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Parental Engagement In IB Schools: A Case Study From Greece

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Abstract

Parental engagement is an umbrella term that encompasses various attitudes, approaches, predispositions and relationships that form between parents and educators. Parental engagement in students' academic experience at school plays a vital role in supporting children's learning and securing positive school-family relations. Existing literature recognizes different levels and forms of parental engagement and/or parental participation in schools, determined by cultural context, school leadership models, parenting practices and types of schools. In this paper, I attempt to analyze the ways in which parental engagement unravels in three IB schools in Athens, Greece. My research seeks to understand how parental engagement is understood and manifested in the IB Diploma Programme (11th and 12th grades in High School) in three IB schools in Athens, Greece. The three IB schools that participated in my research are 'same, same but different' (Neiada, 2022), exhibiting similarities and differences. All offer one or more of the IB programmes (Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, Diploma Programme), hence their connection to the IB mission, Learner Profile and international mindedness (IBO, 2020). Also, all are private schools with high tuition fees, catering for families of higher socio-economic status (SES), and often described as 'elite schools' (Valassi, 2009). Yet, each school includes Greek elements to different extents, because of their geographical location, cultural ties to the home country, and being part of the wider Greek educational system. My research is a qualitative research, in which data were collected through interviews with educators and parents, and documentary analysis. The objectives of my research are to critically examine and compare forms and approaches to parental engagement, from the point of view of educators and parents, as it unravels in three IB schools. This study is important and original, as it explores parental engagement in High School, and in private IB schools. These schools cater for families of higher socio-economic status, who seek active participation in the whole school community. It is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of parental engagement in the context of international schools and international education, two driving forces of educational change on a national and global scale.

Keywords: parental engagement, International Baccalaureate (I.B.), family-school relationships, partnerships, parental involvement