

Homeschool Support Groups: A Model for Parental Involvement in Education

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Abstract

The homeschooling movement in the United States has developed a network of local homeschool support groups that support homeschooling families in their educational efforts. This study presents a rationale for studying homeschool support groups as educational organizations, like public or private schools. Epstein's (2001) model of parental involvement was used as a framework for studying parental involvement with these groups. Studying homeschool support groups as educational organizations using Epstein's model of parental involvement provides the opportunity to gain unique perspectives on parental involvement that may contribute to the understanding of parental involvement in traditional education settings. Findings indicated that for participating parents (n = 278), the desire to be more involved in their child(ren)'s education in substantial ways was very important. For example (using a scale of 1-5), a mean score of 4.72 was reported for the survey question "How important is being involved in decisions about your child's learning environment to your decision to homeschool?" A mean score of 4.68 was reported for the question "How important is being able to be involved with choosing curriculum for your child to your decision to homeschool?" A high level of satisfaction in all six categories of parental involvement was reported. Data related to perceptions of satisfaction with opportunities for parental involvement with the homeschool support group and perceptions of the importance of different categories of parental involvement were very closely correlated.

Keywords: homeschooling, parental involvement, school choice, homeschool support group, educational organization.

THE HOMESCHOOLING MOVEMENT in the United States has developed a network of local homeschool support groups that support homeschooling families in their educational efforts. There has been very little research on the role these homeschool support groups play in parents' decision to homeschool or on how parents use them. For the purpose of this study, homeschool support groups are defined as organizations where member families cooperatively provide support for homeschooling efforts, social activities, and often educational programming for homeschooled students. Homeschool support groups were studied as educational organizations, comparable to public or private schools. This approach is in alignment with Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) research, which served to expand concepts of organizational theory to include means to assess collectives and cooperatives in relation to traditional bureaucratic organizations. In defense of the positioning collectives on the organizational continuum with hierarchical bureaucracies, Rothschild-Whitt stated, "It is in the conceptualization of alternative forms of organization that organizational theory has been weakest, and it is here that the experimentation of collectives will broaden our understanding." Likewise, studying homeschool support groups as educational organizations provides the opportunity to gain unique perspectives on parental involvement with education.

The purpose of this study was to gather data from homeschooling parents that would contribute to the

understanding of parental involvement with educational organizations. More specifically, it sought to assess parents' reasons for becoming involved with their child's education and for becoming involved with a particular educational organization. Goldring and Phillips (2008) used this approach by focusing on parents' choice between public magnet schools and private schools. Goldring and Phillips' findings suggested that parents were "not necessarily 'pushed' out of public schools because of dissatisfaction" (p. 227), but rather "pulled" to choose a school that allowed for a higher level of collaboration between teachers and parents. This study focuses on homeschooling parents and their involvement with homeschool support groups, which are created, run and used by parents. Parents' perceptions about their involvement with a homeschool support group and the influence that access to a homeschool support group might have on the decision to choose the educational option of homeschooling were explored.

Review of Literature

RESEARCHING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT in education generally focuses on assessing parents' reasons for becoming involved with their child's education and for becoming involved with a particular educational organization. Goldring and Phillips (2008) explain that "one of the most important ways in which parents

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are involved in their children's education is through choosing the school they attend" (p. 209). Multiple researchers have sought to understand parental involvement from the perspective of a deficit model, largely in terms of whether or not parents participate in school defined activities like parent-teacher conferences, or help with homework (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). Alternatively, Barton et al. (2004) expand the concept of parental involvement and use the term "parental engagement." They define parental engagement as "a dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interactions with schools and among school actors" (Barton et al., 2004, p. 3). This lens considers the educational organization a central component of predicting parental involvement. In order to study homeschooling in this context, it is important to consider how homeschooling is positioned as a social movement and alternative educational organization by several researchers (Collom & Mitchell, 2005; Stevens, 2009).

It is somewhat ironic to discuss homeschooling in the context of an educational organization, since it has often been perceived as the ultimate withdrawal from the traditional structures of education. However, the historical development of homeschooling as a social movement positions it to be discussed as an educational organization. Collom and Mitchell (2005) chronicle how homeschool families have organized to effect political action to protect their freedom to homeschool, to share resources, and to provide social learning experiences for their children. By sharing curriculum resources, organizing co-op classes, and creating opportunities for educational and social activities for their children, homeschool families build supportive communities. Collom and Mitchell contend that homeschooling is "both a means of educating children according to parental standards and an alternative social movement embracing a unique set of cultural norms and values" (2005, p. 274). The foundation for Collom and Mitchell's positioning of homeschooling as an alternative institution or organization is based on Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) definition: "Alternative institutions may be defined in terms of their members' resolve to build organizations which are parallel to, but outside of, established institutions and which fulfill social needs (for education, food, medical aid, etc.) without recourse to bureaucratic authority" (p. 510).

Rothschild-Whitt uses this definition to describe the structure of cooperative efforts such as free medical clinics, food cooperatives, and communes. This definition also describes the structure of homeschool support groups. Collom and Mitchell's study provides further rationale for studying homeschooling as an educational organization, and for studying parental involvement with homeschool support groups.

Parental involvement has been defined and studied in many ways. However, the consensus is that parental involvement in a child's education is beneficial to the child's academic success (Tedin & Weiher, 2011). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 even includes provisions for schools to develop programs to develop and support parental involvement. Given the importance of parental involvement to a child's education, it follows that it is important to understand both why parents choose to get involved with their child's education and how they want to be involved.

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) model of parental involvement is generally used to predict why parents become involved in their child's education and to predict participation in school choice. Another model, developed by Epstein (2001), is one of the most widely used and referenced frameworks for studying and evaluating how parents are involved with their child's education (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Epstein's (2001) model of parental involvement provides a framework for developing and measuring efforts to support parental involvement. Epstein outlines six categories of parental involvement that encompass factors included in the various definitions of the parent-school partnership. The first category relates to meeting the child's basic needs including health, nutrition, and age-appropriate child development information. The second category stresses the importance of communication between the school and parent, especially related to school programs and the child's academic progress. The third category is the opportunity for parents to volunteer at the school. Parents' perception of opportunity for involvement in the form of invitations from school and child is also an important predictor of parental involvement in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) model of parental involvement. Epstein's fourth category supports learning at home and ways that parents can help their child learn outside of school. The fifth category concerns parental participation in leadership, governance, and advocacy roles. The sixth category provides for the engagement of the community in providing resources and support to meet the needs of the students and to enhance their learning experience. These six categories are commonly used by schools as a framework for developing and evaluating efforts to increase parental involvement. (Allen, 2011; Barlow & Humphrey, 2012; Bower & Griffin, 2011).

Homeschooling is clearly a growing option in the school choice arena. This study sought to understand the influence that access to a homeschool support group might have on the decision to homeschool. It also examined parental involvement with homeschool support groups through the same lens that is used to assess parental involvement with traditional public and private schools. This study provides new data on parental involvement with homeschool support groups that contributes new insights regarding parental involvement and school choice and provides direction for future research.

Purpose of the Study

THE PURPOSE OF this study was to gather data from homeschooling parents that would contribute to the understanding of parental involvement with school choice and of parental involvement with educational organizations. Parents' perceptions about their involvement with a homeschool support group and the influence that access to a homeschool support group might have on the decision to choose the educational option of homeschooling were explored. Lastly, the categories of support offered by the homeschool support groups were examined through the lens of Epstein's (2001) parental involvement model.

The study was guided by the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: How are homeschool families participating in homeschool support groups?

RQ2: What are homeschool parents' perceptions of the importance of types of support and activities offered by a homeschool support group?

RQ3: What are homeschool parents' perceptions of opportunities for parental involvement with their homeschool support group?

RQ4: What are homeschool parents' perceptions towards the importance of different types of parental involvement with their homeschool support group?

RQ5: How important was the opportunity for membership in a homeschool support group to the decision to homeschool a family's children?

Method

Participants and Setting

Descriptive methodology was used in this quantitative study. The target population for this study was families that were homeschooling one or more children for the 2013-2014 school year. Because homeschool laws vary between states and may affect how families participate with homeschool support groups, the decision was made to limit the population for this study to a state or regional area in the southeastern United States where homeschool laws would be relatively consistent. An internet search was conducted to locate homeschool support groups in the defined regional area. Sixteen homeschool support groups were identified and invited to participate in the study. The 16 homeschool support groups from which the sample was obtained had an estimated total membership of 1,500 families. An email letter was sent to the leader and/or contact person(s) for each group. This letter requested that the invitation to participate in this study be shared with their members.

Because the author was concerned that homeschooling families might be reluctant to participate in a study about their homeschooling activities, the emailed invitation identified the author as a homeschooling mother and longtime member of a large, well-known homeschool support group in a southeastern state. It included personal background and observations about homeschooling that informed this research. The research project was briefly described so participants understood the scope of the study. The email invitation was designed to give participants confidence that this study was not biased and that it was designed to learn more about homeschooling and homeschooling families, not to attack homeschooling. A second request that re-iterated the initial information was sent five days after the first emailed invitation, followed by a final request at day 12. The survey was closed eight days after the final request. A total of 333 participants completed, or partially completed, the survey. Of the 333 participants, 15.3% (51) did not answer all of the questions. Additionally, some sections of the survey had qualifying questions, thus the sample size varies with question and statistical test.

Instrument

The survey instrument included five sections of questions, with 33 total questions. The questions in section one were designed to collect qualifying and demographic data. Section

two contains questions that quantified the perceived incidence of special educational needs (SEN) within the study participant groups, while section five questions assessed parents' perceptions of factors important to their decision to homeschool. The data collected in sections two and five were not the focus of this study and have been presented in a separate study. For all questions where participants were asked to rate factors or participation, a scale of 1 to 5 (least to most) was used.

Section three contained questions that provided data for how the study participants used homeschool support groups. Types of activities and support included were based on activities assessed in Collom and Mitchell's (2005) study of homeschoolers' participation in a large homeschool charter organization. These are also the types of activities and support often offered by public and private schools. This section also contained questions to assess parents' perceptions of the importance of membership in a homeschool support group to their decision to homeschool.

The questions in section four assessed participants' perceptions of Epstein's (2001) six categories of parental involvement. Questions were developed to determine parents' perceptions as to whether or not a particular category of parental involvement was supported by the homeschool support group. Follow-up questions allowed the participants to assess their perception of the importance of the category of involvement. The data collected in this section provided insights into how educational organizations that are developed, run, and used by parents support parental involvement.

The survey instrument was developed based on constructs supported by appropriate theoretical and conceptual foundations (Collom & Mitchell, 2005; Epstein, 2001; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Isenberg, 2007; Planty et al., 2009). It was reviewed by a panel of experts who checked for clarity and face validity. The panel included experts in survey research, special educational needs, and homeschool support group leadership. To further test for clarity and validity, a pilot test was conducted using a sample of six homeschool families from a state bordering the state in which the data were collected. These families were chosen because they were not members of any of the homeschool support groups used in the study. No areas of concern regarding clarity and readability were reported from participants in the pilot test. To test for survey reliability, a pilot test/re-test study was planned. A request for participation was posted on the Yahoo Group site of a small homeschool support group (31 members) from a bordering state. Ten participants completed the first test. A week later the survey was sent again, with a request for participants to complete it a second time. Only five participants completed both the first and second surveys. The number of participants who completed both test and retest was too small for the planned analyses of paired sample *t*-tests to be statistically meaningful. The lack of test/re-test reliability data is noted as a limitation of the study.

Results

APPROPRIATE DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 21 (SPSS) (IBM Corp., 2011) were conducted to answer the study's research questions. Results are presented here, organized by the research questions answered.

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Since some participants did not answer all the survey questions and since some sections of the survey had qualifying questions, please note that the sample size reported varies with questions and statistical test.

Demographic Data

Participants' (n = 306) experience with homeschooling ranged from 0 years to 41 years, with a mean of 8.54 years. Several open-ended comment questions were included in the survey, and through these it was learned that at least one participant was a grandparent who had homeschooled his/her children and was now homeschooling grandchildren. This explained the outlier value of 41 years.

Slightly less than half (49.2%) of the participating families (n = 329) have always homeschooled their children. Slightly more than half (50.8%) of the participating families had a child who attended a public or private school prior to making the decision to homeschool. A total of 693 children were being homeschooled by the families who participated in this study.

Data Related to Participation in Homeschool Support Group Activities

These data address Research Question 1: How are homeschool families participating in homeschool support groups? A group of six questions was used to collect data on families' participation in homeschool support group activities. Three questions related to student participation and three questions related to parent participation. Scores for the three student questions were summed and averaged to obtain a student participation score. Scores for the three parent questions were summed and averaged to obtain a parent participation score (see Table 1). The decision was made to sum and average to obtain these scores because not all of the six activities were offered by all homeschool support groups, thus the results only effectively show that students participated more often in homeschool support group activities than parents. The mean for parent participation was 2.36 and the mean for student participation was 3.04. Individual activities can be seen in Table 2.

Research Question 2 focused on parents' perceptions of the importance of different types of activities and support offered by homeschool support groups. The overall means for parents' perceptions of the importance (Scale of 1=Not important to

5=Essential) of different types of activities and support offered by homeschool support groups is reported in Table 2.

**Table 1
Parent & Student Participation in Homeschool Support Group Activities**

Homeschool Support Group Participation Scores						
	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent Participation Score	233	1.00	5.00	550.50	2.3627	1.08111
Student Participation Score	241	1.00	5.00	731.67	3.0360	1.17452
Valid N (listwise)	228					

Data Related to Parental Involvement with the Homeschool Support Group

Research Question 3 focused on homeschool parents' perceptions of opportunities for parental involvement with their homeschool support group. Participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction importance (Scale of 1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very satisfied) with their homeschool support group in regards to opportunities for six categories of parental involvement. The overall means for parents' satisfaction with their homeschool support group in regards to opportunities for six categories of parental involvement are reported in Table 3.

The focus of Research Question 4 was to understand homeschool parents' perceptions towards the importance of different types of parental involvement with their homeschool support group. Participants were asked to indicate how important (Scale of 1 = Not at all Important to 5 = Extremely Important) it is to them that their homeschool support group provide opportunities for six categories of parental involvement. The overall means for parents' perceptions towards the importance of different types of parental involvement with their homeschool support group are reported in Table 4.

**Table 2
Importance of Homeschool Support Group Activities**

Parents' Perceptions of the Importance of Homeschool Support Group Activities		
	N	Mean Std. Deviation
Student Activities		
Social activities for students (parties, park days, clubs, field trips)	247	3.47 1.168
Enrichment (non-credit) classes for students	246	3.18 1.272
Academic (credit) classes for students	245	3.13 1.479
Parent Activities		
Programs that support choosing curriculum and/or teaching methods	247	2.74 1.225
Non-structured social activities for parents (free time at enrichment class programs, visiting at park days, etc.)	246	2.70 1.226
Structured social activities for parents (mom's night out, clubs)	245	2.41 1.179
Valid N (listwise)	239	

Table 3
Perceived Satisfaction with Opportunities for Parental Involvement
For the homeschool group with which you are most active, please rate your satisfaction with how well the
homeschool support group. . .

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
. . .provides opportunities for members to volunteer to help with support group activities, co-op classes, or other support group needs.	233	1	5	4.33	.839
. . .communicates with members.	233	1	5	4.31	.787
. . .provides opportunities for members to serve in a leadership position or on a committee.	232	1	5	3.96	.975
. . .identifies and uses resources and services from the community to provide learning opportunities for its members.	232	1	5	3.93	.902
. . .provides opportunities for members to learn about choosing curriculum and/or teaching methods.	231	1	5	3.82	.850
. . .provides opportunities for members to learn about parenting skills and/or child development.	230	1	5	3.40	.875
Valid N (listwise)	229				

(Scale: 1 to 5 with 1 being least important and 5 being most important)

Table 4
Perceived Importance of Categories of Parental Involvement

<i>How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to . . .</i>	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
. . .provide a method for communication with members?	231	1	5	4.45	.827
. . .identify and use resources and services from the community to provide learning opportunities for its members?	230	1	5	3.98	.995
. . .provide opportunities for members to volunteer to help with support group activities, co-op classes, or other support group needs?	231	1	5	3.92	1.040
. . .provide opportunities for members to learn about choosing curriculum and/or teaching methods?	228	1	5	3.64	1.127
. . .provide opportunities for members to serve in a leadership position or on a committee?	231	1	5	3.61	1.061
. . .provide opportunities for members to learn about parenting skills and/or child development?	230	1	5	2.77	1.241
Valid N (listwise)	227				

Data Related to the Decision to Homeschool

Additional data were collected related to parents' decision to homeschool their children. To answer Research Question 5, the importance of access to a homeschool support group to the decision to homeschool was examined. Of the participants ($n = 249$) who answered this question, 61.8% were aware of the existence of local homeschool support group(s) before they made the decision to homeschool. For these families that were aware ($n = 155$) of local homeschool support groups, 48.4 % indicated that the availability of a homeschool support group had an effect on their decision to homeschool their children. Participants who said that the availability of a homeschool support group did have an effect on their decision to homeschool ($n = 73$) were asked to rate the importance of the opportunity for membership in a homeschool support group to their decision to homeschool. A mean score of 3.54 was reported using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = *not important at all* and 5 = *extremely important*.

Participants ($n = 279$) were asked to rate additional questions concerning factors important to their decision to homeschool their children. All questions used a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = *not important at all* and 5 = *extremely important*. A

mean score of 4.72 was reported for the question "How important is being involved in decisions about your child's learning environment to your decision to homeschool?" A mean score of 4.68 was reported for the question "How important is being able to be involved with choosing curriculum for your child to your decision to homeschool?"

Discussion

Demographic Data

The demographic data collected were chosen for the purpose of understanding parents' decision to homeschool and to provide a basis for comparison for future research. Participants had been homeschooling for an average of 8.54 years. This finding is somewhat different from findings in a prior study by Isenberg (2007). Isenberg analyzed data from the National Household Education Surveys to conclude that only 48% of religious homeschoolers and 15% of secular homeschoolers are still homeschooling after six years. Slightly over half (50.8%) of the participants had at least one child who attended public or private school before the family made the

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decision to homeschool their children and 49.2% of participants have always homeschooled their children. A total of 693 children were being homeschooled by the families who participated in this study ($N = 333$). These data should be important to school administrators as they seek to understand trends in school choice. The continued growth rate of homeschooling is evidenced in the data reported from the 2012 National Household Education Survey Program (NHES) that 1.77 million K-12 students in the United States were homeschooled during the 2011-2012 school year (Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2013). This number represented about 3.4% of the total school-age population in the United States at that time. In this study's sample, over half of the families had their child(ren) enrolled in public or private school before making the decision to homeschool.

Data Related to Homeschool Support Group Use

Research Question 1 focused on understanding how families participated in homeschool support group activities. A group of six questions was used to collect data on how often families participated in various homeschool support group activities. There were three activities related to student participation and three activities related to parent participation. Scores for the three student activities were summed and averaged to obtain a student participation score. Scores for the three parent activities were summed and averaged to obtain a parent participation score. The decision was made to sum and average to obtain these scores because not all of the six activities were offered by all homeschool support groups. The mean for parent participation was 2.36 and the mean for student participation was 3.04. On the scale used (1-5), two was "occasionally participate," three was "participate often," and four was "participate very often." As expected, the homeschooled students participated in homeschool support group activities more frequently than parents.

Research Question 2 focused on parents' perceptions of the importance of different types of activities and support offered by homeschool support groups. Participants were asked to rate the importance of the same six activities used to answer Research Question 1 (three related to students and three related to parents). Mean scores are illustrated in Figure 1. These findings provide baseline information on how families use homeschool support groups that will be useful for future research.

Data Related to Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Research Question 3 focused on determining parents' perceptions of how satisfied they were with opportunities for parental involvement with their homeschool support group. Research Question 4 focused on determining parents' perceptions of the importance of opportunities for parental involvement with their homeschool support group. The opportunities for involvement were based on Epstein's (2001) model of parental involvement, which is commonly used by schools as a framework for developing and evaluating efforts to increase parental involvement (Allen, 2011; Barlow & Humphrey, 2012; Bower & Griffin, 2011). The questions were structured to examine parental involvement with the homeschool support group in the same way as one would examine parental involvement with a public or private school.

A high level of satisfaction in all six categories of parental involvement was reported (see Figure 2). Data related to perceptions of satisfaction with opportunities for parental involvement with the homeschool support group and perceptions of the importance of different categories of parental involvement were very closely related, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Importance of Homeschool Support Group Activities.

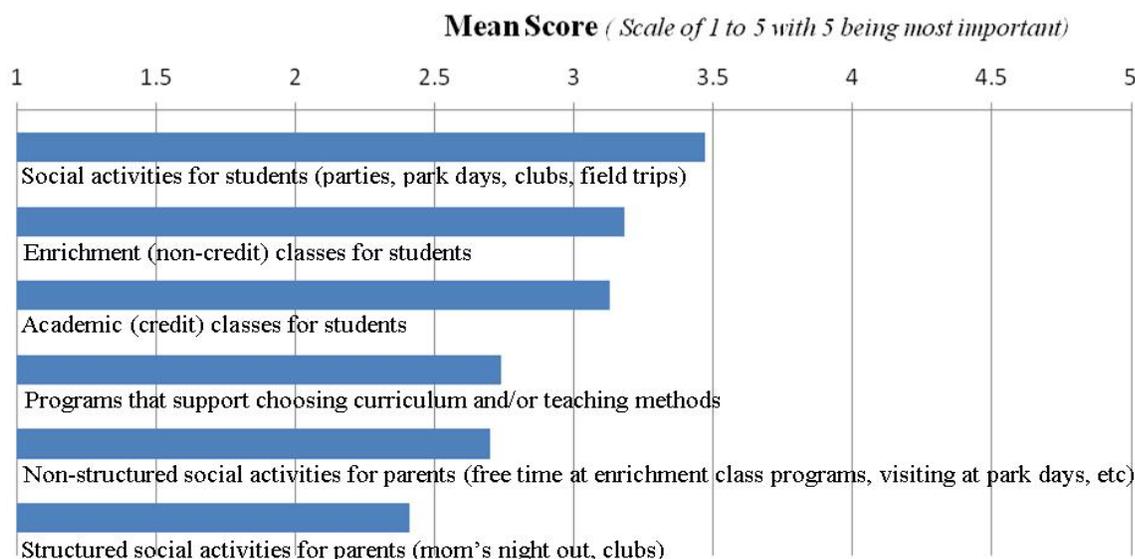
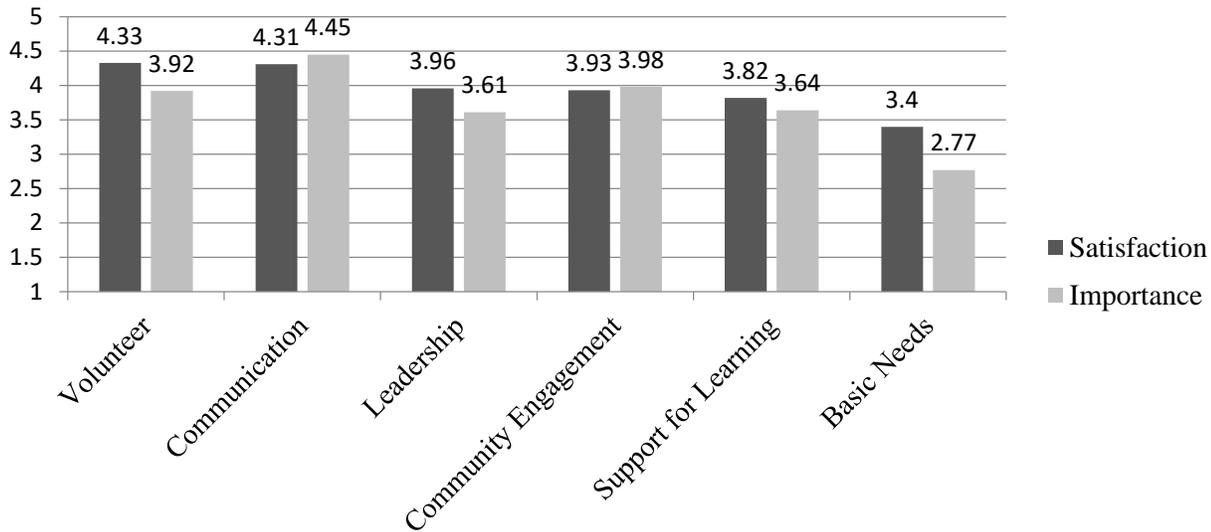


Figure 2. Overall Satisfaction and Importance with Categories of Parental Involvement.



* Rating scale: The scale for *Satisfaction* was 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, and 5 = Very Satisfied. The scale for *Importance* was 1 = Not at all Important to 5 = Extremely Important.

With a homeschool support group, parents are both the administrators for the educational organization and parents of the students attending the educational organization. The mean scores for parents’ satisfaction with opportunities for parental involvement with their homeschool group suggest a high level of satisfaction. This would suggest that the homeschool parents in the study’s sample have joined an educational organization that effectively supports parental involvement, in keeping with Goldring and Phillip’s (2008) assertion that parents are “pulled” to choose educational organizations that support the type of parental involvement consistent with their beliefs. The mean scores for parents’ perceptions of the importance of six categories of parental involvement suggest that parental involvement in their child’s education is very important to parents. As shown in Figure 2, parents’ satisfaction with each category of parental involvement was very closely aligned with their perceptions towards the importance of the category of parental involvement. These data contribute important insights into how parents want to be involved with an educational organization.

The questions used to assess the six categories of parental involvement shown in Figure 2 were as follow:

Volunteer: (a) Please rate your satisfaction with how well the homeschool support group provides opportunities for members to volunteer to help with support group activities, co-op classes, or other support group needs, and (b) How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to provide opportunities for members to volunteer to help with support group activities, co-op classes, or other support group needs?

Communication: (a) Please rate your satisfaction with how well the homeschool support group provides a method for communication with members, and (b) How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to provide a method for communication with members?

Leadership: (a) Please rate your satisfaction with how well the homeschool support group provides opportunities for members to serve in a leadership position or on a committee, and (b) How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to provide opportunities for members to serve in a leadership position or on a committee?

Community Engagement: (a) Please rate your satisfaction with how well the homeschool support group identifies and uses resources and services from the community to provide learning opportunities for its members, and (b) How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to identify and use resources and services from the community to provide learning opportunities for its members?

Support for Learning: (a) Please rate your satisfaction with how well the homeschool support group provides opportunities for members to learn about choosing curriculum and/or teaching methods, and (b) How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to provide opportunities for members to learn about choosing curriculum and/or teaching methods?

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Basic Needs: (a) Please rate your satisfaction with how well the homeschool support group provides opportunities for members to learn about parenting skills and/or child development, and (b) How important is it to you for your homeschool support group to provide opportunities for members to learn about parenting skills and/or child development?

Conclusions and Significance of the Study

For all participating parents ($n = 278$), the desire to be more involved in their child(ren)'s education in substantial ways was very important. For example, a mean score of 4.72 was reported for the question "How important is being involved in decisions about your child's learning environment to your decision to homeschool?" A mean score of 4.68 was reported for the question "How important is being able to be involved with choosing curriculum for your child to your decision to homeschool?" Both questions used a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = *not important at all* and 5 = *extremely important*.

This finding has extremely important implications for public and private school administrators and policymakers. The importance of parental involvement is supported by the very foundation of social learning theory. Tedin and Weiher (2011) summarize a large body of research when they state that "both scholars and practitioners agree that one of the most important factors promoting student success is the active involvement of parents in a child's education" (p.609). Yet, Lai and Vadeboncoeur's (2012) found a discrepancy between the emphasis in the literature about the importance of parental involvement and schools' narrowed definitions of parental involvement. Their analysis illustrated how schools' definitions of parental involvement and partnership frequently subjugated parents' beliefs about how they should be involved with their child's education.

In this study, a high level of satisfaction in all six categories of parental involvement was reported (see Figure 2). Data related to perceptions of satisfaction with opportunities for parental involvement with the homeschool support group and perceptions of the importance of different categories of parental involvement were very closely related. This would suggest that the homeschool parents in the study's sample have joined an educational organization that effectively supports parental involvement. These data contribute important insights into how parents want to be involved with an educational organization.

The six categories of parental involvement from Epstein's model of parental involvement are related to types of parental involvement that require a partnership between the parent, teacher, and educational organization. They integrally involve the parent and the community in the education process. The results of this study suggest that this type of parental involvement is very important to the families that are choosing to homeschool their children. Learning about the types of parental involvement that parents set up for an organization they create, run, and use should be of value to those interested in maximizing parental involvement with their educational organization. These findings provide valuable data for school administrators as they work to evaluate resource allocation for developing and supporting parental involvement.

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