

Factors That Shape Helping Relations Between Parents and Teachers: The Case of Israeli Arab and Jewish Parents

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Abstract

The present research examined helping relations among Israeli Arab and Jewish parents by focusing on collaboration between parents and teachers, parental self-efficacy, and help-seeking orientations from teachers: autonomy, dependency, and avoidance of help-seeking. The difference between the two main forms of help—autonomy and dependence—represent different qualities of help which parents can obtain for their children. The current study included 121 Arab parents and 192 Jewish parents who have at least one child in elementary school. According to the regression analysis, Jewish parents reported using higher levels of autonomous help-seeking, while Arab parents reported using dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientations. Furthermore, for both Arab and Jewish parents, high levels of collaboration between parents and teachers increased their tendency to seek autonomous help from teachers. In addition, ethnicity (Arab/Jewish), parental self-efficacy, and collaborative relations between parents and teachers predicted parents' help-seeking orientation in diverse domains. This study highlights cultural differences regarding parents' engagement with teachers. Based on the positive contribution of parents' engagement in general, we recommend conducting a culture-specific intervention aimed at encouraging both parents and teachers to establish helping relations.

Key Words: ethnicity, help-seeking orientations, parental self-efficacy, parent and teacher collaboration, Israeli Arab, Jewish, families, autonomy, dependence

Introduction

The growing prevalence of the neoliberalism approach with its emphasis on principles of the free market, privatization, school choice, and competition renders parents as essential stakeholders and influential factors in the school–family equation (Croizer, 2019; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lopez et al., 2012). As in other education systems in the world, these elements are essential in Israel. During the last three decades, extensive theory and research have addressed such constructs as parental engagement, parent–teacher relations, and parental involvement (Addi-Raccah et al., 2021; Epstein & Sanders, 2018; Goodall, 2018; Rattenborg et al., 2019; Sheldon & Turner-Vorbeck, 2019). Since parents represent significant diversity in terms of cultural, ethnic, geographical, and socioeconomic backgrounds, studies on school and home/family/parental relations often aim to establish a context-dependent perspective (Antony-Newman, 2019; Huppertz, 2015; Rattenborg et al., 2019; Reay et al., 2011). The diversity of parents' backgrounds thus offer different ways for the parents and their children to act (Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2018; McWayne et al., 2016). As to ethnic background, much of the past research has focused on immigrant parents as ethnic minority groups and their perceptions and attitudes regarding the learning processes of their children (Sime et al., 2018) and the role of parental engagement among different immigrant ethnic groups (Gilbert et al., 2017; Liu & White, 2017).

In Israel, as elsewhere in the world, multicultural ethnic characteristics are reflected in parents' attitudes and relations with the school. The two main segregated ethnic groups are the Arab and the Jewish sectors. Previous studies have shown that different parent–teacher relations prevail in each group (Addi-Raccah & Grinshtain, 2016; Fisher et al., 2014).

The present research focuses on the diverse attitudes of Arab parents, who are considered an ethnic minority group in Israel, and Jewish parents concerning their respective collaborative relations with teachers as well as their parental self-efficacy and its influence on help-seeking orientations. Based on Nadler (1997), parents' autonomous help-seeking from teachers is defined as seeking the teacher's advice and learning how to eventually deal with a problem by themselves, while dependent help-seeking refers to asking the teacher to fix a problem for them in their coping processes with their children's difficulties in learning (Harpaz & Grinshtain, 2020; Komissarouk et al., 2017). The difference between the two main forms of help—autonomous and dependent—represent different qualities of help (Komissarouk et al., 2017) which parents can obtain for their children. Based on the above, the present study aimed to examine the differences between Israeli Arab and Jewish parents in

terms of their collaboration with teachers and their parental self-efficacy as an influence on their help-seeking orientation from teachers.

Terms Definitions

Collaboration relations: Positive and warm interactions between parents and teachers that are based on mutual respect, honesty, trust, and appreciation, alongside willingness to share information and to contribute to each other.

Parental self-efficacy: Parents' belief in their ability to carry out and take actions with their child which reflect their educational positions and their parental worldview as well as how long they persevere in the face of obstacles and adverse experiences.

Help-seeking orientations: The way a person perceives the social environment and the people around them as a source of assistance when dealing with challenges and difficulties. There are two orientations of help-seeking:

Autonomous help-seeking orientation: Refers to seeking advice and knowledge, developing coping skills, and making use of opportunities to develop the ability to deal with problems independently.

Dependent help-seeking orientation: Refers to seeking a solution by asking someone else to deal with the problem or relying on another person's knowledge and abilities to solve the problem.

Avoidant help-seeking orientation: In contrast to these two help-seeking orientations, there is the avoidant help-seeking orientation which refers to avoidant behavior in terms of asking for help, even at the cost of not being able to deal with difficulty and the possibility of failure in tasks or achieving goals.

Literature Review

Parental Involvement and Engagement as Context-Dependent

Parental involvement has gained a strong presence in diverse educational systems and in the research field (Addi-Raccah et al., 2021). "Parental involvement" is an early term which focused on the variety of ways in which parents participate, volunteer, or support the school agenda (Ferland, 2011). "These early conceptions of involvement were still fundamentally a one-way street and the role of [parents as] 'outsiders' remained largely passive and limited" (Kruse & Gray, 2019, p. 82). Use of the term "Parental engagement" demonstrates a shift in the concept which highlights expectations from parents to be integral, active participants or even partners toward a joint effort (Epstein & Sanders, 2018; Kruse & Gray, 2019).

Ever since parental involvement and engagement became a central focus in the educational system (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Sheldon &

Turner-Vorbeck, 2019), special attention has been given to the school context (Addi-Raccah, 2021; Cummings et al., 2017; Gilbert et al., 2017; Kim, 2009) and the parents' background (Bhargava et al., 2017; Valdés-Cuervo et al., 2022) as shaping parents' engagement and its influence on their children's outcomes (Jeynes, 2007). Parents from low levels of socioeconomic status (SES) background and/or racial/ethnic minority groups cope differently with challenges regarding their involvement in school. Thus, they shape their aspirations for their children differently from parents at a higher status (Auerbach, 2007; Hill & Torres, 2010). Parents in disadvantaged communities tend to be less present in their children's schooling (Lemmer, 2007; Kim, 2009). Following that direction, Kalil and Ryan (2020) suggest mechanisms that underlie diversity in parenting engagement. Alongside financial and time constraints, they highlight information, values, and preferences, "Historically, high socioeconomic status parents have valued 'independent thinking' and 'self-direction' more than low socioeconomic status parents do" (p. 36). On the other hand, studies have pointed out that parent's positive role beliefs can offset the disadvantages in children's development caused by a low SES (Ha, 2021).

In addition, the integration of academic socialization, school-based, and home-based involvement may differ according to the ethnic background (Day & Dotterer, 2018). Following the worldwide increase in migrants who are ethnic minorities, studies have indicated barriers to parental engagement, such as limited language skills and less education, that prevent involvement in the school affairs and fewer opportunities for collaboration with teachers and school (Johnson et al., 2016; Li & Sun, 2019). Yet, while studies regarding cultural differences in parent practices in diverse cultures emphasize language and economic difficulties, they also highlight a shared essence of advocacy and activation for the benefit of their children's success in school and in life (e.g., for Latino mothers in the United States, see Rios & Aleman-Tovar, 2022; for Filipino immigrant mothers in South Korea, see Kim, 2022; for immigrant parents in New Zealand, see Lee & Keown, 2018). As is well-documented in the literature, the process of parental engagement leads to building relations between parents and teachers/school (Epstein, 1995; Sheldon & Turner-Vorbeck, 2019). Collaborative or conflictual relations can thus be shaped by the nature of or openness to different levels of parental involvement/engagement (Addi-Raccah & Grinshtain, 2017). Previous studies have shown that collaborative relations are considered a major tool in education (Oughton, 2010; Whyte & Karabon, 2016) which, in turn, deepen trust between parents and teachers and increase parents' recognition of their abilities to help their children (Bang, 2018).

Parents' Help-Seeking From Teachers

The current study, based on the theoretical framework of Nadler (1997, 2015) is based on helping relations and particularly on the help-seeking orientations of parents from teachers, specifically by focusing on two help-seeking orientations: autonomous and dependent. An autonomous help-seeking orientation refers to the seeking of advice, knowledge, and coping skills, and making use of opportunities and future autonomous abilities to deal with problems independently. Dependent help-seeking orientation refers to seeking a solution by asking someone else to deal with the problem, relying on another person's knowledge and abilities to solve the problem (Nadler, 1997, 2015). In accordance with Nadler's terminology, parents who would like the teacher to give them solutions and answers for their child's problem ask for dependent help, which adversely affects child future coping as well. Another option for parents is to seek advice or guidance that will allow them to deal with the difficulty independently (autonomous-oriented help). In addition, parents may avoid asking for help, often at the cost of coping poorly with their children's difficulties (avoidance). The ability to cope successfully with difficulties in the long run is based on developing skills while dealing with difficulty. When someone else solves the problem for you (dependent help-seeking orientation), the learning needed to develop future resilience is effectively avoided (Komissarouk et al., 2017).

Komissarouk and Nadler (2014) showed that people with an independent self-construct prefer autonomy-oriented help, whereas people with an interdependent self-construct—more common in non-western collectivist cultures—have the tendency toward dependent help-seeking. Additionally, Komissarouk et al. (2017) presented, in a series of five studies in Israel of populations from three different cultural backgrounds (native speakers of Hebrew, Russian, and English), a cross-cultural comparison analysis in both academic and job settings of help-seeking orientation preferences. In all three cultural backgrounds, a self-reported preference for autonomy-oriented help predicted higher ratings of performance, while dependent help-seeking was found to be associated with an avoidance temperament and a performance avoidance goal orientation. They also found that, among Jewish Hebrew speakers, the report of a preference for autonomous help-seeking was higher than among Russian speakers, while the report of dependent help-seeking was higher among Russian speakers, characterized by a more collectivist culture.

Nevertheless, Stanton-Salazar et al. (2001) showed that low SES group members (e.g., Latino adolescents in the USA) avoid seeking help more than the high SES adolescents do. Taking into account the differences in SES between Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews (Lavenda, 2011), given that the SES is

higher in the Jewish population than in the Arab population, we suggest that Israeli Arab parents will be characterized by more dependent help-seeking from teachers and avoidant help-seeking, and that Israeli Jewish parents will be more oriented to autonomous help-seeking. Moreover, recent research indicates that asking for dependent help correlates with low self-efficacy (Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Harpaz & Vaizman, 2021; Vaizman & Harpaz, 2022). Alonso and Little (2019) studied the impact of Australian parents' perceptions on help-seeking behavior for their child's psychological problems; results indicated that the higher the competence the parents felt, the higher the tendency to autonomous help-seeking. It should be emphasized that the measurement of help-seeking in Alonso and Little's study, as in other studies in the field, does not serve as a central distinction pertaining to a help-seeking orientation as made in the present study but rather addresses requests for help in general. In addition, Williams and Takaku (2011) conducted research in the U.S. among international students and found that high self-efficacy is correlated with successful coping with challenges in a variety of contexts due to, among other things, adaptive help-seeking, such as autonomous-oriented help (see also Ryan et al., 2001).

Parental Self-Efficacy

The notion of self-efficacy, in general, and parental self-efficacy, in particular, informs as to how parents act and how long they persevere in the face of obstacles and adverse experiences. Studies have shown that high SES participants display stronger self-efficacy than low SES participants (Lowe & Dotterer, 2013; Murdock, 2013) and that better educated parents possess better parental self-efficacy (Coleman & Karraker, 2000). Moreover, the higher the self-efficacy among individuals, the more efforts they invest in autonomous help-seeking (Du et al., 2016; Eden & Aviram, 1993). Focusing on parental involvement, connections were found between parental self-efficacy (as part of parents' motivational beliefs) and degrees of parental involvement at home (Green et al., 2007). The measurement of the parental self-efficacy was based on parents' beliefs about their personal ability to impact the child's educational outcomes through their involvement. The findings enhance the importance of psychological constructs as directly impacting parental involvement practices (Green et al., 2007).

Following previous studies as described in the literature framework, we hypothesized that a dependent and/or avoidant help-seeking orientation would be negatively correlated with parental self-efficacy, and autonomous help-seeking orientation would be positively correlated with parental self-efficacy. The current study emphasizes parents' help-seeking orientation, parental self-efficacy, and collaboration between parents and teachers that were examined in two

different ethnic groups in order to deepen the context-dependent perspective: Israeli Arab and Jewish parents.

Israeli Arab Parents as a Minority Group

In Israel, the Arab population comprises about 20% of the entire population. The education system operating in the Arab sector functions as a separate and segregated system (Agbaria, 2015), facing serious and different challenges as a minority group in Israeli society (Agbaria et al., 2020; Reingold & Baratz, 2020). More than 50% of the Arab population live in poverty, compared to 20% of Jewish population (Hai, 2013). The Taub Report (Weiss, 2018) describes a divide in educational opportunities between Arab and Jewish sectors, favoring the Jewish sector. Yet the shift that has occurred over the past two decades among Arab citizens—from a traditional to a modern society, characterized by the moving from collectivism to individualism as demonstrated by competitive and ambition-driven patterns (Diamond, 2020)—has led Arab parents to greater involvement and intervention in educational spheres (Agbaria, 2020), perceiving it as an opportunity for success and mobility (Cohen, 2006; Fisher et al., 2014; Freund et al., 2018; Swick, 2009; Zedan, 2012).

A shift from collectivism toward individualism tends to occur when the SES (including education) goes up (Greenfield, 2009), and with that shift can come new views of the roles parents should take vis-à-vis their children and schools. Thus, a shift toward individualism among Arabs may not just indicate movement toward competitive and ambition-driven patterns, but also different ways of viewing schools as well as the roles of all the members of the school community. Yet, it is worth mentioning that this shift is still in process, and Arab parents' involvement in schools is still low in comparison to that of Jewish parents (Zedan, 2012).

The Present Study

The present study focuses on help-seeking orientations from teachers among Arab and Jewish parents in the Israeli elementary school system. From the literature presented, the following four research hypotheses are derived:

1. Differences between Arab and Jewish parents' help-seeking orientation from teachers: Arab parents would be characterized by a more dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientation, and Jewish parents would be more autonomous help-seekers.
2. Correlations between parents' help-seeking orientation from teachers and parent–teacher relations in both Arab and Jewish schools: Collaborative relations between parents and teachers would be positively correlated with autonomous help-seeking orientation and negatively correlated with avoidant help-seeking.

3. Correlations between parents' help-seeking orientation from teachers and parental self-efficacy in Arab and Jewish schools: Dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientations would be negatively correlated with parental self-efficacy and an autonomous help-seeking orientation would be positively correlated with parental self-efficacy.
4. Ethnic affiliation (Israeli Arab/Israeli Jewish), socioeconomic status, parental self-efficacy, and parent–teacher relations would predict parents' help-seeking orientation from teachers.

Methodology

Participants

The research was based on two samples. The Arab sample included 121 Israeli Arab parents (93 mothers, 28 fathers); ages ranged from 20–56 years old ($M = 36.84$; $SD = 7.18$); 91% were married, 9% were single parents (divorced or widowed); 7.4% were parents of one child, 22.3% were parents of two, 29.8% were parents of three, and 40.5% had more than three children; 63.6% described themselves as low-working-class, and 36.4% as middle-upper and upper-class. The Jewish sample included 192 Israeli Jewish parents (170 mothers, 22 fathers); ages ranged from 32–55 years old ($M = 43.09$; $SD = 4.35$). Of these, 82% were married, 11% were single parents (divorced or widowed), and 7% cohabited without marriage; 6.9% had one child, 25.5% had two, 52.1% had three, and 15.5% had more than three children; 38.3% describe themselves as low-working-class, and 61.7% as middle-upper and upper-class. The Arab and the Jewish parents were all Israeli citizens and lived in Israel.

Procedure

Participants answered questionnaires in Arabic or Hebrew, according to their mother tongue. The Institutional Ethics Committee of the academic institution of research approved the research (No. 3064). Questionnaires in both languages were first examined in a small sample, and modifications connected to background and cultural sensitivities were performed. All the questionnaires were anonymous, and there was no way to identify the participants' identity (other than ethnic background); confidentiality and privacy were thus maintained. Finally, all the participants in the study signed the informed consent form, which included detailed explanations of the research and its potential future publication.

The procedure, which relied on the referral method, was planned in advance. In the first phase, emails using snowballing sampling were sent to groups of parents in different localities based on recommendations that the

researchers received from acquaintances and colleagues. The mails contained links to the questionnaires in both languages. Parents could freely choose to participate in the research. They were also asked to pass the link on to other parents who might volunteer to answer the questionnaires, a procedure that enabled each new participant to suggest another potential participant (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). In the second phase, in order to increase the number of respondents, a request was sent by the researchers to acquaintances and colleagues to upload the questionnaire link on their Facebook page. This was useful as initial responses were not very high, particularly among Arab parents.

Measures

1. Collaborative Relations Between Parents and Teachers (Addi-Racah & Grinshtain, 2016, 2017, 2021).

This was a 10-item questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree” (e.g., “Teachers consult with parents in relation to their children.” For a full description of the items, see the Appendix). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82$.

2. Parenting Sense of Competence Scale - PSOC (Gibaud-Wallston & Wanderson, 1978, cited in Johnston & Mash, 1989).

This questionnaire has 17 items on a six-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (6) “strongly agree.” Nine items (2,3,4,5,8,9,12,14,16) are reverse scored, so that high scores indicate a positive parental experience. It has two subscales: Items 1–9: Satisfaction From a Parental Experience (e.g., “Being a good parent is a reward in itself.”). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$. Items 10–17: Parental Self-Efficacy (e.g., “I meet my expectations of myself regarding the expertise of my childcare.”). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$. The Cronbach’s α for the 17 items was .85. Similar to Coleman and Karraker (2000), the overall score is used as a measure of parental self-efficacy.

3. Help-Seeking Orientation Scale (Komissarouk et al., 2017)

Participants answered the questionnaire regarding two types of difficulties separately: learning, and social–emotional difficulties. The seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree” includes 14 items for assessing three help-seeking orientations: *Dependent help-seeking orientation*: items 1, 2, 6, 8, 14 (e.g., “Instead of dealing with a problem on my own, I prefer to rely on someone who knows more than me.”). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$ (learning difficulties as well as social–emotional difficulties). *Avoidant help-seeking orientation* items: 3, 4, 7, 12, 13 (e.g., “I do not typically ask for help resolving my problems.”). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$. and $\alpha = .96$ for learning

and social–emotional difficulties, respectively. *Autonomous help-seeking orientation*: items 5, 9, 10, 11 (e.g., “I tend to ask for advice from other people regarding the problems I deal with if it helps me cope better.”). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .96$. and $\alpha = .95$ for learning and social–emotional difficulties, respectively.

4. Background Questions

Participants answered questions concerning their gender and age, their family status, the number of children they have, their SES, and place of residence.

Data Analysis

We used SPSS 25 to analyze the data in three stages. First, we ran descriptive statistics based on background variables. Second, we studied differences between the two samples (Arab and Jewish) in the research variables and correlations. Finally, we conducted six hierarchical linear regressions for dependent, autonomous, and avoidant help-seeking orientations: three for seeking help from teachers in the learning domain, and three while dealing with social–emotional difficulties.

Results

The results section is organized according to the four hypotheses:

1. Arab parents would be characterized by a more dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientation, and Jewish parents would be more autonomous help-seekers.
2. Collaborative relations between parents and teachers would be positively correlated with autonomous help-seeking orientation and negatively correlated with avoidant help-seeking.
3. Dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientations would be negatively correlated with parental self-efficacy and an autonomous help-seeking orientation would be positively correlated with parental self-efficacy.
4. Ethnic affiliation (Israeli Arab/Israeli Jewish), socioeconomic status, parental self-efficacy, and parent–teacher relations would predict parents’ help-seeking orientation from teachers.

First Hypothesis

Independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to identify the differences between the Arab and Jewish samples concerning the help-seeking orientation (see Table 1). Supporting the first research hypothesis, Arab parents were found to be more avoidant help-seeking than the Jewish parents. Additionally, in line with the first research hypothesis, when they seek help, the Arab parents were

characterized more as dependent help-seekers than the Jewish parents. All of these differences were also obtained in both learning and social–emotional difficulties. Finally, the Jewish parents were more autonomous help-seekers than the Arab parents when dealing with social–emotional difficulties. Thus, the first research hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 1. Independent samples *t*-test for equality of help-seeking orientation means by ethnic group (Jews/Arabs)

| Help-Seeking Orientation Domain | Help-Seeking Orientation | Jews (<i>N</i> =170) M (SD) | Arabs (<i>N</i> =121) M (SD) | <i>t</i> -test <i>t</i> (311) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Learning | Dependent help | 4.39 (1.35) | 5.26 (1.31) | 5.60*** |
| | Avoidant | 3.52 (1.60) | 4.31 (1.58) | 4.28*** |
| | Autonomous help | 5.60 (1.29) | 5.79 (1.28) | 1.61 n.s. |
| Social–Emotional | Dependent help | 4.22 (1.43) | 5.02 (1.30) | 5.06*** |
| | Avoidant | 3.33 (1.60) | 4.29 (1.41) | 5.58*** |
| | Autonomous help | 5.71 (1.14) | 5.46 (1.18) | 1.82* |

p* < .05; *p* < 0.01; ****p* < 0.001

In addition to testing the research hypothesis, significant differences were found in parental self-efficacy between the Jewish sample (*M* = 4.60; *SD* = 0.60) and the Arab (*M* = 3.66; *SD* = 0.71) one *t*(310) = 12.38; *p* < 0.0001. The Jewish parents were characterized by parental self-efficacy significantly higher than that of the participating Arab parents.

Second Hypothesis

Supporting the second research hypothesis, positive significant correlations were found in the Jewish sample between autonomous help-seeking orientation from teachers and parent–teacher collaborative relations (dealing with learning difficulties: *r* = 0.17; *p* < 0.01; dealing with social–emotional difficulties: *r* = 0.22; *p* < 0.001). In the same way, positive significant correlations were found in the Arab sample between autonomous help-seeking orientation and parent–teacher collaborative relations (learning difficulties: *r* = 0.24; *p* < 0.01; social–emotional difficulties: *r* = 0.19; *p* < 0.05).

Additionally, a significant negative correlation was found in the Jewish sample between avoidant help-seeking from teachers and collaborative parent–teacher relations (learning difficulties: *r* = -0.13; *p* < 0.05; social–emotional problems: *r* = -0.16; *p* < 0.05). Likewise, in the Arab sample, a significant negative correlation was found between avoidant help-seeking from teachers

and collaborative parent–teacher relations (learning difficulties: $r = -0.28$; $p < 0.001$; social–emotional difficulties: $r = -0.19$; $p < 0.05$). The second research hypothesis was thus confirmed (see Table 2).

Table 2. Correlations Matrix, Arab and Jewish Parents' Samples

| | | Age | # of Children | Parent–Teacher Collaboration | Parental Self-Efficacy |
|--|-------|--------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Number of children | Arabs | .44*** | - | | |
| | Jews | - | - | | |
| Parent–teacher collaboration | Arabs | - | - | - | |
| | Jews | - | - | | |
| Parental self-efficacy | Arabs | - | -.19* | .18* | - |
| | Jews | - | - | - | |
| Learning dependent help-seeking orientation | Arabs | - | - | - | - |
| | Jews | - | - | - | -.20** |
| Learning autonomous help-seeking orientation | Arabs | - | - | .24** | - |
| | Jews | - | - | .17* | - |
| Learning avoidant help-seeking orientation | Arabs | .26*** | - | -.28*** | -.20** |
| | Jews | - | .17* | -.13* | -.21** |
| Social–emotional dependent help-seeking orientation | Arabs | - | - | - | .20** |
| | Jews | - | - | - | -.14* |
| Social–emotional autonomous help-seeking orientation | Arabs | - | - | .19* | - |
| | Jews | - | - | .22** | - |
| Social–emotional avoidant help-seeking orientation | Arabs | - | - | -.19* | -.24** |
| | Jews | - | .15* | -.16* | -.28*** |

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Third Hypothesis

Supporting the third research hypothesis, a significant negative correlation was found in the Jewish sample between a dependent help-seeking orientation from teachers and parental self-efficacy (learning difficulties: $r = -0.20$; $p < 0.01$; social–emotional difficulties: $r = -0.13$; $p < 0.05$). In the Arab sample, contrary to the third hypothesis of the study, a positive correlation was found between the dependent help-seeking orientation and the first subscale of parental self-efficacy (social–emotional: $r = 0.20$; $p < 0.001$). In addition, unlike

the Jewish sample, no correlations were found in the Arab sample between a dependent learning help-seeking orientation and parental self-efficacy. Moreover, supporting the third research hypothesis, significant negative correlates between parental avoidance of help-seeking from teachers and parental self-efficacy were found in both the Jewish sample (learning difficulties: $r = -0.21$; $p < 0.001$; social-emotional difficulties: $r = -0.28$; $p < 0.0001$) and the Arab sample (learning difficulties: $r = -0.20$; $p < 0.001$; social-emotional difficulties: $r = -0.24$; $p < 0.001$; see Table 2).

Fourth Hypothesis

In order to predict the six dependent variables concerning parents' help-seeking orientation from teachers (dependent, avoidant, and autonomous help-seeking orientation in learning and in social-emotional difficulties), we conducted six hierarchical linear regressions. In the first step, the demographical variables were examined in stepwise regression (ethnicity-Arab/Jewish, age, number of children, SES). In the second step, parental self-efficacy and parent-teacher relations variables were examined (see Table 3). According to the hierarchical linear regressions, three main variables predicted a help-seeking orientation in both learning and social-emotional difficulties: ethnicity (Arab/Jewish), parental self-efficacy, and collaborative parent-teacher relations.

In the learning domain, ethnicity and parental self-efficacy predicted dependent help-seeking: Arabs and low parental self-efficacy parents asked for more dependent help than Jewish parents or high parental self-efficacy parents. Also, ethnicity and collaborative relations predicted avoidant help-seeking: Arab parents who reported low collaboration in parent-teacher relations avoided seeking help more than Jewish parents or parents who reported high collaboration. Collaborative relations also predicted more autonomous help-seeking from teachers in the learning domain (see Table 3). In the social-emotional domain, more Arab parents sought dependent help than Jewish parents; parental self-efficacy and collaborative relations negatively predicted an avoidant help-seeking orientation and the same as in the learning domain: collaborative relations also predicted autonomous help-seeking from teachers. In addition, avoidant help-seeking in the learning domain was positively predicted by the parents' age and by the number of children in the family in the social-emotional domain. For Arab parents, greater age was correlated with avoidant help-seeking in the learning domain, whereas for Jewish parents, a greater number of children was correlated with avoidant help-seeking in the learning domain.

Table 3. Results of the Hierarchical Linear Regression for Predicting Parents' Help-Seeking Orientation From Teachers

| | Learning Domain | | | | | | Social-Emotional Domain | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|------------------|--------|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|------------------|--------|
| | Dependent Help | | Avoidant | | Autonomous Help | | Dependent Help | | Avoidant | | Autonomous Help | |
| Model 1 | β | t | β | T | β | T | β | t | β | t | β | t |
| Ethnicity (Arab/Jewish) | 0.31*** | 5.32*** | 0.24*** | 3.67*** | 0.13* | 2.19* | 0.27*** | 4.62*** | 0.23*** | 3.83*** | - | - |
| Age | - | - | 0.13* | 2.00* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| # of children | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.15** | 2.54** | - | - |
| R ² adj. | 0.09 | | 0.08 | | 0.01 | | 0.07 | | 0.08 | | - | |
| F | F (1,276)=28.27*** | | F(3,274)=8.63*** | | F (1,276)=4.81* | | F (1,276)=21.34*** | | F (2,275)=13.18*** | | - | |
| Model 2 | β | t | β | T | β | t | β | t | β | t | β | t |
| Ethnicity (Arab/Jewish) | 0.25*** | 3.24*** | 0.15* | 1.86* | - | - | 0.27*** | 3.34*** | - | - | - | - |
| Age | - | - | 0.16** | 2.42** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| # of children | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.12* | 1.97* | - | - |
| Parental self-efficacy | -0.19** | -2.64** | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0.22** | -3.14** | - | - |
| Collaboration | - | - | -0.17** | -2.62** | 0.18** | 2.81** | - | - | -0.14* | -2.26* | 0.22** | 3.36** |
| Model Summary | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R ² adj. | 0.11 | | 0.10 | | 0.06 | | 0.07 | | 0.12 | | 0.05 | |
| F | F (6,271)=6.70*** | | F (8,269)=4.95*** | | F (7,270)=3.33** | | F (6,271)=4.60*** | | F (7,270)=6.30*** | | F (5,272)=3.73** | |
| ΔR^2 | 0.04 | | 0.04 | | 0.05 | | 0.02 | | 0.05 | | 0.06 | |
| ΔF | 2.26* | | 2.54* | | 2.79** | | 1.24 n.s. | | 3.33** | | 3.73** | |

Note. Only significant predictors are presented. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Discussion

The present study sought to shed light on help-seeking orientations of Arab and Jewish parents by focusing on the help they seek from their children's teachers while dealing with learning and social-emotional problems, their parental self-efficacy, and parent-teacher collaboration perceptions. In doing so, the study extended the limited scholarship on the orientations of parents toward seeking the help of teachers by comparing the views of two ethnic groups in the state education system in Israel. The findings are discussed below by differences and similarities between the ethnicities.

As for differences between the ethnic groups, participating Arab parents seem to be characterized by higher levels of dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientation in both learning and social-emotional domains, while surveyed Jewish parents are more autonomous in the social-emotional domain. Moreover, high parental self-efficacy correlates negatively with dependent help-seeking orientation among Jewish parents, but correlates positively with dependent help-seeking among Arab parents.

Following these results, similarities and differences between the two ethnicities can be discussed. The findings in the current study indicate that collaborative relations with teachers were found to contribute positively to parents' autonomous help-seeking among both Arab and Jewish parents. Previous studies have indicated that positive collaborative relations are perceived as strongly beneficial for parents, teachers, and students (Addi-Racah & Grinshain, 2017; Bang, 2018). In addition, studies that focus on the increase in parental involvement in the Arab population emphasized the move toward modernity and greater openness to individualistic ways among the Arab citizens of Israel (Arar et al., 2018; Freund et al., 2018). Although parents from different backgrounds may construct their roles differently in terms of the academic environment and aspirations for their children (Auerbach, 2007), it seems that Israeli Arab parents perceive their stronger involvement and engagement in the educational process as encouraging mobility toward higher SES (Fisher et al., 2015; Komissarouk & Nadler, 2014). On the other hand, schools appear to be enhancing collaborative relations with parents to create a full partnership instead of seeing the parents as a disengaged group, as has been the case in the past (Arar et al., 2018; Dor, 2013; Komissarouk & Nadler, 2014). Collaborative relations can be the key for the desired changes for children. As the findings in the present study indicate, these relations and engagement can be achieved or enhanced by deepening the helping relations, with a focus on encouraging useful patterns of help-seeking.

As for the differences found between the two ethnicities, Arab parents in the present study tend to be more avoidant or dependent in their help-seeking

orientation than their Jewish counterparts. Although the Arab population generally lives apart from the Jewish population, Arab parents appear to limit their involvement by adopting passive strategies in order to maintain the status quo (Kim, 2009). Adopting these help-seeking patterns may be a result of their low SES (Stanton-Salazar et al., 2001) characterized by low levels of educational capital, that is, knowledge about active ways of getting involved with school and teachers (Khoury-Kassabri & Straus, 2011; Kim, 2009), and by the limited resources that would enable them to help their children (Arar et al., 2018; Gur et al., 2020). Autonomous help-seeking may thus be perceived as unfamiliar and not beneficial for them. In terms of ethnic cultural characteristics, it was found that in individualistic cultures, people who function well tend to perform individual objectives and make decisions by themselves without help from others, while in collectivistic societies people invest less effort to change things (Komissarouk & Nadler, 2014). Since the Israeli Arab ethnic group tends to be more collectivistic (Arar et al., 2013; Cohen, 2007; Eilam, 2002), the orientations of dependent and avoidant help-seeking are more common aspects of their traditional culture. There have been indications of a transition in recent years from collectivism to individualism in Arab society in Israel, ambition-driven and reflected in greater competitiveness (Abduljaber, 2018; Agbaria, 2020; Diamond, 2020). It seems, however, that more support and awareness of options to enhance the beneficial help-seeking orientation are needed. This is relevant for both Israeli Arab and Jewish parents from diverse backgrounds in light of a recent qualitative study conducted among the two groups finding parents activated different orientations of dependent help-giving in their children's homework (Grinshtain & Harpaz, 2021). Finally, the reasons for these less useful help-seeking patterns may be rooted in governance. Since the leadership style among Israeli Arab citizens is characterized as more authoritative than the Jewish citizens (Ali & Da'as, 2017) and centralized (Toren & Iliyan, 2008), "the power is in the hand of the governance which manages the affairs of the school without openness to outside parties, including parents" (Arar et al., 2018, p. 336). Since helping relations are formed by both sides—help-seeking parents and help-giving teachers—it seems that features of the school may serve to maintain differences between the two ethnic groups.

A particularly interesting finding for both groups relates to the inverse correlation obtained between parental self-efficacy and dependent help-seeking parents (Du et al., 2016; Eden & Aviram, 1993). Findings presented in the present study showed that among Jewish parents low levels of parental self-efficacy were associated with high levels of dependent help-seeking. Among Arab parents, however, high levels of parental self-efficacy were associated with high dependent help-seeking. In general, high parental self-efficacy seems to be a

starting point for help-seeking. Thus, the Arab parents may perceive dependent help as a small step toward becoming more involved or engaged with school and are aware of its importance for their children (Fisher et al., 2014). Taken together with the significant differences between the high amounts of dependent help-seeking by Arab parents compared to Jewish parents, it seems that dependent help can apparently be viewed as more beneficial than avoidance and high parental self-efficacy as facilitating the process of helping relationships.

The present study extends the knowledge on help-seeking orientations of Israeli Arab and Jewish parents by pointing out the kind of help they seek from their children's teachers while dealing with learning and social-emotional problems, their parental self-efficacy, and parent-teacher collaboration perceptions. Two main issues are worth discussing. First, since Arab parents in general are characterized by high levels of avoidance of help-seeking, high parental self-efficacy is strongly beneficial for them. Encouraging parents to use greater autonomous help-seeking may require a culture-specific intervention, particularly relevant when examining the traditional and collective-oriented approach. An example for insights on how teachers can reach out to and engage parents from collectivistic cultures comes from the Bridging Cultures Project (Trumbull et al., 2003; Trumbull et al., 2020). This project demonstrates the importance of professional development that helps teachers who work with diverse populations have a more informed perspective on their own culture as well as the culture of their students. Zoabi and Savaya (2016) summarized that in a traditional society such as this Arab group, emphasis is given to social cohesion and harmony obtained by conformity with social norms, avoidance of public expression of disagreement and emotional expressions. Thus, in a traditional society, an autonomous help-seeking orientation can be perceived as a disrespectful form of collaborative relations between parents and teachers. As was previously discussed, Jewish education gives more space to parental choice and individualism. Thus, parent-teacher relations are still shaped and influenced by their school policy and not by individual interactions (Addi-Raccah & Grinshtain, 2017). This can be seen as a traditional approach rather than a modern one that focuses on individuals' needs and growth. Moving from a traditional society to a more modern one could be a trigger for learning how to use autonomous help and could create a meaningful step toward realization that parent-teacher collaboration could enhance children's well-being (Trumbull et al., 2020). Second, as a minority group, Arab parents perceive education as highly valuable for their children's future (Fisher et al., 2015; Freund et al., 2018). Thus, focusing on help-seeking in the learning domain may reflect a possible contribution of parents to their children's development in the future.

Conclusions

Parental engagement, as a phenomenon that is broadly studied around the world, was examined in the current research by focusing on collaborative relations between parents and teachers in two ethnic/cultural groups in Israel: Arab and Jewish. The two groups represent minority and majority ethnic groups respectively in Israeli society. The conclusions were divided as to similarities and differences between the groups.

As for similarities, it seems that collaboration between parents and teachers is highly beneficial for establishing autonomous help in both groups. This finding highlights the importance of collaboration in diverse groups and cultures. It also goes hand in hand with the direction of past studies which reflect the moving toward modernity in the Arab society (Agbaria, 2020; Diamond, 2020). As for differences, dependent and avoidant help-seeking orientations were higher among Arab parents. As these orientations are considered less useful, it is important to undertake research to discover underlying cultural norms that are at the base of these orientations. If teachers can understand the cultural differences between Arab and Israeli parents in their likely orientations to their children's schooling—for example, differences in how parents construe their own and teachers' roles—they will be in a better position to encourage parents to participate in new ways.

The present study sheds light on helping relations between parent and teachers as dependent on the educational-cultural context. In particular, it emphasizes that Israeli Arab parents, as part of a minority group, face the challenge of overcoming barriers in order to enhance helping relations options for their children.

Recommendations

We propose to foster parent-teacher collaboration regarding help-seeking norms and expectations for collaboration between parents and teachers. This can be achieved through guidelines and guidance for parents on recommended ways to ask for autonomous help from the teachers, focusing on the implications of autonomous versus dependent help. In addition, teachers should be trained in helping parents to understand beneficial ways to get help that can foster the children's coping abilities in the future. Zhou et al. (2020) argued that supportive parental involvement contributes to students' achievement and that controlling or intrusive involvement was negatively connected to achievement. Addressing the distinction between supporting and controlling involvement as well as the distinction between dependent and autonomous help-seeking might allow parents to apply the implications of these different types of help for their children.

Limitations

Some limitations of this study should be noted. Following the SES variable, the measurement in the sample of the current study indicated a majority of low SES among the Arab sample and a high SES among the Jewish sample. Therefore, although the SES variable was measured for both the Arab and Jewish samples, it was not included in the final analyses. According to Addi-Raccah (2021), the Jewish and the Arab sectors are divided based on SES, and most of the Arab population live in low-SES settlements (Addi-Raccah, 2021). While these differences are not accidental and reflect the differences in the two ethnic groups in Israel, it is worth exploring the theoretical ideas put forward in the present study with other minority and majority groups where SES diversity is significant. For example, measuring the different contribution of ethnicity/cultural features and SES, the variables of the current study should be examined in countries where certain minority ethnic groups are characterized as having meaningful diversity in SES. Moreover, as the present research is based on parental self-reporting, in order to further validate the findings in subsequent studies, we suggest examining this issue through, for example, observational research as well as through validation of parental self-reporting on the opinion of the child's teacher. Further, using qualitative methods by interviewing parents from both ethnic groups might increase our understanding of the motives for help-seeking as related to specific contexts. A deeper understanding of the meaning of the different help-seeking behaviors could thus be achieved.

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Appendix. Items of Parent–Teacher Collaboration

1. Parents contribute to teachers' work.
2. Parents assist in handling problems at school.
3. Parents appreciate the teachers at school.
4. Teachers consult with parents in relation to their children.
5. Teachers respect parents.
6. Parents and teachers work jointly on various themes.
7. Teachers report to parents on their children's learning situation.
8. Teachers encourage parents' involvement in class activities.
9. Teachers collaborate with parents on decision-making.
10. Teachers are honest with parents.