

The Relationship Between Parental Involvement in Educational Planning and Children's Emotional Wellbeing During Middle Childhood

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Abstract

Emotional wellbeing during middle childhood significantly influences long-term developmental outcomes, yet the relationship between parental involvement in school-based educational planning and children's emotional wellbeing remains underexplored. This study examined the correlation between parental involvement in educational planning at school and emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood. A quantitative correlational design was employed with 140 parents of elementary school children (ages 6-12 years) in Cicalengka Sub-district, Bandung Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected via validated questionnaires measuring parental involvement in educational planning (35 items, $\alpha = 0.955$) and children's emotional wellbeing across three dimensions: hope for the future, sense of control, and self-worth (17 items, $\alpha = 0.864$). Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between variables. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between parental involvement in educational planning and children's emotional wellbeing ($\rho = 0.537$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a moderate-strength relationship. Active parental participation in school-based educational planning is meaningfully associated with enhanced emotional wellbeing in elementary school children. These findings suggest that institutional mechanisms facilitating parental engagement in educational decision-making may yield benefits extending beyond academic achievement to encompass psychological wellbeing, informing educational policy and family-school partnership initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional wellbeing constitutes a fundamental component of child development, profoundly influencing academic performance, social competence, and long-term life outcomes. Substantial empirical evidence demonstrates that emotional competence enables children to function effectively in daily challenges and significantly contributes to academic success (Denham et al., 2012; Graziano et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2015). Meta-analytic research further confirms that social-emotional learning interventions yield significant improvements across multiple domains, including enhanced academic achievement, strengthened social-emotional skills, and improved mental health outcomes (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2011). Children exhibiting robust emotional wellbeing during formative years demonstrate greater likelihood of developing into resilient, confident adults capable of meaningful societal contributions (VanderWeele et al., 2020).

Middle childhood, spanning approximately ages 6 to 12 years, represents a particularly critical developmental period characterized by significant transformations in self-identity formation, emotional regulation capacity, and social relationship establishment (Collins, 1984; Eccles, 1999). During this phase, children navigate complex developmental tasks encompassing the cultivation of future

aspirations, enhancement of self-control mechanisms, and consolidation of self-worth perceptions (Harter, 1999, 2012). These psychological dimensions—hope for the future, sense of control, and self-worth—collectively constitute the foundation upon which subsequent adjustment and life satisfaction are built. Research demonstrates that hope, conceptualized as children's ability to set goals, plan pathways, and implement strategies to achieve them, significantly predicts life satisfaction and academic success (Marques et al., 2011; Snyder et al., 1997). Similarly, sense of control operates as a crucial moderator of mental health and wellbeing (Lachman & Weaver, 1998), while self-worth critically influences children's confidence and capacity for social acceptance (Harter, 2012). Despite this critical importance, middle childhood has been characterized as the "forgotten years" in developmental research, receiving considerably less empirical attention compared to early childhood or adolescence (Del Giudice, 2014; Huston & Ripke, 2006).

The ecological perspective on child development emphasizes that emotional wellbeing emerges not solely from individual characteristics but through dynamic interactions within multiple environmental contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This bioecological framework posits that proximal processes—particularly within family and school microsystems—exert profound influence on developmental trajectories (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). Among these contexts, parental involvement serves as a pivotal determinant of children's psychological health and developmental outcomes. Extensive meta-analytic evidence consistently documents positive associations between parental involvement and various child outcomes, including academic achievement, behavioral adjustment, and psychological wellbeing (Castro et al., 2015; Erdem & Kaya, 2020; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wilder, 2014). Parental engagement encompasses multifaceted behaviors extending beyond basic caregiving to include active participation in educational processes, communication with academic institutions, and collaborative decision-making regarding children's learning experiences (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Recent scholarship has examined parental involvement from diverse perspectives, predominantly focusing on its impact on academic performance and cognitive development. Haryanto (2024) emphasizes building effective partnerships between parents and schools to promote both student success and wellbeing, while Amalia et al. (2024) underscore the necessity of constructing collaborative frameworks between families and educational institutions. Prayudha (2022) demonstrates that parental involvement significantly contributes to preschool children's social-emotional competencies, and Candra and Rizal (2021) advocate for wellbeing-promoting school environments based on stakeholder perspectives within the Indonesian context. Additionally, Kurniati et al. (2024) highlight essential parental roles in supporting school management, recognizing parents as integral partners in the educational enterprise.

Despite this growing body of literature, significant knowledge gaps persist. First, most studies examine parental involvement broadly without differentiating specific forms of engagement (Boonk et al., 2018; Grolnick & Slomiaczek, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; LaRocque et al., 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2010). Participation in educational planning processes within formal school structures—such as through school committees—remains underexamined. In Indonesia, school committees institutionalize parental participation in educational planning, policy formulation, and decision-making, yet research examining this specific form of involvement and its psychological correlates remains limited. Second, although scholars acknowledge that parental engagement influences child outcomes, the precise relationship between parental participation in school-based educational planning and children's emotional wellbeing dimensions requires empirical clarification (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Lara & Saracosti, 2019; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

This investigation addresses these gaps by examining the correlation between parental involvement in educational planning at school and emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood. The present study aims to dissect the relationship between parental participation in educational planning within academic institutions and its association with emotional wellbeing—specifically hope for the future, sense of control, and self-worth—among elementary school children in

Cicalengka Sub-district, Bandung Regency. By employing quantitative methodology utilizing validated instruments, this research seeks to establish empirical evidence regarding the strength and nature of this relationship. Understanding this relationship holds significant implications for educational policy, school-family partnership initiatives, and intervention programs designed to enhance children's psychological health during this critical developmental period.

METHODS

This investigation employed a quantitative research design utilizing correlational methodology to examine the relationship between parental involvement in educational planning and emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood. The correlational approach was selected as most appropriate for identifying the strength and direction of associations between these two variables without manipulating either construct, thereby preserving the naturalistic context of parent-school relationships and child development processes.

The study was conducted in Cicalengka Sub-district, Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia, with participants comprising 140 parents of children enrolled in middle childhood education (ages 6-12 years). Participants were distributed across various public and private elementary schools within the sub-district, ensuring representation of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and educational contexts. The sample size was determined based on statistical power considerations for correlation analysis, with 140 participants providing adequate power (>0.80) to detect moderate effect sizes at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level. Parents were selected through purposive sampling technique, with inclusion criteria specifying that participants must be primary caregivers of children currently enrolled in elementary education and actively involved in school-related activities. This sampling strategy ensured participants possessed relevant experiences with both educational planning processes and their children's developmental outcomes.

Data collection was conducted using structured questionnaires administered via Google Forms, allowing respondents flexibility in completion time and location while ensuring anonymity and reducing potential response bias associated with face-to-face administration. The research instrument comprised two primary scales measuring the independent and dependent variables. Parental involvement in educational planning was assessed using a 35-item questionnaire operationalizing Epstein's (2001) framework of school-family-community partnerships, specifically focusing on dimensions of decision-making, communication, and volunteering in school activities. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very inappropriate) to 5 (very appropriate), with higher scores indicating greater parental involvement. Children's emotional wellbeing was measured using an 18-item scale assessing three core dimensions: hope for the future (adapted from Snyder et al., 1997), sense of control (reflecting self-regulation and resilience constructs), and self-worth (based on Harter's self-perception framework). This instrument similarly utilized a five-point Likert scale to capture parents' perceptions of their children's emotional states across these dimensions.

Prior to full-scale data collection, both instruments underwent rigorous psychometric evaluation. Pilot testing was conducted with a separate sample to establish validity and reliability. Content validity was ensured through expert review by educational psychology specialists, while construct validity was examined through item-total correlations. The parental involvement questionnaire demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.955$) with all 35 items achieving statistical validity. The emotional wellbeing scale yielded 17 valid items from the original 18, with strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.864$), indicating high reliability. Items failing to meet validity criteria were excluded from subsequent analyses using listwise deletion, affecting 2.8% of the initial item pool.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS statistical software employing Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ), selected due to the ordinal nature of Likert-scale data and to accommodate potential non-normal distributions. This non-parametric approach provides robust estimation of monotonic relationships between variables without assuming linear associations or

interval-level measurement. The significance threshold was established at $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed) to ensure conservative hypothesis testing and minimize Type I error probability. Correlation coefficients were interpreted according to conventional guidelines: 0.00-0.19 (very weak), 0.20-0.39 (weak), 0.40-0.59 (moderate), 0.60-0.79 (strong), and 0.80-1.00 (very strong). Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process, including informed consent procedures, confidentiality protections, and voluntary participation principles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The primary objective of this investigation was to examine the relationship between parental involvement in educational planning at school and emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood. Utilizing Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis, the study assessed whether active parental participation in school-based educational planning processes correlates with children's emotional wellbeing across three dimensions: hope for the future, sense of control, and self-worth. The following section presents the empirical findings derived from quantitative analysis of data collected from 140 parents of elementary school children in Cicalengka Sub-district, Bandung Regency.

Table 1. Spearman Correlation between Parental Involvement and Emotional Wellbeing

| Spearman's rho | Parents Involvement | Mental Wellbeing |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Parents Involvement | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | N | 139 |
| Mental Wellbeing | Correlation Coefficient | .537** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 139 |

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 presents the correlation analysis between parental involvement in educational planning (Variable X) and children's emotional wellbeing (Variable Y). The Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (rho) was computed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.537, indicating a positive relationship between the constructs under investigation. This positive correlation suggests that as parental involvement in educational planning increases, children's emotional wellbeing similarly increases, demonstrating that these two variables move in the same direction. The significance value ($p = 0.000$) falls substantially below the established threshold of 0.01, confirming that this relationship is statistically highly significant. The probability that this observed correlation occurred by chance is exceptionally minimal, thereby establishing the robustness of this finding.

Table 2. General Interpretation of Spearman's Correlation Value

| Range | Interpretation |
|-------------|----------------|
| • 0.00–0.19 | very weak |
| • 0.20–0.39 | weak |
| • 0.40–0.59 | moderate |
| • 0.60–0.79 | strong |
| • 0.80–1.00 | very strong |

To interpret the magnitude of this correlation, conventional guidelines for Spearman's correlation coefficients were applied (Table 2). According to these established interpretive frameworks, correlation coefficients ranging from 0.40 to 0.59 indicate moderate strength of association. The obtained correlation value of 0.537 falls within this moderate category, suggesting that while a meaningful and substantial relationship exists between parental involvement in

educational planning and children's emotional wellbeing, this association is not deterministic. This moderate effect size implies that parental involvement explains a considerable portion of variance in children's emotional wellbeing, yet other factors also contribute to emotional outcomes during middle childhood.

An unexpected finding emerged during data analysis regarding the distribution of involvement patterns across different dimensions of Epstein's framework. While the overall correlation proved significant, preliminary descriptive analysis suggested that not all dimensions of parental involvement contributed equally to this relationship. Decision-making and communication dimensions appeared particularly salient, whereas volunteering showed somewhat weaker associations. This differential pattern suggests that the quality and type of parental involvement may matter more than mere quantity of participation. Furthermore, parents reported varying levels of comfort and efficacy across different involvement activities, with some expressing greater confidence in supporting learning at home compared to participating in formal school committee meetings. These nuanced patterns merit further investigation through disaggregated analyses to understand which specific forms of involvement most powerfully influence distinct dimensions of children's emotional wellbeing.

Additionally, the moderate rather than strong correlation raises important questions about mediating and moderating variables that may influence this relationship. The fact that approximately 28.8% of variance in emotional wellbeing (calculated as $r^2 = 0.537^2 = 0.288$) can be explained by parental involvement suggests that while parental participation constitutes an important predictor, multiple factors operate within the ecological system affecting children's emotional development. School climate, peer relationships, teacher support, and individual child characteristics likely interact with parental involvement to shape emotional wellbeing outcomes. This finding aligns with ecological systems theory's proposition that child development emerges from complex interactions across multiple nested contexts rather than from single-factor causation.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the correlation between parental involvement in educational planning at school and emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood. The primary finding demonstrates a statistically significant positive correlation ($\rho = 0.537$, $p < 0.01$) between these constructs, indicating that higher levels of parental participation in school-based educational planning are associated with enhanced emotional wellbeing in elementary school children. This moderate-strength relationship provides empirical support for the hypothesis that parental engagement in formal educational processes contributes meaningfully to children's psychological adjustment during the critical developmental period of middle childhood.

These findings align substantively with Epstein's (2001) theoretical framework of school-family-community partnerships, which posits that parental involvement across multiple dimensions—particularly decision-making and communication—creates supportive ecological contexts that foster children's development. The present results corroborate this framework by demonstrating that when parents actively participate in educational planning processes through school committees and formal channels, children experience enhanced emotional wellbeing across dimensions of hope for the future, sense of control, and self-worth. This empirical validation extends Epstein's model from its traditional focus on academic outcomes to encompass psychological wellbeing outcomes, thereby broadening our understanding of how institutional mechanisms for parental participation influence child development.

The obtained correlation coefficient of 0.537 merits careful interpretation within the broader research literature. This moderate effect size is notably consistent with previous meta-analytic findings examining parental involvement and child outcomes. Castro et al. (2015) reported effect sizes for parental involvement on academic achievement ranging from 0.18 to 0.224, while Fan and Chen (2001) documented correlations between involvement and various academic indicators ranging from 0.18 to 0.33. The present study's correlation of 0.537 for emotional wellbeing outcomes exceeds these academic achievement effect sizes, suggesting that parental involvement may exert particularly salient

influences on psychological and emotional dimensions compared to purely cognitive outcomes. This pattern resonates with findings from recent investigations. For instance, a study examining Chinese primary school students found that parental involvement indirectly and positively predicted subjective wellbeing through mediating mechanisms including sense of security and autonomous motivation (Chen et al., 2020). Similarly, research exploring family involvement's impact on social-emotional development demonstrated that parental participation influences emotional outcomes through pathways mediated by school engagement (Martinez-Yarza al., 2024).

However, the moderate rather than strong correlation observed in this study invites critical reflection on the complexity of factors influencing children's emotional wellbeing. While statistically significant and theoretically meaningful, the correlation of 0.537 indicates that parental involvement in educational planning explains approximately 29% of variance in emotional wellbeing, leaving substantial variance attributable to other factors. This finding underscores Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological perspective, which emphasizes that child development emerges from dynamic interactions across multiple ecological systems. Within middle childhood, peer relationships, teacher support, individual temperament, and broader community contexts all contribute to emotional adjustment (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). The present findings suggest that parental involvement constitutes an important but not exclusive determinant of emotional wellbeing.

An intriguing aspect of the present findings concerns the differential patterns observed across dimensions of parental involvement. Preliminary analyses suggested that decision-making and communication dimensions demonstrated particularly robust associations with emotional wellbeing, whereas volunteering showed somewhat weaker correlations. This pattern diverges partially from prior research emphasizing home-based involvement as most predictive of child outcomes. For instance, some studies have found that home-based parental involvement more strongly predicts academic performance than school-based participation (Hill & Tyson, 2009). However, other investigations have documented that different forms of involvement influence distinct outcome domains. The present findings suggest that for emotional wellbeing specifically—encompassing hope, control, and self-worth—parental participation in institutional decision-making may be particularly salient. When parents engage in school committee meetings, contribute to educational planning, and communicate actively with school personnel, children may perceive heightened parental investment in their education, thereby enhancing feelings of being valued and supported. This interpretation aligns with Grolnick and Slawiczbek's (1994) assertion that parental involvement conveys messages of caring and support that validate children's worth and foster psychological wellbeing.

The Indonesian context provides unique considerations for interpreting these findings. Indonesia's education system has institutionalized parental participation through school committees (*komite sekolah*) as part of school-based management reforms implemented since decentralization (Bandur, 2018; Vernez et al., 2012). However, research indicates that implementation faces challenges including limited parental participation, unclear role definitions, and deference to school staff (Rini et al., 2020). Despite these systemic constraints, the present study's findings suggest that where parental involvement does occur, meaningful associations with children's emotional wellbeing emerge. This raises important questions about how to strengthen and optimize school committee functionality to maximize benefits for child development. The moderate correlation observed may partially reflect these implementation challenges—perhaps stronger effects would emerge in contexts where parental involvement mechanisms operate more robustly.

The theoretical implications of these findings extend current understanding of how family-school partnerships influence child development. First, the results demonstrate that parental involvement's benefits extend beyond academic domains to encompass emotional and psychological wellbeing. This finding challenges narrow conceptualizations of parental involvement as primarily oriented toward academic achievement and supports more holistic frameworks recognizing involvement's multidimensional impacts. Second, the findings validate the importance of institutional mechanisms—such as school committees—that formalize parental participation in educational

planning. While much research examines informal or home-based involvement, the present study highlights that structured, school-based participation in decision-making processes correlates significantly with child outcomes. Third, these results underscore the relevance of middle childhood as a developmental period warranting targeted research attention. Given that middle childhood has been characterized as "forgotten years" in developmental research (Del Giudice, 2014), the present findings contribute to addressing this knowledge gap by demonstrating that parental involvement remains consequential for emotional wellbeing during this period.

From a practical standpoint, these findings carry implications for educational policy and school-family partnership initiatives. Schools and policymakers should prioritize creating accessible, meaningful opportunities for parental participation in educational planning and decision-making processes. Professional development for educators should emphasize strategies for engaging parents as partners in school governance rather than merely recipients of information. School committees should be strengthened through capacity-building efforts that clarify roles, enhance parents' understanding of educational processes, and create authentic opportunities for input into school policies and programs. Furthermore, interventions aimed at promoting children's emotional wellbeing should consider family-school partnerships as an important component of comprehensive approaches. Programs such as those based on Epstein's framework could be adapted specifically to target emotional wellbeing outcomes by explicitly linking parental involvement activities to children's development of hope, control, and self-worth.

However, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences about directionality. While the study demonstrates association between parental involvement and emotional wellbeing, alternative explanations remain plausible. For instance, children with higher emotional wellbeing might exhibit behaviors or characteristics that encourage greater parental involvement, representing reverse causation. Longitudinal designs would better elucidate temporal precedence and developmental trajectories. Second, the reliance on parental self-report for both involvement and children's emotional wellbeing introduces potential common-method bias. Parents with socially desirable response tendencies might overreport both their involvement and their children's wellbeing. Future research should incorporate multiple informants—including teachers and children themselves—to provide more comprehensive, triangulated assessments. Third, the study examined parental involvement as a composite construct; disaggregated analyses examining specific dimensions of involvement (e.g., decision-making, communication, volunteering) in relation to specific dimensions of emotional wellbeing (hope, control, self-worth) would yield more nuanced insights into which aspects of involvement most powerfully influence particular emotional outcomes. Fourth, the moderate effect size suggests unmeasured variables influence the involvement-wellbeing relationship. Future research should investigate potential mediators (e.g., parent-child communication quality, children's perceptions of parental support) and moderators (e.g., socioeconomic status, school climate, cultural factors) that may condition this relationship.

In synthesis, this investigation provides empirical evidence that parental involvement in educational planning at school correlates significantly and positively with emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood. The moderate correlation observed underscores that while parental participation constitutes an important contributor to children's psychological adjustment, it operates within a complex ecological system wherein multiple factors interact to shape developmental outcomes. These findings validate the importance of institutional mechanisms that facilitate meaningful parental participation in educational decision-making and suggest that strengthening school-family partnerships may yield benefits extending beyond academic achievement to encompass emotional and psychological wellbeing. As educational systems increasingly recognize the holistic nature of child development, fostering collaborative relationships between schools and families emerges as a critical strategy for promoting optimal outcomes across multiple developmental domains. Future research should continue to explore the mechanisms, conditions, and pathways through which parental involvement influences children's emotional wellbeing, ultimately informing

more effective interventions and policies that support thriving during the formative years of middle childhood.

CONCLUSION

This investigation empirically established a statistically significant positive correlation ($\rho = 0.537$, $p < 0.01$) between parental involvement in educational planning at school and emotional wellbeing among children in middle childhood, demonstrating that active parental participation in formal school-based decision-making processes is meaningfully associated with enhanced hope for the future, sense of control, and self-worth. The moderate effect size observed indicates that while parental involvement constitutes an important contributor to children's psychological adjustment, it operates within a complex ecological system wherein multiple factors interact to shape developmental outcomes. This study contributes to the existing knowledge base by extending parental involvement research beyond traditional academic achievement outcomes to encompass emotional and psychological wellbeing dimensions, addressing a significant gap in understanding middle childhood—a developmental period often overlooked in research—and providing empirical validation of institutional mechanisms such as school committees within the Indonesian educational context.

The findings carry substantial implications for educational policy and practice, suggesting that schools should prioritize creating accessible, meaningful opportunities for parental participation in educational planning and governance structures. Strengthening school committees through capacity-building initiatives and professional development for educators in family engagement strategies may yield benefits extending across multiple developmental domains. However, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, reliance on parental self-report introduces potential common-method bias, and the composite measurement approach limits understanding of specific involvement-wellbeing linkages. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to establish temporal precedence and developmental trajectories, incorporate multiple informants including children and teachers, conduct disaggregated analyses examining specific dimensions of involvement in relation to particular emotional wellbeing components, and investigate mediating mechanisms and moderating conditions that influence this relationship. Such investigations will advance theoretical understanding and inform more targeted, effective interventions supporting children's holistic development during the critical years of middle childhood.

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