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THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP ON TEACHER-PARENT COMMUNICATION AT SECONDARY EDUCATION

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The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of school-family partnership on teacher-parent communication. The population of the study consisted of the parents of 4937 students studying in the 12th grade of Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools in five districts (Aksu, Kepez, Konyaaltı, Muratpaşa and Döşemealtı districts) in Antalya, Turkey. In order to represent the target population, the proportional distribution technique, which is one of the stratified sampling methods, was used. 450 questionnaires were distributed to reach the sample number, out of which 364 were completed. The tool used was, an adapted version of the School-Family-Community Partnership Scale, developed by Epstein et al. (2009). The validity and reliability analyses of the scales were established with explanatory and confirmatory factor analyses. The findings revealed that majority of parents were primary school, secondary school, or high school graduates. Decisions in the family were found to be made either jointly by the mother and the father or in some cases by father only. The level of mothers' decision-making regarding children were found to be low. It was also found that Parents go to school at least once and maximum four times in a year. However, parent of one out of ten students did not visit the school to get information about their child. The relationship between school-family partnership and teacherparent communication was found to be directly proportional and fairly high. In other words, a strong partnership between the school and the family increases the communication between the teacher and parents.

KEYWORDS: School-Family Partnership, Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School, 12th Graders, Teacher-Parent Communication

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INTRODUCTION

Although schools are institutions that are officially responsible for the education of nations, it is a universally accepted fact that students' academic, behavioural, social and emotional competence is influenced by the role of families and the atmosphere at home. Families and schools are the main agents in students' socialization. The concept of school-family partnership is stated as school-family relationship and school-family involvement in the literature. In the Merriam Webster (2019) dictionary, partnership is defined as "the legal contract between two or more persons about the existing business principles", and relationship is defined as the way two or more individuals, groups, countries, etc. talk to, care about, and treat each other. On the other hand, the Turkish Language Association (2019) dictionary defines partnership as "the business partnership which is established by those with mutual aims and interests", while relationship is defined as "the mutual interest, bond, relationship, contact between two things". It is understood that the concept of partnership has a more legal definition including the parties. Therefore, it can be said that it is more appropriate to use the expression of "school-family partnership" based on the definitions of partnership and relationship.

The collaboration between families and school, which is the most influential institution in the raising of the students, is important in terms of achieving the aims targeted in education. To help students acquire a behaviour as a habit, maintain their existence in the society as individuals, develop an identity, and develop habits for self-improvement, school-family partnership is necessary (Wyatt, 1996). The concept of school-family partnership came into the agenda especially in the 1990s and was considered to be an extension of effective school. School-family partnership includes the idea that both parties work towards the same aim and raise the child (Berger, 1991). In the past education understanding, the relationship between the in-school and out-ofschool elements was determined and the relations were discussed within this context. However, today, with globalization, these boundaries and patterns have been eliminated, and the in-school and out-of-school elements work together to realize the education process in the best way possible. In other words, it is necessary for teachers and parents to work together for the educational attainments of children (Rimm-Kaufman, 2005). For this purpose, it is important that parents and teachers are willing to perform the duties they are responsible for (Arnold et al., 1994). School-family partnership mainly involves activities that parents do to support the education of their children (Drake, 2000). Schools, society and students benefit from families' involvement in the education of their children (Caplan, 2000). In fact, this partnership fills the gap in the education of the child. Khan (1996) states that school-family partnership is important for two reasons. The first is that school-family partnership has a positive effect on the child's psychological and emotional development and educational success. The second is that school-family

partnership is an effective way of creating a sense of mutual trust, sincerity and interdependence although it is not a solution for increasing mutual distrust between the education system and the community and for establishing a relationship between the parties. According to Akbaşlı (2007), the main aim of school-family partnership is to organize the relations between the family and the school, and to establish cooperation between parents, school administration and teachers in order to educate the children in the best way possible. School-family partnership leads to student development by showing students that their family and teachers are exerting effort for their well-being. This partnership directly affects students' academic success as a source of motivation (Ritblatt et al., 2002).

School-family partnership includes the efforts to eliminate the duality in the education of the child, to make an effort for the education of the child with the same purpose and to make the education process efficient. Tutar (2003) states that with school-family partnership, unwanted behaviours of students are eliminated and students are instilled with the idea that respect and communication are important. Wyatt (1996) argues that the main purpose of school-family partnership is to ensure student's peace at school, to direct his education, and to give the student confidence. The fact that the family and the school work together, that the families are aware of the studies and activities in the school, and that they develop or contribute to joint participation increase students' awareness that education is a serious job and with the support of the family, they continue to work more confidently (Rosental and Sawyers, 1996). In brief, school-family partnership allows for better communication between families and educators. They support and share home and school goals mutually, better understand the complexities of child development, and gather family and school resources to find solutions and to implement them (Christenson and Reschly, 2010).

The decision of families to participate or not to participate in the education process also affects the academic success of the student. It is not a coincidence that the academic achievement of the children who do not receive sufficient educational support from their family is low. When families, who are the teachers at home, are indifferent to their children's education, children's positive impression about education is damaged (Hollingsworth & Hoover, 1999). The factors that prevent parents from participating in school-family partnership are that parents do not have a good perception of the structure and functioning of the school, the school has limited talks with parents, and schools generally consider parents as financial support (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). Other factors can be listed as follows: Parents are subjected to psychological intimidation by schools; schools establish too much authority on students and they do not include parents in the system (Epstein & Dauber, 1991); schools have limited communication with parents and parents have some socio-economic problems (Jasso, 2007); the partnership between the school and the

family is incompatible (Troatman, 2001); the family is indifferent to the child's education (Altun, 2009). According to Caplan (2000), teachers' lack of time, the prejudice that parents cannot help teachers, the incompatibility between the communication styles of teachers and parents, and the incompatibility between the interaction styles of parents and teachers due to cultural and linguistic differences negatively affect school-family partnership. Also, family's limited time, some parents' fear of school, the fear that they will not be welcomed, and parents' negative past school experiences adversely affect school-family partnership (Caplan, 2000).

Although school-family partnership has a very important place in the education of children, it cannot be said that today this partnership can properly be established. Çınkır and Nayır (2017) stated that schools have been inadequate in the education of children in recent years and that school-family-community partnership has become even more important. Particularly during the secondary school period, when physical and mental changes are greatly experienced, adolescents may be distracted by many in-school and out-of-school factors as they are in the process of establishing their identity. In this period, students are open to take everything they see around as an example, and as they are easily affected and cannot distinguish between right and wrong, they can make mistakes. In such an important period, there should be a high level of communication between the school and family (Vandergrift & Greene, 1992).

Ensuring school-family partnership in secondary education affects the student as well as the teacher. Good communication between parents and teachers also influences teacher performance directly (Broussard, 2003). When the family visits the school to talk to the teachers about students' current school status, absenteeism, or any other subject, the connection between the teachers and the family improves. As the family cares about the emotional and social relationship between the teacher and the student, appreciates the views of the teacher, and shows this appreciation through frequent visits, the teacher's performance is positively affected and also social relations between the teacher and the family are strengthened (Bos & Vaughn, 2002).

Adolescents may show undesirable behaviours during the early years of educational life and in secondary education that corresponds to adolescence. These unwanted behaviours may be bad habits, disrespect, and giving harm to the environment. School-family partnership is effective in preventing the student from displaying these behaviours. Thus, the student is prevented from developing bad habits, and the success rate increases (Rosental & Sawyers, 1996).

Within the Turkish Education System, school-family partnership is created through school-family associations, which are established in schools with the National Education Fundamental Law No.1739 (Official Gazette: 24.06.1973)

under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The Regulation on the School-Family Associations was published in 2012. The aim of this regulation is to regulate the procedures and principles of the establishment, functioning, duties, authority and responsibilities of the school-family associations (the Ministry of National Education, Regulation on School-Family Association, 2012). However, this regulation does not impose any obligation on families, and so school-family partnership is carried out with families' initiatives. Aslan (1984) criticizes this situation by stating that there is no planned communication between the school and the family, and that the relationship between the administrators, teachers, the school and the family remains unplanned and random. In this context, the importance of school-family partnership and parent-teacher communication between school-family aims to investigate the relationship between school-family partnership and parent-teacher communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study and employs the relational screening model, which is used to determine the interaction between multiple variables. The hypothesis of this study is: School-family partnership has an effect on teacherparent communication. In this context, the dependent variable is teacherparent communication, and the independent variable is school-family partnership.

RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study consists of the parents of 4937 students studying in the 12th grade of the Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools in five districts (Aksu, Kepez, Konyaalti, Muratpaşa and Döşemealtı districts) in Antalya, Turkey. Due to the difficulty in reaching the whole population, the limited time and economic reasons, it was aimed to reach a representative sample of the target population. The researchers aimed to reach one parent of every student studying at 12th grade. When the sampling error was 5% and the random error was 5%, the sample size was found to be 357 (Baş, 2001). In order to represent the target population, the proportional distribution technique, which is one of the stratified sampling methods, was used. The five districts in Antalya were sampled at the rate they were represented in the population. 450 questionnaires were distributed to reach the determined sample size and 364 of them returned completely filled. Table 1 shows the distribution of the parents who make up the sample of the study across the districts.

Table 1

Districts	The Number of	The Number of	The Number of	The Percentage of
	12th Graders	12th Graders in	Questionnaires	the Questionnaires
		the Sample	Returned	Returned
Döşemealtı	555	52	38	73%
Kepez	2314	213	172	81%
Konyaaltı	471	45	37	82%
Muratpaşa	1450	135	109	81%
Aksu	38	5	8	160%
Total	4937	450	364	81%

The Distribution of the Parents of 12th Graders Across the Districts.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the parents of the 12th graders in the vocational and technical education schools across the central districts of Antalya. The return rate is 81%.

Demographic Information of the Participants

184 (50.5%) of the parents of 12th graders in Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools were female and 180 (49.5%) were male. The educational status of parents was bachelor's degree (11.3%), high school (33.8%), secondary school (22%), primary school (29.4%), literate (1.4%), and illiterate (2.2%), respectively. 44.8% of the students in this study were female and 55.2% were male. When the decision makers in the family are considered, it was observed that 58.5% of the families had a joint decision, while fathers made the final decision at 28% and mothers were the decision makers at 13.5% (Table 2).

As far as the occupational status of the participants is concerned, 15.7% of the parents were tradesmen, 30.2% were housewives, 9.9% were laborers, 11.3% were civil servants, 10.4% were self-employed, and 17% work in the private sector. As for the frequency of visiting the school in a year, 4.9% of the parents stated that they go to the school for parents' meeting, while 3.6% go occasionally, and 11% never go. Also, 50.5% go 1-4 times a year, while 13.5% visit the school 5-8 times, 3% of the parents 9-12 times, and 2.2% more than 12 times a year (Table 2).

When the number of children attending secondary school is considered, it is seen that 69% of the parents have one child, 27.2% have 2 children, 3.3% have 3 children, and 0.5% have 4 children attending secondary school. As far as the relationship between the parent and the student is concerned, it was found that 48.6% of the parents are the mothers of the students, while 45.3% are the fathers, 3.3% are the brothers, 1.6% are the sisters, and 1.1% are the uncles

(Table 2).

Table 2

The Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Parents' Personal Information.

Independent Variables		Ν	%			N	%
C 1	Female	184	50.5		Tradesman	57	15.7
Gender	Male	180	49.5	_	Housewife	110	30.2
	Bachelor's degree	41	11.3	_	Labourer	36	9.9
Elizit	High School	123	33.8	Occupation	Government worker	41	11.3
Status of the	Secondary School	80	22	-	Self- employed	38	10.4
parents	Primary School	107	29.4	_	Private sector	62	17
	Literate	5	1.4		Always	36	9.9
	Illiterate	8	2.2	_	When call ed	5	1.4
				_	At parents' meeting	18	4.9
				The frequency of	Occasionally	13	3.6
Can dan af	Girl	163	44.8	parents' visiting	Never	40	11
Gender of	Boy	201	55.2	the school	1-4 times	184	50.5
the student				_	5-8 times	49	13.5
					9-12 times	11	3
					More than 1 2 times	8	2.2
The decision	Father	102	28	The number of	1	251	69
maker in the	Mother	49	13.5	children parents	2	99	27.2
family	Joint	213	58.5	have in secondary	3	12	3.3
				school	4	2	0.5
				The solution shine	Mother	177	48.6
				hetween the	Father	165	45.3
				student and the	Brother	12	3.3
				narent	Sister	6	1.6
				Purch	Uncle	4	1.1

DATA COLLECTION TOOL DEVELOPMENT

The scale used in the study is composed of three parts. The first part of the scale includes demographic information about the parents of the students. The second part includes the School-Family-Community Partnership Scale developed by Epstein et al. (2009) and adapted to Turkish, and the third part includes the Teacher Parent Communication Scale developed by the researchers.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHER-PARENT COMMUNICATION SCALE (TPCS)

Within the process of developing the Teacher-Parent Communication Scale (TPCS), first we examined the books, theses and articles on the subject, and then we developed the scale by following some certain steps. We decided that the scale would be first applied to the parents of 12th graders attending vocational and technical high schools in line with the purpose of the measurement tool.

The five-point Likert type scaling (5 = totally agree 1 = not agree at all) was used in the scale developed by the researchers. There were 40 items in the scale. Expert opinion was received to ensure the content validity of the scale. Within this scope, one faculty member in the Department of Turkish Education, one faculty member in the Department of Assessment and Evaluation, and four different faculty members in the Department of Educational Management were consulted in order to examine the suitability of the scale to the study, the content validity of the scale and its relation with the department. In light of the feedback received from the experts, the scale was revised by making some additions or removing some items.

The factor validity of the TPCS, in other words, the content validity, was investigated with two different factor analyses (explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis). The TPCS is a multidimensional scale. The reliability analysis of each sub-dimension of the scale was investigated with Cronbach's alpha value and the reliability coefficients were found as 0.94, 0.89, 0.88 and 0.85, respectively (Table 3). The total reliability of the scale was found to be 0.96. These values indicate high internal consistency (Hair, Anderson, Tahtam & Black, 1998). As a result of the factor analysis, the total variance explained is approximately 63%, and the variances of the sub-dimensions are 24%, 15%, 12%, 12%, respectively. KMO (0.952) and Bartlett test (7817.081) values were found to be appropriate. Table 3 shows the results of factor analysis.

Table 3

Factor	$\overline{\mathbf{x}}$	SS	Factor	Varia nce	Cronbach's
			loading	explained	Alpha
Teacher's behaviour towards the	3.71	0.89	0.577 -0.787	24	0.94
parent s					
Teacher's responsibilities to the	3.54	1.04	0.571 -0.721	15	0.89
parent s					
Teacher's support for the parent s	3.46	1.04	0.543 -0.699	12	0.88
The methods used by the teacher in	3.12	1.29	0.546 -0.793	12	0.85
communicating with the parent s					

Explanatory Factor Analysis Results for the TPCS.

As seen in Table 3, the factor loadings of the items of the four subdimensions of the TPCS are greater than 0.50. The factor loading value was taken as 0.50 in order to increase the validity of the study. When the arithmetic mean values of the dimensions are analysed, it is seen that the parents consider the teacher's behaviours towards the parents and the teacher's responsibilities towards the parents as the most important factors.

The 30-item and 4-factor structure obtained from the explanatory factor analysis was tested with confirmatory factor analysis. Lisrel 8.54 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001) was used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA is the direct application of the structural equation model, and by determining a single model, the researcher uses the structural equation model to evaluate the statistical significance of this model (Hair, Anderson, Tahtam & Black, 1998). As a result of the path analysis conducted using Lisrel 8.54, conformity statistics such as RMSEA, CFI, and the GFI index were found to be in acceptable range (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger & Müller, 2003). According to the first-order confirmatory factor analysis, the TPCS is in a four-factor structure.

The fit indices of the model obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis of the TPCS were examined and the chi-square value ($\chi 2 = 2.56$) and the degree of freedom (df = 2), p = 0. 27799 \ge 0.05) was found. Since the aim was to develop a model that fits the data, a non-significant chi-square value was desired. This chi-square value is not significant, meaning that the model is suitable for the data (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2015). According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, the p value should be interpreted. This value gives information about the significance of the difference between the expected covariance matrix and the observed covariance matrix (Table 4). Thus, the p value should be p \ge .05 (Bagozzi, 1981).

Table 4.

Fit Indices	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	The Proposed Model
χ^2	$0 \le \chi^2 \le 2sd$	$2sd < \chi^2 \le 3 sd$	2.56 (sd=2)
χ^2/sd	$0 \le \chi^2/df \le 2$	$2 < \chi^2/df \le 3$	1.28
RMSEA	$0 \le \text{RMSE A} \le 0,05$	$0,05 < \text{RMSEA} \le 0,10$	0.028
GFI	$0,95 \leq \mathrm{GFI} \leq 1,00$	$0,90 \le \text{GFI} < 0,95$	1.00
AGFI	$0,90 \leq \text{AGFI} \leq 1.00$	$0,85 \le AGFI < 0,90$	0.98
NFI	$0,95 \le \text{AGFI} \le 1.00$	0,90 ≤ NFI <0,95	1.00
CFI	$0,95 \leq \mathrm{CFI} \leq 1.00$	0,85 ≤ CFI <0,90	1.00
RMR	$0 \le \text{RMR} \le 0.05$	$0,05 < \text{RMR} \le 0,1 \ 0$	0.008
SRMR	$0 \le \text{SRMR} \le 0.05$	$0,05 < \mathrm{SRMR} \le 0,10$	0.000

Goodness of Fit Indices of the TPCS.

Source: Schermelleh-Engel, K., Moosbrugger, H., & Müller, H., 2003.

In this scale, as $p = 0.27799 \ge .05$, we can say that the data fit perfectly. The fit index values were obtained as RMSEA = 0.028, NFI = 1.00, GFI = 1.00, AGFI = 0.98, CFI = 1.00, and SRMR = 0.000, and RMR = 0.008. The fit indices of the model were considered to be sufficient to use (Table 4).

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE SCHOOL-PARENT-COMMUNITY SCALE (SPCS)

The SPCS originally included 53 items. The dimensions of the scale are

parenting, communication, volunteering, home learning, decision making and collaboration with the community. A five-point Likert scale (5 = totally agree 1 = not agree at all) was used in the SPCS. To use the SPCS in the study, permission was obtained from Joyce Epstein, who developed the scale.

The SPCS developed by Epstein et al. (2009) is in English. For this reason, the scale was adapted to Turkish. In order to ensure maximum equivalence in the translation of measurement instruments from one language into other, a procedure known as double translation or back translation is used (Brislin, 1980). The consensus method (Knudsen et al., 2000), which is one of the translation processes (e.g. concept mapping, focus group, etc.), was used in the translation of the scale from English to Turkish and from Turkish to English. Two faculty members who completed their PhD in the field of Educational Management in the US and two faculty members who completed their PhD in educational management in Turkey independently translated the SPCS from English to Turkish. The measurement tools which were translated independently were compared with each other and finalized considering the common view. The scale translated into Turkish was then back translated into English by a PhD holder who has a Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching and who completed her PhD in the field of Educational Management. This process continued until the researchers and the translators of the scale reached a consensus. As a result, the SPCS was finalized with a few corrections. 53 items in the scale were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis provides more precise theoretical information about the validity of the model and the factor structure compared to explanatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using Lisrel 8.54 package program in order to confirm the factors in the SPCS. Rather than making a decision considering a single goodness of fit index, other indexes were investigated as a large number of goodness of fit indexes was used in structural equation modelling. According to the first order confirmatory factor analysis, the SPCS has a six-factor structure. Fit indices calculated as a result of the improvement between decision making and social partnership dimensions were compared with the general criteria and it was observed that the values were within acceptable levels (Table 5).

Fit Indices	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	The Proposed Model
X ²	$0 \le \chi^2 \le 2sd$	2sd < χ²≤ 3 sd	25.37 (sd=8)
χ^2/sd	$0 \le \chi^2/df \le 2$	$2 < \chi^2 / df \le 3$	3.17
RMSEA	$0 \leq \text{RMSEA} \leq 0,05$	$0,05 < \text{RMSEA} \le 0,10$	0.077
GFI	$0,95 \leq \mathrm{GFI} \leq 1,00$	$0,90 \leq \mathrm{GFI} < 0,95$	0.98
AGFI	$0,90 \leq \mathrm{AGFI} \leq 1.00$	$0,85 \leq \mathrm{AGFI} < 0,90$	0.94
NFI	$0,95 \leq \mathrm{AGFI} \leq 1.00$	0,90 ≤ NFI <0,95	0.99
CFI	$0,95 \leq \mathrm{CFI} \leq 1.00$	$0,85 \le CFI < 0,90$	0.99
RMR	$0 \le \text{RMR} \le 0.05$	$0,05 < \text{RMR} \le 0,10$	0.014
SRMR	$0 \leq \mathrm{SRMR} \leq 0,05$	$0,05 < \mathrm{SRMR} \leq 0,10$	0.014

Table 5

Source: Schermelleh-Engel, K., Moosbrugger, H., & Müller, H., 2003.

The fit indices of the model obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis of the SPCS scale were examined, and the Chi-square value (χ 2= 25.37) and degree of freedom (df = 8), p = 0. 000 <0.05) were found. The fit index values were RMSEA = 0.077, NFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.98, AGFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.99, SRMR = 0.014, and RMR = 0.014. The fit indices of the model were considered to be sufficient to use (Table 5).

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection tool of the study was submitted to the approval of Akdeniz University, Social and Human Sciences Publication Ethics Committee so that it could be applied to the parents of 12th graders attending Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools in the central districts of Antalya. After the approval of the Ethics Committee, permission was requested from Antalya Provincial Directorate of National Education through the Institute of Educational Sciences to apply the data collection tool in the Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools. It took about a month to get permission from the Provincial Directorate of National Education. After obtaining the necessary permission, the data was collected within a month.

DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS 24.0 and LISREL 9.3 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001) statistical package programmes were used to analyse the data. Explanatory and confirmatory factor analyses were used in the development process of the scales. The frequency and percentage distributions of the participants' demographic characteristics (gender, age, number of children, etc.) and the mean and

standard deviation values for the sub-dimensions of the data collection tools were calculated. In the study, the relationship between the data collection tools was identified through the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. While the correlation coefficients were evaluated, absolute values between 0.70 and 1.00 were interpreted as high, while values between 0.69 and 0.30 were considered to be average, and coefficients at 0.29 and lower were interpreted as low (Büyüköztürk, 2005). The relationship between school-family partnership and teacher-parent communication was tested with the structural equation modeling (path).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Relationship between School-Parent Partnership and Teacher-Parent Communication

Whether there was a significant relationship between school-family partnership and teacher-parent communication was tested with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation technique. The results are given in Table 6. As seen in the table, while parenting and home learning dimensions have a high average value in the school-family partnership scale, decision making and collaboration with the community dimensions have the lowest average value. In the teacher-parent communication scale, on the other hand, the dimension "teacher's behaviour towards the parents" has the highest average value, while the dimension "the methods used by the teacher in communicating with the parents" has the lowest average value.

According to Table 6, there is a moderate and positive relationship between parenting and the teacher's behaviors towards the parents (r = 0.485, p < 0.01), the teacher's responsibilities to the parents (r = 0.452, p < 0.01), the teacher's support for the parents (r = 0.475, p < 0.01) and the methods used by the teacher in communicating with the parents (r = 0.521, p < 0.01).

The relationship between communication and the teacher's behaviour towards the parents (r = 0.739, p <0.01), the teacher's responsibilities to the parents (r = 0.712, p <0.01) and the teacher's support for the parents (r = 0.808, p <0.01) was found to be high and positive, while there is a moderate and positive relationship between communication and the methods used by the teacher in communicating with the parents (r = 0.695, p <0.01). A moderate and positive relationship was found between volunteering and the teacher's responsibilities to the parents (r = 0.533, p <0.01), the teacher's support for the parents (r = 0.535, p <0.01) and the methods used by the teacher in communicating with the parents (r = 0.563, p <0.01).

Table 6
The Correlation Analysis Results Pertaining to the Relationship Between School-Family Partnership and Teacher-
Parent Communication.

Correlation \overline{X} SS(o) Parenting 3.38 0.99 Communication 3.43 0.78 Volunteering 3.24 0.94	Parenting									
Parenting3.380.99Communication3.430.78Volunteering3.240.94		Communication	Volunteering	Home Learning	Decision making	Collaboration with the community	Teacher's behaviour towards parents	Teacher's responsibilities to parents	Teacher's support for parents	Methods used by the teacher in communicatir with narents
Communication 3.43 0.78 Volunteering 3.24 0.94	1	0.724**	0.708**	0.741**	0.677**	0.664^{**}	0.485**	0.452**	0.475**	0.521**
Volunteering 3.24 0.94		1	0.742**	0.757**	0.724**	0.703**	0.739**	0.712**	0.808**	0.695**
			1	0.821**	0.781**	0.771**	0.540**	0.533**	0.535**	0.563**
Home Learning 3.38 0.96				1	0.802**	0.799**	0.495**	0.573**	0.544**	0.547**
Decision 3.11 0.99 making					1	0.847**	0.477**	0.531**	0.527**	0.589**
Collaboration 3.17 1.03 with the community						1	0.468**	0.535**	0.516**	0.585**
Teacher's 3.73 0.90 behaviour towards marents							1	0.685**	0.730**	0.620**
Teacher's 3.54 0.95 responsibilities to parents								1	0.759**	0.689**
Teacher's 3.46 0.98 support for parents									1	0.692**
Methods used 3.12 1.06 by the teacher in communicating										
with parents										

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There is a moderate and positive relationship between home learning and the teacher's behaviour towards parents (r = 0.495, p <0.01), teacher's responsibilities to parents (r = 0.573, p <0.01), teacher's support for parents (r = 0.544, p <0.01) and the methods used by the teacher in communicating with parents (r = 0.547, p <0.01). There is a moderate and positive relationship between decision making and the teacher's behaviour towards parents (r = 0.477, p <0.01), the teacher's responsibilities to parents (r = 0.531, p <0.01), the teacher's support for parents (r = 0.527, p <0.01) and the methods used by the teacher's behaviour towards parents (r = 0.477, p <0.01), the teacher's responsibilities to parents (r = 0.531, p <0.01), the teacher in communicating with parents (r = 0.589, p <0.01). There is a moderate and positive relationship between collaboration with the community and the teacher's behaviour towards parents (r = 0.468, p <0.01), the teacher's responsibilities to parents (r = 0.535, p <0.01), the teacher's support for parents (r = 0.516, p <0.01) and the methods used by the teacher in communicating with parents (r = 0.585, p <0.01).

TESTING THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The structural equation model was used to test the hypothesis of the study (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). While the dependent variable was teacherparent communication, the independent variable was school-family partnership. As a result of the analysis, the model in Figure 1 was obtained. As seen in Figure 1, in school-family partnership, home learning is the strongest dimension, while parenting is the weakest. In other words, parents interpret school-family partnership as home learning, volunteering, decision making, collaboration with the community, communication, and parenting. As far as teacher-parent communication is concerned, the teacher's support for the parents is the strongest dimension, while the dimension the methods used by the teacher in communicating with the parents is the weakest dimension. In other words, parents consider teacher-parent communication as the teacher's support for the parents, the teacher's responsibilities to the parents, the teacher's behaviour towards the parents, and the methods used by the teacher in communicating with the parents.



Figure 1. The Proposed Model.

As a result, fit indices are Chi-square value (χ 2=76.82), degree of freedom (df = 29, p = 0.000 < 0.05), χ 2 / sd = 2.64, and RMSEA = 0.067. Improvement has been made between decision making and collaboration with the community. The fit indices of the model are NFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.96, AGFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.99 and SRMR = 0.027 and RMR = 0.028.

This research tests the relationship between school-family partnership and teacher-parent communication. According to the model, there is a positive, direct and significant relationship between school-family partnership and teacher-parent communication (β = .71) (t = 12.67). In other words, as the school increases its partnership with families, teacher-parent communication also increases. Moreover, it is seen that the teacher's support for the parents and the teacher's responsibilities to the parents increased more than other dimensions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of school-family partnership on teacher-parent communication. The study was carried out with the parents of 12 graders attending vocational and technical Anatolian high schools in the central districts of Antalya. Parents interpret school-family partnership as home-learning, volunteering, decision-making, collaboration with the community, communication, and parenting, respectively. Parents associate teacher-parent communication with the teacher's responsibilities to parents and the teacher's support for parents.

Another finding of the study is that the majority of the parents are primary, secondary and high school graduates. The percentage of the parents who have

received a bachelor's degree is very low. Özgan and Aydın (2010) conducted a study on school-family partnership and received the opinions of administrators, teachers and parents. They found that family participation is related to parents' level of education. According to the study, as parents' education level decreases, their relations with the school also decrease. However, although the education level of the majority of the parents in this study is limited, their expectation from the teacher is high. In our study, the high level of support of the teacher for parents and the teacher's responsibility to the parents can be evaluated within this scope.

According to another finding obtained in this study, the decisions in the family are taken by the mother and the father together or by only the father. Mothers do not make decisions about their children much. Parents visit the school at most one to four times in one academic year, and one out of ten parents does not visit school at all. Pang (2004) states that 57% of the class teachers in Hong Kong can reach the parents of their students. In Japan, families do not visit the school much as in Hong Kong (Pang, 2004).

This study, which uses the relational screening model, revealed that the relationship between school-family partnership and teacher-parent communication is directly proportional. In other words, a strong school-family partnership directly and positively affects teacher-parent communication. Epstein and Dauber (1991) and Epstein (1995) state that one of the main liabilities of schools is to contact families about school programs and children's progress. According to the authors, schools can reach families through notes, notifications, phone calls, school reports, parent meetings and some innovative communication methods. Whether the information sent by the school is understood by the family members affects the nature and form of the communication to a great extent. Pang (2004) argues that there is a tendency towards two-way and less formal communication between the teacher and the family.

In their study with class teachers in Hong Kong, Pang and Watkins (2000) found that teachers communicate with parents about half an hour or one hour on academic issues. According to Pang (2004), this situation is not surprising because families and teachers have a busy life because of educational reforms and the changing economy. Pang (2004) argues that families are seen as clients by schools and although there is an increase in the understanding of families about the school, the accountability-oriented communication may have no effect on student learning.

Khan (1996) argues that increased parental participation may put teachers' professional autonomy and the undivided authority of school leaders at risk, and also may pose complex barriers, which means testing the ability of administrators to manage conflicts. Rich (1998) states that it is more difficult to communicate with parents as students grow up. According to Rich (1998), it becomes more difficult to reach parents when students are at secondary school, so the author suggests that at secondary school, teachers must have parents' phone numbers and address and they should be accessible and sensitive when parents call or want to meet them. The Hispanic Policy Development Project involved 42 schools and Spanish families. The project revealed that there is no need for a large amount of money to overcome the obstacles between schools and Spanish parents. It was found that only personal assistance, unprejudiced communication and respecting parents for their feelings are enough (cited in Inger, 1992).

As a result, school-family partnership directly and positively affects teacher-parent communication. Parents need to learn more about how to help their children so that they can improve their learning. In this context, schools can support parents by inviting them to school, meeting them and conducting regular informative meetings. Different fun training activities can be organized for families, students, and teachers to help improve communication. Some central and local strategies and policies should be developed by many actors to involve parents in education.

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Footnote:

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