exploit the advantages of each one and provide a more in-depth, broader and richer research picture.

During the **first stage** of this research, Friedman and Fisher's (2003) questionnaire to measure parents' attitudes to school and the extent of their involvement was used. The questionnaire is valid and reliable having been used in previous studies on the subject of parent-teacher attitudes (ibid) with regard to involvement in and partnership with schools for the purpose of examining parents' attitudes on the one hand and teachers' attitudes on the other and therefore was chosen to examine parents' and teachers' attitudes towards school and the extent of their involvement. The questionnaire has two parts: the first part - reciprocal relations between parents and schools and the second part - how do you act practically in your links with schools. Since the second part was not relevant to examining parents' and teachers' attitudes, only the first part was used. The questionnaires were distributed to the research population made up of 80 parents of elementary, junior high and high schools. 25 of the teachers teach in the elementary school where I am principal. I saw it as important for them to participate in the research because of the part they play in the work the school is undertaking with regard to involvement and I even saw it as an opportunity to examine their attitudes, following the research, which would indeed constitute data to be gathered for professional dialogue on the matter. Following statistical analysis of the questionnaires, questions for the semi-structured interviews were composed, for the other tool used in this research.

During the **second stage**, in-depth interviews examined the reasons for the attitudes that emerged from the questionnaires in qualitative analysis that enabled me to understand the depth of perceptions thoughts and emotions (Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2016). The purpose of semi-structured interviews with a small sample of 10 parents and teachers was to strengthen findings acquired from the analysis of the questionnaires.

Data analysis from the first stage was statistical and quantitative allowing generalization from sample to population. In the second stage, content analysis was

qualitative in order to reveal key attitudes arising from interviews. At this stage, it is important for the researcher to have a profound understanding of the emotions, thoughts and attitudes of both parents and teachers regarding parental involvement in and partnership with schools (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2013). This paradigm is congruent with the research questions.

The following table summarizes the research design:

**Table 1.II Research Design**

<b>Research Stage</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Research Tool</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
<b>First stage – quantitative research</b>	(a) To examine parents' attitudes towards parental involvement in school.	80 parents of children in elementary, junior high and high schools.		Quantitative analysis, statistical analysis.
	(b) To examine teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement in school.	78 teachers from elementary, junior high and high schools.	Quantitative questionnaire to measure parents' and teachers' attitudes towards school and the extent of their involvement (Friedman & Fisher 2003).	
<b>Second stage – qualitative research</b>	To get an in-depth understanding and interpret parents' and teacher's attitudes emerging from questionnaires; in-depth understanding of perceptions, thoughts and emotions towards involvement.	5 parents and 5 teachers.	In-depth semi-structured interview.	Qualitative analysis, Content analysis.
<b>Third stage – qualitative research</b>	To examine parental and teachers' attitudes on the topic of parental involvement following the forums schedule.	Parent group, approximately 25 parents. School management team (principal, deputy principal, counsellor, 5 teachers.	Forums between parent group and school management team.	Qualitative.

The research population comprised 158 parents and teachers: 80 parents and 78 teachers. All participants reside in a small settlement of about 30,000 residents in northern Israel. I, as the researcher, also reside in this settlement and even hold the post of principal of one of the two secular elementary schools there. The parental population

is characterized by the fact that they have children of different ages across the regional schools: elementary school, junior high school and high school. These parents are of different ages, in order to examine the attitudes of young parents who are taking their first steps in getting to know the education system as well as those who are older with more experience. In addition, it will be possible to acquire a picture of the overall parents of elementary, junior high and high school pupils regarding attitudes towards parental involvement in schools and as such it will be possible to refer to a variety of parents who possess diverse ideas and attitudes regarding involvement in and partnership with schools.

The teacher population is characterized by the fact that they teach pupils of all age levels: at elementary, junior high and high schools, and they encounter the subject of parental involvement at different and varied levels, in similar, and sometimes different situations and of course their personal points of view regarding the examined subject are diverse. Participating teachers are made up of those with many and few years of service, in order to acquire a broad picture regarding teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement in and partnership with schools. Furthermore, the fact that teachers teach at different age levels will help acquire a perspective regarding the way in which those teaching younger pupils perceive, for example, the phenomenon of parental involvement in contrast to those of older students. It will be interesting to examine whether their attitudes are similar or different. This is also true for parents' attitudes, are the attitudes of parents with older children the same as those with younger children regarding involvement? The issue of teachers' years of service and whether this affects their attitudes is also interesting and therefore it will be interesting to see the attitudes of veteran teachers alongside that of newly-qualified teachers. The variety in the research population, both regarding parents and teachers, is important for the analysis of findings and drawing conclusions.

Five parents and five teachers were chosen for the semi-structured in-depth interviews. The parents were of different ages, young alongside old, their children were pupils at elementary, junior high and high schools, they were men and women, who have different attitudes regarding parental involvement alongside teachers teaching at different age levels, veteran teachers alongside relatively new teachers in the education system, whose attitudes towards parental involvement are also different. This group

was chosen in order to get information needed to carry out the research and which is held by diverse people in their opinions and reference to the researched subject.

The quantitative-positivist research approach makes use of a random sample of participants. 'Randomness' is a statistical concept that depends on a large number of participants. In constructivist, qualitative research there is no significance to using a random statistical sample. Therefore, a purposeful sample is appropriate because it focuses on choosing informants who best represent the population from which they were chosen in order to learn about the examined phenomenon (Mason, 1996).

## **The Pedagogical Experiment**

### **The Pre-Experimental Stage**

Leadership is not one man's concern. Leadership means building common commitment and nurturing a leadership team (Wallace Foundation, 2008). The public and decision makers expect much from schools. Schools are required: (a) to work towards raising pupils' achievements (b) to develop an educational climate based on caring and concern for individuals and dialogue between teachers and teachers, teachers and pupils, pupils and pupils and school and pupils (c) to activate educational processes, teaching-learning-evaluation directed at individuals and their development cognitively, intra-personally, interpersonally, and sensory-motor.

These expectations and demands are aimed first and foremost at school principals. However, it appears that principals cannot meet these demands alone. In a document by Karen Welles (Wallace Foundation, 2008), dealing with training school principals to manage schools in a contemporary reality, she stated that for too long it has been expected that a school principal should behave as a superhero or solo master-craftsman" (Wallace Foundation, 2008).. According to researchers, the best and most effective outcomes for pupils will be reached when teachers work together, learn together, propose improvements and changes to guarantee constant teaching improvements. In light of research findings (ibid) and accumulated experience, awareness is growing that guaranteeing the success of schools and meeting the aforementioned demands is a shared task for many. Therefore, principals must develop schools as learning communities, nurture common commitment and authority to improve learning and spread work between teams and work groups. As part of school policy, representatives

of parents' leadership are also a work team and working with and opposite them transparently creates a commitment to improve and promote nurturing parental involvement in schools as part of creating an optimal school climate. Of course, all this must be carried out in a joint process building partnership. Therefore, the meetings with the parents' leader group and school management team were structured into the school calendar. (Wallace Foundation (2008), *Becoming a leader: preparing school principals for today's schools*. <http://www.Wallacefoundation.org/Pages/default.aspx>)

In addition, during the research, while carrying out the interviews and thereafter, an experiment was carried out among the parent leadership group at the school. This group numbered about 25 parents (representation of 2-3 parents per class). The group elects a chair at the beginning of each academic year (according to the Director General's Circular, <http://cms.education.gov.il>) and they represent all school parents. This year, the school's work plan included a goal of promoting parent participation as a basis for an optimal school atmosphere. This is one of the Ministry of Education's targets of choice and was chosen by school management as one of its targets for this year. As part of this, a work plan was put together for a different type of meeting with parent leaders. The meetings included members of school management including the principal, deputy principal, school counselor and subject coordinators (language coordinator, ICT coordinator, school trips coordinator and social education coordinator).

### **The Experimental Stage**

Every two months, throughout the academic year, the school management team met with parent's representatives in forums that included: report and discussion about ongoing matters, important issues put forward by school management and participating parents. The last part of the meeting dealt with parental involvement and included information from professional literature on the topic and operational proposals for implementation at our school. These forums exposed parents to information from professional literature about the phenomenon of parental involvement in Israel and around the world, its importance, the reasons for it coming into being and the ways in which optimal parental involvement can be created both from the point of view of parents and teachers.



## **The Post-Experimental Stage**

The purpose of this forums schedule was to examine whether exposing parents and teachers and sharing information with them from professional literature would affect formulating their attitudes on the issue of parental involvement in schools. It can be said that in fact, parental and teachers' attitudes were examined at the same time as this program was ongoing at the school.

## **III. FINDINGS**

### **Findings Emerging from Research Question 1**

#### **Teachers' and Parents' Attitudes to Parental Involvement in Schools**

##### **Teachers**

In the first stage of analyzing data collected from the closed- ended questionnaires, it is important to note attitudes of parents and teachers are given as an average of all the questions. Thereafter, a t-test of independent samples was taken comparing parents to teachers. The results of the test were insignificant! No difference was found in the mark for parental attitudes (M=4.27, S.D. =0.48) and teachers (M=4.17; S.D. = 0.51):  $t(156) = 1.314, p=0.191 >0.05$ .

These results refute the first research hypothesis according to which a difference between parents' and teachers' attitudes would be found with respect to parental involvement in schools. In fact, no difference was found between the mark for parents' attitudes and that of teachers, data that was quite surprising.

Examples of statements are presented below:

**Table 1.III: Teachers' Attitudes towards Parental Involvement – Interviews**

<b>Reasons to be involved in school life</b>	
<b>Teacher Code Name: 1</b>	<i>"The minute a child knows that his parents are involved with what is happening to him at school, it gives him the power and willingness to succeed and experience successes"</i>
<b>Teacher Code Name: 2</b>	<i>"When a child gets the message that a parent and school are in contact, he has more confidence and desire to progress"</i> <i>"In my experience, it is important for children that we keep their parents' updates with what is happening to them at school"</i>
<b>Teacher Code Name: 5</b>	<i>"Parental involvement is very important first for pupils. The moment there is parental involvement pupils try harder from a study point of view and this helps them from a social point of view as well"</i> <i>"The moment a parent is aware of his child's learning difficulties and he helps him in cooperation with the school, this contributes and helps the child progress"</i> <i>"The moment parents are included in the process and are empowered, given the sense that they are capable of helping and contributing to their children's class, parents are extremely satisfied and cooperative and the result will be seen in their children"</i>

<b>Views regarding parental involvement</b>	
<b>Teacher Code Name: 1</b>	<i>"I think that parents should be very involved. In my approach, I inform them about almost everything, everything connected to learning and social aspects of their children. Parental involvement can progress their child"</i> <i>"A parent should not be involved to make it better for his child, but for the benefit of the whole school"</i> <i>"Parents want to be involved firstly because of the desire to know at any given moment what is happening with their child at school. As a mother, I can say that I would want to know what was happening with my son at school. This desire indicates taking responsibility, desire to cooperate with a school, which is to the benefit of my child"</i> <i>"It empowers the staff and motivates them to work"</i>
<b>Teacher Code Name: 2</b>	<i>"It is important that parents be involved because at the end of the day, it is their child at school and cooperation will move their child forward in all areas. There is a link between what happens at school and at home, and when there is communication, there is also continuity with what happens at school"</i> <i>"Parental involvement contributes at all levels - pupil, parent, class and school provided it is respectful and positive."</i>
<b>Teacher Code Name: 5</b>	<i>"It is very important for parents to be involved, children are above all theirs and to the same extent, we want their children to succeed"</i> <i>"Parents who don't want to be involved and don't interfere for the good of their child, it's a type of neglect"</i> <i>"Inclusion makes parents feel needed, important, that their opinions are considered and then they cooperate and in fact are involved in what happens at school"</i>

The research findings show that teachers acknowledge the importance of involvement for parents, perceive parental involvement as essential for the progress of each parent's individual child and for the school as an organization. Parental involvement is even seen by parents as essential for personal, organizational success and in addition teachers view parental involvement as important because it empowers teachers themselves, because they feel that their work and investment is seen, and expressed in children's success and their emotional, behavioral, social and learning development. This success, at the end of the day, is a school's success.

## **Findings Emerging from Research Question No 2**

**Is there a difference between parents' and teachers' attitudes on the matter of parental involvement in school? If yes, what is the difference? This question was investigated using a closed questionnaire (Appendix ---).**

In the first analysis stage of data emerging from the closed questionnaire, a mark was calculated for parents' and teachers' attitudes as an average score of all the questions. Thereafter, a t-test was carried out on independent samples comparing parents to teachers. The test results were insignificant: no difference was found in the score between parents' attitudes ( $M=4.27$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) and teachers' ( $M=4.17$ ;  $SD = 0.51$ );  $t(156)=1.314$ ,  $p=0.1919>0.05$ .

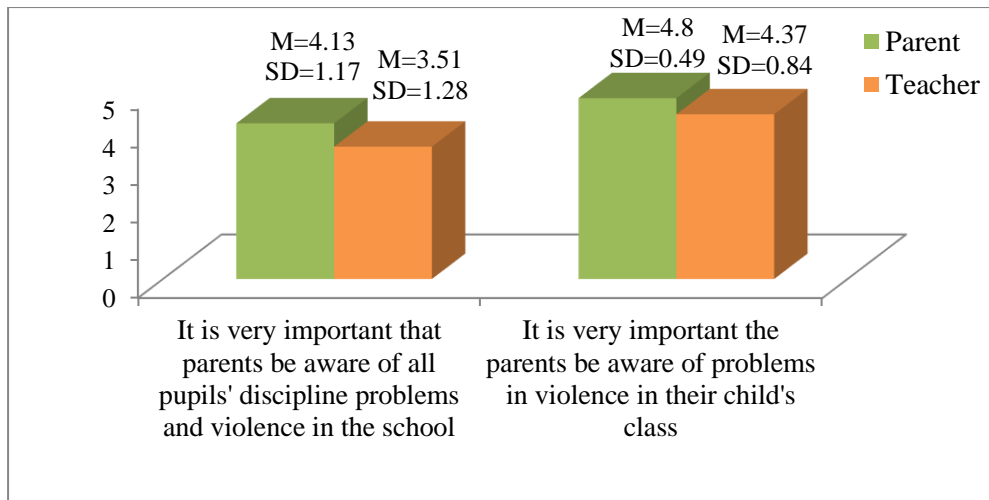
In addition, independent t-tests were carried out to compare parents and attitudes on each question separately. Table 2.III presents the questions that demonstrated a significant difference between parents' and teachers' attitudes.

**Table 2.III: Questions for which a difference was found between parents' and teachers' attitudes**

Question	Average		Standard Deviation		T value	Level of Significance
	Parent	Teacher	Parent	Teacher		
1. It is very important that parents be aware of all pupils' discipline problems and violence in the school	4.13	3.51	1.17	1.28	3.14	0.002
2. It is very important that parents get the results of feedback provided at school	4.23	3.81	1.11	1.14	2.33	0.021
3. It is very important the parents be aware of problems in violence in their child's class	4.80	4.37	0.49	0.84	3.91	0.000
4. It is very important that parents be aware of disrespect towards teachers in their child's class	4.65	4.33	0.62	0.80	2.78	0.006
5. It is very important for parents to acknowledge teachers' behavior in class (way of speaking, relationship with pupils etc.)	4.83	4.40	0.41	0.92	3.76	0.000
6. It is very important for parents to be aware of the relationship between the teacher and their child	4.93	4.71	0.31	0.65	2.72	0.008

Figures 1.III – 3.III illustrate the results graphically.

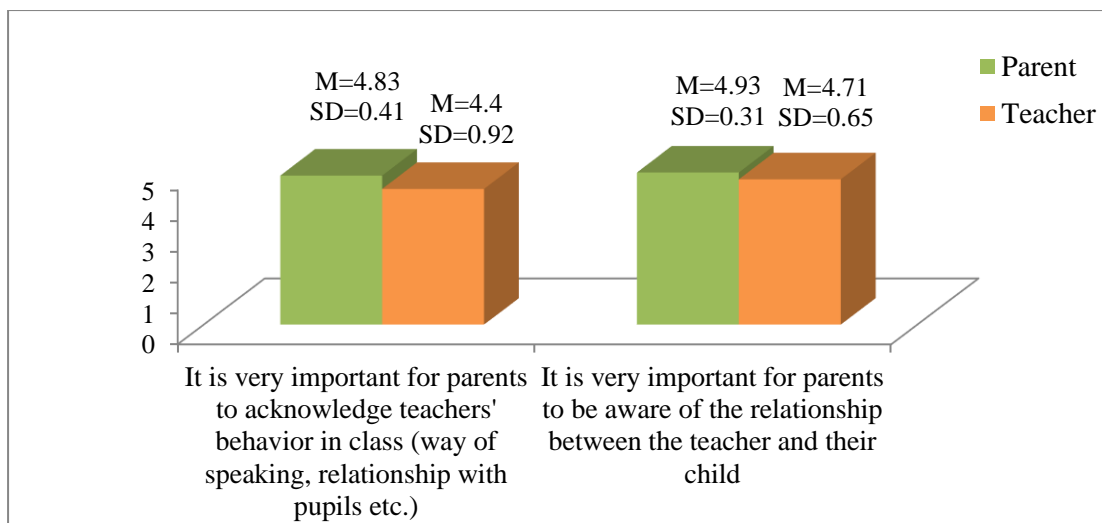
Figure 1.III Answers to the questions (1) "It is very important that parents be aware of all pupils' discipline problems and violence in the school" and (3) "It is very important the parents be aware of problems in violence in their child's class"



**Figure 1.III: Answers to questions presented in items (1 - discipline) and (3 - violence)**

One can see that the answers among parents scored higher than those of teachers. In other words, in these questions there is a difference between parents' and teachers' answers. Parents answered that it was very important for them to be aware of discipline problems and violence in school generally and especially their children more than teachers.

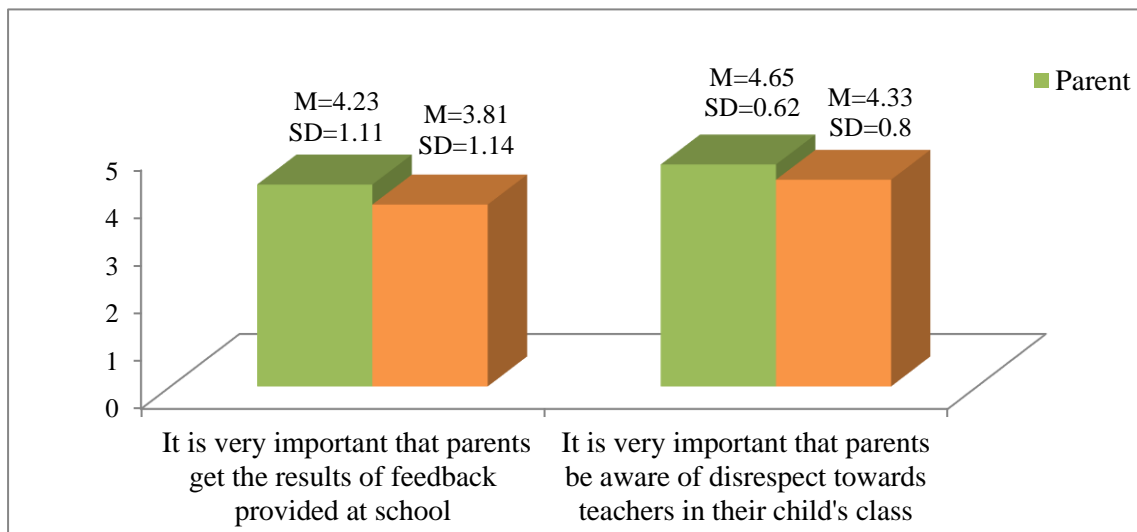
Figure 2.III Answers to the questions (5) "It is very important for parents to acknowledge teachers' behavior in class (way of speaking, relationship with pupils etc.)" and (6) "It is very important for parents to be aware of the relationship between the teacher and their child"



**Figure 2.III: Answers to questions presented in items (5 – teachers' behavior) and (6 – attitude to children)**

Like the previous figure, one can see that scores among parents were higher than those among teachers. The same can be said for the following questions: "It is very important for parents to be aware of the relationship between the teacher and their child". This data indicates a parents' greater desire for parental involvement in these areas.

Figure 3III: Answers to the questions (2) "It is very important that parents get the results of feedback provided at school" and (4) "It is very important that parents be aware of disrespect towards teachers in their child's class"



**Figure 3.III-: Answers to questions presented in items (2 – feedback) and (6 – disrespect for teachers)**

Like the previous figures, the answers among parents were higher than teachers. Parents regard involvement as being higher in the following matters: getting feedback from school and problems of disrespect to teachers in their children's classes.

Therefore, for all the differences found, one can conclude the attitudes (perceptions of how important awareness is of certain issues) are higher among parents than teachers, as seen in the analysis of findings from the questionnaire (for questions presented in Table ---). The key difference between parents' attitudes towards parental involvement in school and those of teachers is expressed in the way they each perceive the way parents are involved in school.

### **Findings Emerging from Research Question No 3**

**The best way to build parental-teacher involvement in schools - findings arising from content analysis** (see tables 1.III and 2.III).

**Table 3.III: Parents' Attitudes towards Parental Involvement - Content Analysis**

<b>Reasons to be involved in school life</b>	
<b>Parent Code Name: 2</b>	<p><i>"Children like what is familiar and when parents are involved with the staff, with school management, it instills their children with a sense of security, the child is more comfortable and it is pleasant and good at school and this will even have implications on his achievements"</i></p> <p><i>"Parents who want their children to succeed are involved in the life of their children's school"</i></p>
<b>Parent Code Name: 6</b>	<p><i>"An involved parent gives his child a sense of having someone always to rely on and also helps increase his self-confidence"</i></p> <p><i>"The desire to give, to be part of, to contribute and to bring about change makes parents want to be involved in the life of their children's school. A child looks at his parent differently when he knows the parent is part of school, it's not just a parent's own child who sees him differently, but other children in his class. A parent's contribution and connection with school empowers his child"</i></p> <p><i>"The child of such a parent gets self-confidence, he is socially empowered and even feels proud. Other pupils are encouraged to recruit their parents to become involved because of the giving parental involvement brings to their children"</i></p>
<b>Parent Code Name: 8</b>	<p><i>"Parents should be in involved in the life of their children's school because of a parent's natural desire to know what is happening with his child whilst he's at school. Despite the fact that not all parents are the same...Parents are involved according to their ideology with regard to their children's education and even their natures have an effect. Parental involvement contributes to their children getting the best education"</i></p> <p><i>"A parent has to be involved in order to bring his child up with self- confidence. A strong child is one who acquires the tools to succeed in life"</i></p>
<b>Parent Code Name: 4</b>	<p><i>It is very important for parents to be involved in the school life of their children. For a child, it is important to know that his parents know what is happening to him at school and that there is someone to whom he can turn and talk...Children have to deal with many things...A child must know that he has a parent behind him. A parent who is personally involved in his child's life, will lose his child in the end"</i></p> <p><i>"In recent years, parents' and teachers' authority have been reduced and this has created parental over-involvement because of the absence of transparency at school and the fact that is customary for information not to be passed on to parents. The minute information is passed openly through school, involvement will look different"</i></p>
<b>Parent Code Name: 7</b>	<p><i>"Interested in being involved for the benefit of the children and to be their power because there are problems in the Israeli educational framework that are not always resolved in real time and the educational system does not always understand the needs of its pupils"</i></p>
<b>Views regarding parental involvement</b>	
<b>Parent Code Name: 2</b>	<p><i>"There is a teacher-parent-pupil triangle and it is important that this triangle exists for the benefit of our children"</i></p> <p><i>"Parental involvement depends on the type of parent. If a parent wants to know and is interested in knowing what happens to his own child, he will first be involved with his child and then the school generally."</i></p>

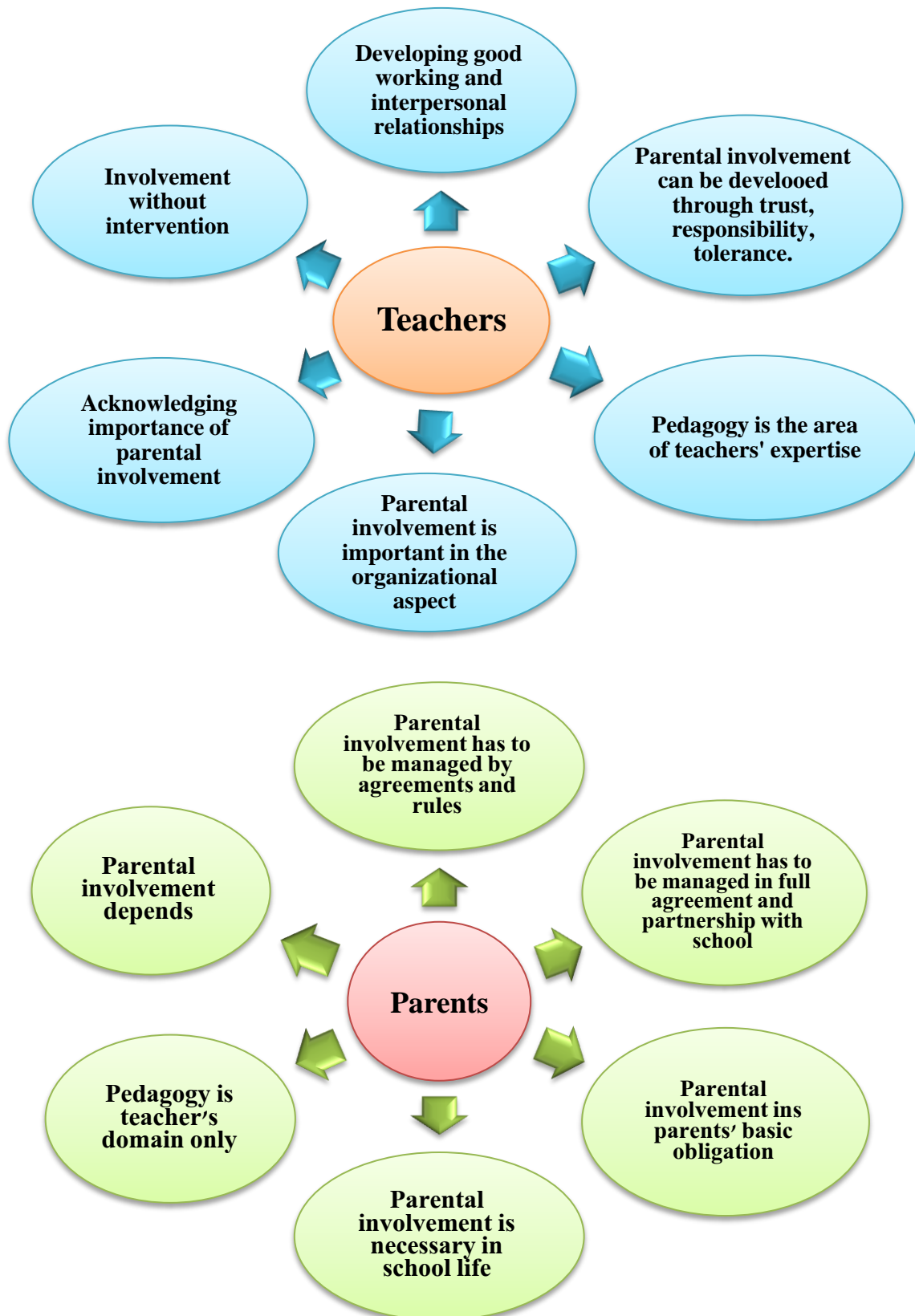
<b>Parent Code Name:</b> 8	<i>"Parents must be involved to a very great extent"</i> <i>"It is very important, unequivocally, that a parent be involved. An involved parent sees to the good of a child"</i>
<b>Parent Code Name:</b> 7	<i>"Parents must be involved and not interfere. Parental involvement can lead to the achievements of a child who has fallen between the stools and sometimes take steps and bring projects to the educational system, and even help teaching staff if they want"</i> <i>"It is important and desirable for a parent to be involved in school especially if he has good intentions to develop communication with the school"</i>

<b>Way of involvement</b>	
<b>Parent Code Name:</b> 2	<i>"In my opinion, there is no difference between parents and teachers regarding parental involvement, parents and teachers have a common interest in the subject of parental involvement, despite the fact that things are even dependent on a teacher's or parent's personality."</i>
<b>Parent Code Name:</b> 6	<i>"Extent of parental involvement depends on the 'I believe' of the school's management. In transparent relationships, parental involvement is generally high, but if management is unwilling to share and give parents a sense they can contribute, involvement will be low"</i> <i>"A parent can be involved in any area in which he can help. Parents with expertise in one or another area can contribute, according to their expertise, to classroom activities, lectures in the field, volunteering for one or other classroom or school activity, accompany school trips, organize class evenings."</i> <i>"From the school's point of view, correct to today, it opens its doors to any parent who wishes to be involved and help. A parent can help at his child's classroom level, going on a school trip, organizing parties, organizing activities for his child's class or any other teacher request"</i> <i>"There are parents who think that they are interfering, they are involved, but it's not right"</i>
<b>Parent Code Name:</b> 7	<i>"Parents interested in being involved can be involved in issues of school safety, cultural activities for pupils' benefit, taking care of disciplinary problems, concern for school climate, help families needing help"</i>

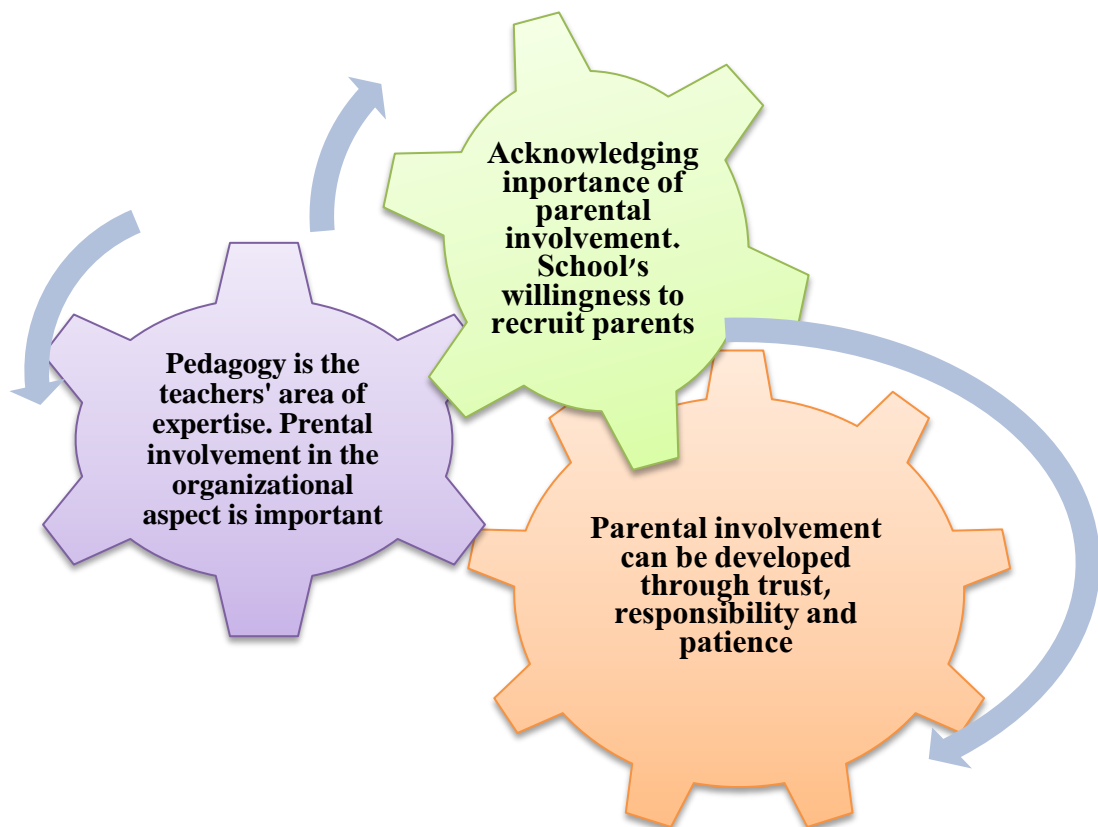


## CONCLUSIONS

The research findings enabled the development of a model to create optimal involvement in the shape of the **OPIM (Optimal Parental Involvement Model)**.



The research findings enabled the development of a model presents the world of parents' concepts with regard to parental involvement in schools against the world of teachers' concepts on the subject and between them there is the world of concepts common to both parents and teachers. This is the world of concepts that correspond to the attitudes of parents and teachers and what they share. In accordance with this world of concepts, one can structure an optimal partnership between parents and teachers. Structuring this partnership is a dynamic process that requires the sides to be sensitive towards their partners and much learning about self-observation abilities. Declaring a commitment to partnership is only the first step in a long process of climbing the steps of the **Partnership Escalator**.



In addition, the experimental program demonstrated that structuring a work program with parent leaders especially and school parents in general, that has a place in a school's goals and its annual work program contributes to strengthening parent-teacher relations, to the way in which parents and teachers perceive the issue of parental involvement and moreover, helps build the best possible partnership between school parents and teachers.

## **Practical Implications for the Field of Action**

This research raised the fact that involving parents in their children's learning processes is a factor that positively affects children's success at school. The research findings enable the following recommendations to be proposed:

1. Continuous dialogue between parents and teachers should be established and carried out. School principals should be responsible for this, as it is part of their role to acknowledge the importance of parental involvement in schools and build a framework in which there is a place for optimal parental involvement in schools. The practical expression of this is creating channels for effective communications, such as information pages for parents, parents-teachers-pupils' meetings, creating a common language, 'internal codes', willingness to expose weaknesses and raising difficult issues for discussion.

2. As proposed in the model, there is a place to create communications between parents and teachers by building trust based on acknowledging a common aim, good will among all partners to develop optimal involvement, in which everyone has a role according to talents and abilities and both sides benefit from this. The practical expression of this is a clarification of partners' roles, teachers want to know that parents will not take over school and parents want to understand what commitment they are making. Representative of the establishment (regional or national) are interested in setting boundaries for the process, such as management that meets Ministry of Education regulations, and as representatives of broader public interest, to ensure fairness in work processes and outcomes. Another expression of this is a general definition of partnership patterns such as: what decisions are taken together and when is one side entitled to operate separately.

In addition, consideration should be given to teacher training as part of their professional development on the issue of building optimal parent-teacher communications, in that not all teachers always know how to do this and what is the optimal way of communicating with parents.

In the post-modern age, it is even possible to establish parent training on this subject, to invite parents to lectures, together with schoolteachers so as to develop a culture of optimal parent-teacher involvement.

In conclusion, the challenge of creating an educational partnership is still preferable to the personal and social price we will pay for withdrawal, alienation and hostility between parents, educators, children, the establishment and the entire community.

### **Contribution to Theoretical and Practical Knowledge**

The current research is testament to the importance of parental involvement in the lives of their children as well as the great importance of the link between families and schools for children's development. The role of parents in the context of the education given to their children at school is much more significant than what is accepted generally by society, although understanding about parents' place in the system is becoming clearer. Parents and teachers must recognize the importance of this link and promote cooperation for the wellbeing and strength of their children and the future of society as a whole.

On a theoretical level, this research helps understand the attitudes of both parents and teachers with regard to structuring an optimal partnership between parents and teachers, in school with all their difficulties and means of coping with them. In addition, developing awareness of understanding these positions will enable us to cope better with the difficulties that derive from them. This research is likely to contribute to principals, management teams, teachers and parents. Likewise, this subject will surely occupy teacher and parent populations at a universal level and can contribute to them as well. As such, the contribution to theoretical knowledge was made through OPIM (Optimal Parental Involvement Model) proposed in this research. This model constitutes a contribution to theoretical knowledge in the field of parental involvement in school life.

In other words, the research added to the knowledge in the field of Epstein's Partnership Escalator theory (1997), Fishman and Fisher's theory of identification and awareness (2002), Hoover and Dempsey's theory of effect (2009), the closed door, open door theory and balance theory of Friedman (2010). In addition, the partnership escalator model and optimal partnership models developed in this research close the gap in knowledge in the field of parental involvement derived from the research findings and therefore this research is original and innovative in this field.

On a practical level, an innovative, original model was developed, derived from the research and it can serve principals, management teams and teaching staff to help build optimal parental involvement in schools. The model is practical and can guide teachers and parents how to carry out optimal involvement practically in school. In addition, the practical implications can lead to a change in the policy of teachers' and parents' professional development such that the Ministry of Education will develop frameworks for teachers and parents to learn how it is possible to develop optimal parental involvement in schools.

### **Future Studies**

This research, which focuses on parents' and teachers' attitudes on the issue of parental involvement in schools (elementary, junior high and high schools). Levels of parental active involvement in schools practically has not been examined in this research, but levels in attitudes. Therefore, further research in this field can be carried out on how the process of creating partnerships between parents and teachers are implemented.

In addition, in this research a new model was proposed for the development of optimal parental involvement in schools. The importance of future research to the current research will be in examining the effectiveness of the model proposed in this research, OPMI and its effect on the ability to develop optimal parental involvement in schools.

Furthermore, future research on the topic of parental involvement is proposed, research about developing framework to train teachers on the issue of parent-teacher involvement and their contribution to the professional development of teacher in the field.