

Gender and Children's Participation in Family Roles: A Sociological Approach to Understanding the Impact of Social Structures on Socialization and Family Relationships



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Abstract:

When discussing the reality of the ongoing tension and conflict between what we have termed the “traditional culture of gender” and the “modern culture of gender,” and examining the repercussions of this tension on the family, we observe that it has generated a conflict between two trajectories within marital relationships. These trajectories can be characterized by two cultural orientations: the “culture of authority” and the “culture of equality.” Our aim is to highlight the effects of this cultural conflict on the socialization processes of boys and girls, and to demonstrate how it gives rise to a tension between two distinct approaches to child-rearing: the “gender-differentiated socialization approach” and the “egalitarian socialization approach.”

Keywords: participation, socialization, family, gender, children.

1. Research Problem

The discourse of participation and gender is considered part of the broader discourse of emancipation and social transformation. Over the past two decades, numerous scholars have emphasized that the concept of **gender** is a relative cultural construct that varies across time and societies, shaping societal perceptions regarding the roles, capacities, rights, and responsibilities of males and females. From the very first day of their lives, children are systematically guided toward gender-specific roles through the establishment of frameworks that define the future social roles expected of each sex. The process of socialization encompasses physical, cognitive, behavioral, and value-based preparation. At its most extensive level, this process reinforces gender differences, even in the types of games and activities practiced by boys and girls (Akarakar, 2003, p. 35).

Various socialization institutions contribute to the reinforcement of gender roles for males and females. These institutions include the family, school, religious and cultural organizations, media outlets, oral traditions, songs, and games. Studies have identified several factors influencing the formation of gender identity within society, including age, educational level, social traditions, prevailing societal perceptions, and stereotypical images of males and females, among other factors (Ali & Tout, n.d., pp. 53–60). The effects of these factors gradually permeate the child's cognitive structure and shape their culture in accordance with developmental stages.

The influence of stereotypical gender roles extends to participation in general and children's participation in particular. Cultural frameworks often constitute barriers to the promotion of children's participation, especially those frameworks that regard children—both boys and girls—as lacking the right to express their opinions, and that view the world of children as one that can only be shaped and regulated by adults (Zayed, 2002, pp. 135–138). Since children's participation occurs within a framework of parental care, and since this framework is primarily constructed within the family, the latter bears responsibility for educating children about participation through dialogue and freedom of expression. Consequently, parental socialization plays a crucial role in enhancing participation. Participation continues to remain largely controlled by adults, who determine when and how it may occur. More precisely, participation is contingent upon the emotional and social bonds prevailing within the family (Crespi, 2008, pp. 80–81).

In light of the foregoing, it becomes evident that there is a relationship between gender dimensions and participation. Parents play an active role both in shaping gender identity and in defining children's participation roles. Therefore, the issue addressed in this study concerns whether fathers and mothers in contemporary Algeria still adhere to traditional gender norms, particularly with regard to children's participation (UNICEF, 2008, pp. 293–295).

The current study seeks to answer the following central question:

To what extent does gender identity influence parents' perceptions of children's right to participation, as well as its levels and domains?

This main question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent do fathers' and mothers' knowledge of children's right to participation differ according to certain demographic variables (gender, age, education, and occupation)?
2. Do parents' perceptions of children's right to participation differ according to the parents' gender (male or female)?
3. To what extent do parents' attitudes toward children's participation within the family, and the degree to which participation is permitted, vary according to socioeconomic status (education and occupation)?
4. Do fathers and mothers tend to emphasize specific activities for boys and girls within the family, and what is the nature of these activities?

2. Significance of the Study

This study derives its significance from the importance of the age group it addresses and from its focus on one of the issues affecting children. Paying attention to children, providing appropriate educational and developmental conditions, ensuring adequate scientific and vocational preparation, and encouraging effective participation that fosters the utilization of their creative and innovative capacities all contribute to safeguarding the future of the nation and promoting social development and modernization.

The importance of the study also stems from its affiliation with cultural studies that seek to explore cultural dimensions—represented here by gender differences—within a specific social context. The study examines perceptions of gender roles, the formation and acquisition of gender identity during childhood, and their relationship to children's participation across various domains of social life.

Within this framework and in accordance with the objectives of the study, attention was focused on five levels of participation:

- Parents' knowledge of the child's right to participation as stipulated in the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**.
- Parents' attitudes toward children's participation.
- Children's freedom to express opinions and the extent to which these opinions are taken into consideration.
- Opportunities provided for consultation and dialogue.
- Actual levels of participation within the family.

3. Research Methodology

The present study adopts the **descriptive-analytical (inductive-comparative) approach**, which is appropriate to the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. A diverse and integrated set of data sources was utilized.

Quantitative data were collected through fieldwork using a questionnaire administered to a sample of parents (fathers and mothers).

Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions aimed at identifying mechanisms of interaction with children within the Algerian family, the degree to which participation is permitted, levels of participation, and differences in the treatment of boys and girls by fathers and mothers. These methods were employed to deepen understanding of the nature of gender roles as they relate to children's participation.

4. Data Collection Instrument

The study relied on a **questionnaire** as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed and its main dimensions were determined in accordance with the objectives of the study. Care was taken to formulate the questions in a logical sequence that would enable respondents to answer objectively and facilitate the processes of data coding, classification, and analysis.

After completing the initial design of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted to verify its validity and suitability. The pilot study was administered to a randomly selected sample of **20 parents of primary school pupils**.

The questionnaire included several sections corresponding to the study objectives, namely:

- Basic demographic information about the parent or guardian.
- Questions measuring the level of knowledge and attitudes regarding children's participation.
- Questions related to the levels of children's participation within the family.
- Questions concerning children's participation within the school.
- Questions addressing obstacles to participation.

5. Scientific Concepts and Terminology Used in the Study

Defining the key concepts of the study is an essential prerequisite for exploring the research problem and clarifying its various dimensions and implications. The present study is based on two central concepts: **gender** and **participation**.

Concept of Gender

Numerous definitions of the concept of **gender** have emerged since its widespread diffusion during the mid-1990s. The concept evolved from a linguistic term into a theoretical framework and an ideological foundation of the feminist movement.

The English term **Gender** originates from a Latin root and refers to masculinity and femininity as categories used to analyze the roles, responsibilities, and constraints experienced by men and women. The concept of gender is often contrasted with that of **sex**.

The distinction between the two concepts lies in the fact that **sex** refers to the biological characteristics that differentiate males from females, characteristics that remain constant regardless of changes in time and place.

In contrast, **gender (social gender)** is a relative cultural concept that varies across societies and historical periods. It reflects society's perceptions of the roles, capabilities, rights, and responsibilities of women and men.

Gender also refers to a socially constructed identity and human entity that gradually permeates the cognitive structure of the child and shapes his or her culture according to different developmental stages (Zayed, 1992, pp. 293–295).

The concept of gender entered Arab and Islamic societies following the document of the **1993 Cairo Conference** (Zayed, p. 128). Its use subsequently expanded to encompass individual and personal identity.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** defines gender as a term used to describe the characteristics of men and women that are socially constructed and unrelated to biological differences. Likewise, the **Encyclopaedia Britannica** defines gender identity as "a person's sense of being male or female." Gender has also been defined as the characteristics of men and women that are shaped by their social relationships under the influence of economic, cultural, and ideological factors, which determine their respective social roles.

Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that the roles performed by males and females are primarily shaped by social circumstances rather than by biological differences (Abu Jado, 2000, p. 148).

Concept of Participation

The concept of **participation** refers to an individual's contribution to an activity, task, or undertaking, usually involving other individuals. It implies the existence of relationships among individuals or groups that are not necessarily based on material interests but rather on cooperation and responsibility, as is the case within family or school groups working toward a common objective (Dagher, 2004, p. 239).

From the foregoing, participation can be understood as both a human need and a fundamental right. It is essential for transforming an individual from a person who depends on others into an autonomous individual capable of self-reliance and cooperation with others. Participation thus contributes to individuals' involvement in public life and fosters a positive self-image.

Children's participation entails recognizing their ability to think independently, express their views effectively, and engage in meaningful and constructive interaction with others. This implies that boys and girls actively participate in decisions and actions that affect their lives, as well as the lives of their families and communities.

Accordingly, the definition of children's participation adopted in this study extends beyond passive involvement. It encompasses a continuum of progressively advanced levels that begin with awareness, positive attitudes, and freedom of expression, and culminate in full engagement in social issues and activities (Shelbi, 2002, pp. 63–65).

6. Theoretical and Research Frameworks of the Study

Overview of the Research Literature

After reviewing the body of research related to the impact of gender-related factors on children's participation, previous studies can be classified into several major themes.

First Theme: Studies Examining Gender Differences in Children's Participation

This theme includes studies that investigated gender differences in children's engagement in various activities. Findings within this area indicate the existence of gender-based differences in participation patterns, with girls and boys tending to engage in different types of activities.

Among these studies is the work of **Ke Le Chan (1998)**, who examined the impact of gender on voluntary participation among Chinese adolescents. The study was conducted on a sample of 1,105 Chinese adolescents (457 males and 648 females). The findings revealed no significant gender differences in the participation of males and females in voluntary activities (*ibid.*, p. 75).

Similarly, **Jennings (1998)** investigated the levels of political participation among Chinese females compared with males. The study found that males participated in political life to a greater extent than females and that gender inequality develops over time through structural and institutional mechanisms.

Another study examined participation in extracurricular activities among a sample of 1,357 adolescents. The findings indicated that male adolescents participated more frequently in sports and organized group activities, whereas females showed higher participation rates in religious activities (Matar, 2004, p. 35).

Second Theme: Studies Examining Factors Associated with Children's Participation

This theme encompasses studies that explored factors related to children's participation in collective activities and the influence of gender on participation.

Studies Addressing Factors Influencing Participation in General

Louise Chawla (2001) examined the concept of participation and the factors affecting it, including age, culture, gender, political and economic conditions, available resources and opportunities, and the objectives of participation (Zayed, 2012, p. 34).

The study also discussed different forms of participation and the psychological and social consequences of children's participation.

In 2008, the **United States Department of Tourism** conducted a survey to identify factors influencing children's perceptions of the importance of participation in sports and physical activities, as well as their preferences for specific types of activities. The survey relied on data collected from the parents of children involved in these activities.

One of the study's most significant findings was that a higher proportion of boys participated in sports activities compared with girls. Furthermore, the gender gap widened among adolescents aged 13–17 years. The study also demonstrated that social and economic factors influence participation levels, as

children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds participated less frequently in sports activities than those from higher socioeconomic groups (Lormolashawy, 1982, p. 34).

Intimité Monanty (2012) conducted a study on gender differences in education in India among children aged 10–12 years. The study produced several important findings, most notably the existence of gender-based disparities in educational outcomes. Families were found to allocate more resources to the education of male children. The findings further emphasized that both the child's age and gender play a significant role in school enrollment decisions and in determining whether the child remains in school.

Being male increased the likelihood of school enrollment and continuation to higher educational levels. Family characteristics, particularly parents' educational level and occupation, were also identified as important factors influencing school entry and retention (Hart, 1997, p. 13).

Studies Examining the Role of Gender in Participation

Barbara Mensch and colleagues (2003) conducted a study to identify gender-role attitudes among unmarried Algerian adolescents aged 16–19 years. The study explored adolescents' views regarding participation in family decision-making and responsibility for household tasks.

The results revealed substantial differences according to gender. They showed that neither boys nor girls exhibited strongly egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles. Furthermore, the attitudes of boys and girls did not differ consistently or significantly according to socioeconomic background, and education did not appear to play a substantial role in promoting egalitarian gender-role attitudes.

In addition, **Massey and colleagues (2006)** conducted a study on gender differences in motivation in general, and achievement motivation in particular. The findings indicated significant differences between males and females in achievement motivation. These differences were attributed to individuals' beliefs and behaviors that are shaped by rigid cultural stereotypes concerning gender.

Synthesis of Previous Studies

A review of previous studies addressing factors associated with gender differences in children's participation reveals a diversity of explanatory perspectives. Some researchers attribute these differences to parental preferences, motivational factors, cultural influences, age, political and economic conditions, available resources and opportunities, participation objectives, and gender itself.

Of particular relevance to the present study are investigations that examined the relationship between gender and participation. These studies highlight the role of culture in shaping parental attitudes and children's experiences through gender-based socialization and the division of gender roles. They demonstrate how cultural expectations guide children toward participation in specific activities. Moreover, these studies draw attention to the influential role of parents and the extent to which they affect their children's participation.

This body of literature raises an important question regarding the role of parents' gender identities and their relationship to children's participation and the various levels at which such participation occurs.

7. Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study adopts an integrated approach that combines **Feminist Theory** and **Children's Participation Theory** in an attempt to explain gender differences and their role in promoting particular patterns of children's participation.

Feminist Theory

Scholars associated with the feminist perspective focus on the concept of the **patriarchal system**, which refers to power relations deeply rooted in the traditional roles that society assigns to males and females. Since men traditionally occupy positions of authority within the household, they often exercise this authority to dominate family affairs. As a result, gender-based roles become institutionalized and perpetuated.

Sherry Ortner argues that women are associated with natural functions such as pregnancy and childbirth, activities that are generally accorded lower social status than politics, religion, and leadership positions in business, which are traditionally occupied by men. Feminist thinkers contend that these inequalities in social status within the wider society are translated into inequalities in family roles.

Gender identity is explained through **gendered socialization**, that is, the processes through which children learn to behave in ways that society considers appropriate for their sex. Role modeling, together with role expectations, plays a crucial role in this process.

As children grow older, they become increasingly exposed to stereotypical masculine and feminine gender roles. Gender differences are therefore not biologically determined; rather, they are culturally produced and continuously reproduced through everyday social practices.

Theory of Children's Participation

Roger Hart sought to develop a theoretical model explaining the levels of children's participation and the role of gender in shaping these levels. His model illustrates the extent to which children gain control over the participation process.

Hart proposed a hierarchical framework, commonly referred to as the **Ladder of Participation**, which enables access to different levels and dimensions of participation. The ladder consists of **eight levels**, serving as the foundation of his participation model.

The first three rungs (levels 1–3) represent forms of **non-participation** among children and adolescents, whereas the remaining levels represent varying degrees of participation. The model assumes that participation at lower levels is generally less valuable than participation at higher levels. Nevertheless, non-participation may itself constitute a form of participation if children and adolescents (both boys and girls) are given the opportunity to choose whether or not they wish to participate.

The participation ladder was designed as a starting point for conceptualizing the various ways in which children may participate. Levels of participation depend on numerous factors that are not directly related to program design, including children's capacity to participate and cultural issues associated with gender

roles that influence children's participation. Consequently, it is not always necessary for children to operate at the highest level of the ladder, as they may choose to engage at different levels of participation.

8. Study Findings

The study seeks to answer its research questions in light of the obtained findings and through an examination of the factors shaping the relationship between gender and children's participation within the family.

The participation model adopted in this study emphasizes participation that is grounded in knowledge and understanding of its purpose. When opportunities for participation are granted to children (boys and girls) based on informed awareness and positive perceptions regarding children and their roles within the family, participation becomes more effective. Conversely, participation is weakened when such knowledge and positive attitudes are lacking.

Participation therefore depends largely on the amount of knowledge and information upon which it is based, as well as on the depth of positive attitudes toward it. This perspective allows us to assume that opportunities for participation expand for children (both boys and girls) when parents possess adequate knowledge of laws and regulations related to participation, as well as an understanding of the rights and responsibilities that shape and regulate such participation.

9. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis was based on the **individual as the unit of analysis** and focused on quantitative statistical analysis at two levels:

Level One: Descriptive Analysis

This level involved describing the study variables through the use of frequencies and percentages.

Level Two: Multivariate Analysis

This level focused on examining the influence of a set of key variables—namely **gender, age, education, and occupation**—on children's participation within the family.

10. Sample Size and Sampling Method

The present study was conducted on a sample of **240 parents (mothers and fathers)** residing in **Algiers, Algeria**.

The sample was selected using a **random sampling technique** and consisted of:

124 families with male children, and

116 families with female children.

The children were between **8 and 18 years of age** and were enrolled in educational levels ranging from the **fourth year of primary school** to the **second year of secondary school**.

The results revealed the following:

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	Frequency (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Males)	Percentage (Females)	Total
25–35 years	37	14	32.1%	11.4%	51
35–45 years	75	91	64.3%	73.2%	166
45–55 years	4	19	3.6%	15.4%	23
Total	124	116	100%	100%	240

The table shows that the majority of respondents were between **35 and 45 years of age**, accounting for **73.2%** of families with female children and **64.3%** of families with male children. This indicates that most parents in the sample belonged to the 35–45 age group.

The second largest group consisted of parents aged **25–35 years**, representing **32.1%** of families with male children and **11.4%** of families with female children. In contrast, parents aged **45–55 years** accounted for **15.4%** of families with female children and **3.6%** of families with male children.

These findings suggest that as parents become more mature with age, they are more likely to recognize the importance of allowing their children to participate in decision-making and express their opinions regarding family matters. Such participation is viewed as an important social right of children.

Another factor that contributes to parents' awareness of the importance of children's social participation within the family, whether boys or girls, is the educational level of the parents.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Males)	Percentage (Females)	Total
Primary	38	42	31.0%	36.3%	80
Middle School	24	23	19.0%	20.2%	47
Secondary School	62	51	50.0%	43.5%	113
Total	124	116	100%	100%	240

The table indicates that the majority of respondents had an educational level above middle school, specifically **secondary education**, representing **50.0%** of families with male children and **43.5%** of families with female children.

This was followed by respondents with a **primary education level**, accounting for **36.3%** of families with female children and **31.0%** of families with male children. Respondents with a **middle school education** represented **20.2%** of families with female children and **19.0%** of families with male children.

These findings suggest that parents' educational level, whether high or low, plays an important role in shaping their awareness of the significance of granting children—both boys and girls—the right to social participation within the family. Educated parents tend to recognize that providing children with opportunities to participate fosters a stronger sense of belonging and helps prepare them to make sound decisions in their future lives.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Type of Occupation

Type of Occupation	Frequency (Male Children)	Frequency (Female Children)	Percentage (Male Children)	Percentage (Female Children)	Total
Unemployed	60	–	48.3%	–	60
Lower-level occupations	16	54	12.9%	46.8%	70
Middle-level occupations	15	37	12.1%	31.4%	52
Higher-level occupations	33	25	26.7%	21.8%	58
Total	124	116	100%	100%	240

The table shows that the majority of respondents were engaged in **lower-level occupations**, accounting for **46.8%** of families with female children. This was followed by respondents who were **unemployed**, representing **48.3%** of families with male children.

Respondents employed in **middle-level occupations** constituted **31.4%** of families with female children and **12.1%** of families with male children. Meanwhile, respondents holding **higher-level occupations** represented **26.7%** of families with male children and **21.8%** of families with female children.

These findings suggest that even when families do not possess sufficient financial resources, they remain committed to allowing children—whether boys or girls—to engage in social participation within the family. This reflects an awareness that granting children the right to participate contributes to their healthy social development and helps them become well-adjusted individuals capable of facing life's challenges more effectively.

Table 4: Parents' Perceptions of Children's Participation (Boys and Girls)

Perceptions are usually based on available knowledge and information. Through this section, we attempt to identify parents' perceptions regarding participation, as well as their views about the institutions responsible for instilling the value of participation in children.

Institution responsible for introducing participation	Fathers (%)	Mothers (%)	Parents' education (Secondary)	Parents' education (Intermediate)	Parents' education (Primary)	Mothers' education (Secondary)	Mothers' education (Intermediate)	Mothers' education (Primary)	Fathers' education (Secondary)	Fathers' education (Intermediate)	Fathers' education (Primary)	Parents' occupations (High)	Parents' occupations (Medium)	Parents' occupations (Low)	Parents (No work)
Family	100	92.6	94.4	79.3	100	92.2	93.1	92.2	100	89.3	96.4	92.9	83.9	91.4	91.7
School	65	67	68.5	71.4	74.1	64.4	65	60	65.5	71.4	65	87.6	67.7	65.7	68.1
Friends group	–	6.1	13.7	7.1	5.2	7.5	–	1.7	2.1	–	–	14.3	12.9	5.7	5.6
Media	20	20	25.7	7.1	25.9	22.4	3.4	16.4	7.1	7.1	20	25.7	19.4	50	20.7
Civil society organizations	2.6	12.1	–	–	5.2	4.5	–	2.2	–	–	–	7.1	2.2	50	1.4
Government institutions	2.8	13.2	–	–	10.3	9	3.4	6.7	10.7	12.3	7.6	7.1	9.7	–	7.2

The table shows that there are no major differences between fathers’ and mothers’ perceptions regarding the institutions most responsible for introducing children to the right of participation. The **family** ranks first among these institutions, with fathers accounting for approximately **94.4%** and mothers for about **92.2%**. This indicates that the family remains the primary environment in which the early foundations of a child’s personality are formed.

The **educational institution (school)** comes in second place, with fathers at **60.5%** and mothers at **67%**. The **media** ranks third, with fathers at **25.8%** and mothers at **20%**.

The data also reveal differences between fathers’ and mothers’ perceptions regarding the role of peer groups and civil society organizations in introducing children to their rights. Fathers recorded approximately **13.7%**, while mothers reached about **6.1%**. These findings indicate that females have less mobility and social interaction due to cultural restrictions imposed on them at different stages of life.

No significant differences were observed between fathers and mothers in terms of education level, occupation, or age categories regarding agreement on the importance of these three institutions. The only noticeable variation appeared among younger parents regarding their perceptions of the role of civil society organizations in educating children about their rights. This suggests that younger parents tend to be more open-minded than older ones.

Parents’ Attitudes Toward Allowing Children’s Participation According to Children’s Gender (Male–Female)

This section addresses parents’ attitudes regarding the extent to which fathers and mothers allow children to engage in dialogue within the family, whether they listen to boys and girls when they express their opinions on specific issues, and the degree to which they permit both boys and girls to exercise their right to participate in family decision-making.

Table 5: Parents’ Willingness to Involve Male and Female Children in Decision-Making According to Parents’ Education and Occupation

Parents’ permission for children’s participation in decisions	Gender	Fathers (%)	Mothers (%)	Fathers’ education: Primary	Fathers’ education: Intermediate	Fathers’ education: Secondary	Mothers’ education: Primary	Mothers’ education: Intermediate	Mothers’ education: Secondary
Boys only		14.8	14	18.8	9.5	13.8	25	8	9.4
Girls only		9	13	14	14.3	8.5	11.4	4	9.4
Boys and girls together		76.2	73	67.2	76.2	77.7	63.6	88	81.2
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The table shows that the majority of fathers and mothers support the participation of both boys and girls in decision-making. The percentages of fathers (14.8%) and mothers (14%) who support the participation of boys only are relatively close. Similarly, 13% of mothers indicated approval of girls’ participation only, while a small proportion of fathers (9%) supported the participation of girls only.

Although this percentage is low, it indicates a tendency—albeit limited—toward gender differentiation in children’s participation in decision-making, a distinction shaped by the cultural norms of society. This form of differentiation represents one of the key constraints imposed on children’s freedom.

Parents’ Attitudes Toward the Benefits of Children’s Participation

This section examines parents’ perceptions regarding the importance and functions of participation within the family. Parents (both fathers and mothers) were asked about the benefits of participation and their views on its role.

The responses were largely positive. **90.5% of fathers** and **89.5% of mothers** agreed that participation within the family is beneficial. Only a small percentage of respondents rejected its usefulness (**9.5% of fathers and 10.5% of mothers**).

These findings clearly indicate a strong awareness among both fathers and mothers of the benefits of children’s participation within the family.

Table No. (06): Parents' Attitudes Toward the Benefits of Children's Participation According to the Variables (Education, Occupation, and Age).

Household Activities	Mothers' Education (Secondary)	Mothers' Education (Middle)		Mothers' Education (Primary)		Fathers' Education (Secondary)		Fathers' Education (Middle)	Fathers' Education (Primary)	Permission for Girls (Mothers)	Permission for Girls (Fathers)	Permission for Boys (Mothers)	Permission for Boys (Fathers)
		M Sec	M Mid	M Prim	F Sec	F Mid	F Prim						
Purchasing needs	75.9	68.2	88.9	77.6	63.6	91.7	78.4	70.2	79.3	72.8			
House organization	86.2	72.7	77.8	83.8	68.2	72.2	86.0	92.7	76.7	86.3			
Meal preparation	81.0	72.7	77.8	69.0	68.2	63.9	78.4	84.7	77.2	86.3			
Budget planning	32.8	13.6	33.3	29.3	13.6	33.3	29.3	29.8	27.6	30.6			
Caring for siblings	93.1	77.3	88.9	91.4	72.7	86.1	88.8	90.3	86.2	87.9			
Supporting family members	87.9	81.8	91.7	89.7	81.8	86.1	87.9	95.2	87.6	95.2			
Transferring school learning	77.6	72.7	91.7	77.6	72.7	72.7	81.0	85.5	86.0	85.5			

The table data reveals the benefits of children's participation as perceived by parents. The findings show clear differences between fathers and mothers in their perceptions of the extent of these benefits, with fathers demonstrating greater awareness of the advantages of participation compared to mothers.

While **86.3% of fathers** confirmed that children's participation enables them to understand their responsibilities within the family, this percentage decreased to **60.2% among mothers**. Likewise, **83.3% of fathers** agreed that children's participation enhances their ability to assume responsibility, although this percentage slightly decreased among mothers, reaching **79.6%**.

This was followed by the benefit of **self-confidence**, which was affirmed by **82.5% of fathers**, while the corresponding percentage among mothers was **74.3%**. Here, a relatively close convergence is observed between fathers and mothers in confirming these two benefits, indicating a shared agreement that there is a reciprocal relationship (of influence and interaction) between responsibility-taking and self-confidence. A sense of responsibility strengthens self-confidence.

Fathers also emphasized, at varying rates, the importance of children's participation in relation to the development of their social skills. More than half of the fathers' sample (54.2%) confirmed that children's participation within the family increases their sense of belonging to the family, whereas this percentage decreased among mothers to 44.2%.

By examining the table data, it becomes clear that education is an influential variable in shaping parental attitudes. The results indicate that the higher the parents' educational level, the greater their awareness of the importance of participation and its benefits for the development of children's personality. Participation does not only benefit children; its impact extends to adults as well, and even to society as a whole, as it contributes to building a new generation capable of active social engagement.

Limits of Participation Within the Family

This section identifies the levels of participation within the family in light of prevailing cultural frameworks and the system of household labor division.

Limits of Allowing Opinion Expression

This part examines the extent to which fathers and mothers allow their children to express their opinions in a number of situations or decisions that affect their lives, as well as the extent to which parents (both father and mother) take these opinions into consideration.

By analyzing the data in relation to the variables of parents' education and gender, a clear positive relationship emerges between education and the tendency to allow children to participate by expressing their opinions on family matters. All percentages related to allowing children to express their views increase steadily with higher levels of parental education.

The distribution of responses according to gender shows a high degree of similarity, with no significant gender differences between fathers and mothers regarding the level of allowing children to express their opinions on family matters. **82.3% of fathers** and **79.3% of mothers** agreed to allow children to express their views. Meanwhile, the percentage of parents who allowed only limited participation was very small, and only **1.7% of the total sample** rejected the idea of participation entirely. This indicates a general tendency toward granting children opportunities to speak and express their opinions.

The highest levels of support for children’s participation in expressing opinions, in terms of educational level, were found among highly educated parents (**87.5% of fathers and 79.6% of mothers**). This is expected given the role education plays in changing attitudes toward participation and in promoting greater freedom for children.

Levels of Children’s Participation

This section examines the extent of participation within the family and the degree to which the adult world allows children to contribute to decisions that affect their lives. It also explores the level of parental permission granted to boys and girls, ranging from merely listening to children’s opinions, to allowing them to express their views and take them into account, and ultimately to relinquishing some authority to children.

Table No. (07): Parents’ Attitudes Toward the Levels of Participation Allowed for Children According to (Education Level and Occupation).

Household Activities	Mothers’ Education (Secondary)	Mothers’ Education (Middle)	Mothers’ Education (Primary)	Fathers’ Education (Middle)		Fathers’ Education (Primary)		Mothers’ Permission for Girls	Mothers’ Permission for Boys	Fathers’ Permission for Girls	Fathers’ Permission for Boys	Girls Allowed (Mothers)		Boys Allowed (Mothers)		Boys Allowed (Fathers)	
				F Sec	F Mid	F Prim	M Girls					M Boys	F Girls	F Boys	Girls (M)	Girls (F)	Boys (M)
Purchasing needs	75.9	68.2	88.9	77.6	63.6	91.7	74.6	76.2	89.3	74.6	78.4	70.2	79.3	72.8			
House organization	86.2	72.7	77.8	83.8	68.2	72.2	83.6	85.7	71.4	82.1	86.0	92.7	76.7	86.3			
Meal preparation	81.0	72.7	77.8	69.0	68.2	63.9	76.1	85.7	78.6	78.2	78.4	84.7	77.2	86.3			
Budget planning	32.8	13.6	33.3	29.3	13.6	33.3	31.3	14.3	35.7	29.9	29.3	29.8	27.6	30.6			

Caring for siblings	93.1	77.3	88.9	91.4	72.7	86.1	92.5	90.5	78.6	91.0	88.8	90.3	86.2	87.9
Supporting family members	87.9	81.8	91.7	89.7	81.8	86.1	86.6	95.2	85.7	86.6	87.9	95.2	87.6	95.2
Transferring school learning	77.6	72.7	91.7	77.6	72.7	72.7	79.1	85.7	82.1	79.1	81.0	85.5	86.0	85.5

The table data reveals that the space granted by parents for children's participation decreases in accordance with the level and depth of participation. Parents' willingness gradually declines as we move down the "ladder of participation" toward higher levels that grant children greater involvement. The lowest level of willingness appears when children are allowed to take over some parental authority, with only **11.2% of fathers and 17.7% of mothers** supporting this. In contrast, the highest level is observed at the level of simply listening to children, reaching **91.1% for fathers and 81.9% for mothers**.

The data also reveal clear differences between fathers and mothers in their attitudes toward listening to children, helping them express their opinions, and taking their viewpoints into consideration. Regarding assisting children in expressing their opinions, the results show **86.3% for fathers compared to 74.1% for mothers**. For taking children's views into account, the percentages were **66.9% for fathers and 59.5% for mothers**.

In contrast, mothers recorded higher percentages in relation to allowing children to intervene in decision-making, relinquishing some authority, and allowing children to make decisions. Mothers' attitudes toward allowing children to participate in decision-making reached **39.5% compared to 29.3% for fathers**. Similarly, the percentage of mothers who supported relinquishing some authority to children was **17.7%, compared to 11.2% for fathers**, while support for allowing children to make decisions reached **21% for mothers versus 12.9% for fathers**.

These findings reflect the persistence of male dominance within family authority structures, where mothers appear more willing to provide greater space for children's participation in certain forms of authority and decision-making. This suggests that fathers are still more inclined toward maintaining control and monopolizing authority within the family compared to mothers.

Educational data indicate that the degree of willingness to grant children greater participation increases with the educational level of both parents. This suggests that higher education within the family is associated with a greater space for children to engage in participatory practices. Families with higher educational attainment tend to be more supportive of children's participation.

The data also show that this tendency is stronger among parents with higher occupational status. This indicates that both education and occupational level are important factors in shaping awareness of the principles of participation and their significance for children.

Nature of Activities in Which Children (Boys and Girls) Participate Within the Family

This section examines the division of labor within the household and whether this division is based on gender principles (i.e., gender-based division of household work). It does so by comparing the types of tasks that children (boys and girls) are allowed to perform within the family.

To understand the actual reality of participation permitted by parents, a list of household activities in which children (boys and girls) may participate was presented to parents.

Table No. (08): Nature of Household Activities Allowed by Parents According to the Gender of Children (Boys and Girls) and Parents' Educational Level.

Household Activities	M Ed Sec (Girls)	M Ed Mid (Girls)	M Ed Prim (Girls)	M Ed Sec (Boys)	M Ed Mid (Boys)	M Ed Prim (Boys)	F Ed Sec (Girls)	F Ed Mid (Girls)	F Ed Prim (Girls)	F Ed Sec (Boys)	F Ed Mid (Boys)	F Ed Prim (Boys)	Girls Allowed (Mothers)	Girls Allowed (Fathers)	Boys Allowed (Mothers)		Boys Allowed (Fathers)	
Activity	M Sec G	M Mid G	M Prim G	M Sec B	M Mid B		M Prim B	F Sec G	F Mid G	F Prim G	F Sec B	F Mid B	F Prim B	G (M)	G (F)	B (M)	B (F)	
Purchasing needs	75.9	68.2	88.9	77.6	63.6		91.7	74.6	76.2	89.3	74.6	76.2	92.9	78.4	70.2	79.3	72.8	
House organization	86.2	72.7	77.8	83.8	68.2		72.2	83.6	85.7	71.4	82.1	76.2	64.3	86.0	92.7	76.7	86.3	
Meal preparation	81.0	72.7	77.8	69.0	68.2		63.9	76.1	85.7	78.6	78.2	76.2	90.2	78.4	84.7	77.2	86.3	
Budget planning	32.8	13.6	33.3	29.3	13.6		33.3	31.3	14.3	35.7	29.9	9.5	35.7	29.3	29.8	27.6	30.6	
Caring for siblings	93.1	77.3	88.9	91.4	72.7		86.1	92.5	90.5	78.6	91.0	85.7	75.0	88.8	90.3	86.2	87.9	
Supporting family members	87.9	81.8	91.7	89.7	81.8		86.1	86.6	95.2	85.7	86.6	95.2	82.1	87.9	95.2	87.6	95.2	
Transferring school learning	77.6	72.7	91.7	77.6	72.7		72.7	79.1	85.7	82.1	79.1	85.7	82.1	81.0	85.5	86.0	85.5	

The previous table data reveals that there are certain activities in which the degree of parental permission for boys' participation is lower compared to girls, particularly in household-related tasks such as organizing and arranging the home. The percentage for girls reached **92.7%** compared to **86.3% for boys**. Regarding helping in food preparation, the rate of permission for girls was **84.7%**, compared to **73.4% for boys**. As for caring for siblings, the percentages were **90.3% for girls** versus **87.9% for boys**. These findings clearly reveal a gender-based division of labor between boys and girls.

The data also indicate a higher rate of fathers allowing boys to purchase family necessities compared to girls. The percentage of permission for boys reached **79.8%**, while for girls it was **80.2%**. These results highlight differences in the nature of tasks assigned to boys and girls according to parents' gendered perceptions. The data further suggest that fathers have greater influence in matters related to children, confirming the persistence of male dominance within the family structure.

The findings also show that there are activities in which both fathers and mothers grant equal levels of permission to boys and girls. These are general activities that do not involve strict division of labor, such as comforting family members, transferring what children learn at school, and following general social issues. Educational data for both fathers and mothers revealed no statistically significant differences among respondents in the distribution of these tasks between boys and girls. This indicates that traditional and stereotypical views of gender roles within the family still persist, reflecting deeply rooted cultural norms in society.

The data also show relatively high parental attitudes (both fathers and mothers) toward children's participation—boys and girls—in comforting family members during times of sadness. This activity ranked first among participation priorities, reaching **87.1% among those in high-status occupations**, and rising to **100% among those in medium occupations**, followed by participation in caring for younger siblings, transferring school learning, organizing the home, purchasing family needs, participating in public issues, and finally planning the family budget.

What is particularly noteworthy is that the data confirm the continuation of a gender-based division of household labor even among younger and middle-aged generations. Girls are still considered more capable of organizing and arranging the home, even among higher occupational groups (**87.1% for girls vs. 83.9% for boys**), helping in food preparation (**77.4% for girls vs. 67.7% for boys**), and caring for younger children (**93.5% for girls vs. 90.3% for boys**).

At the same time, the data indicate a shift in parental attitudes regarding children's participation in external or public-oriented activities, such as purchasing goods, where the percentages are relatively balanced across genders and occupational levels. Age-related data did not show significant differences among respondents in the distribution of these tasks among children.

Actual Areas of Participation

This section examines the main areas in which families allow children to express their opinions and whether these opinions are actually taken into consideration, or whether participation is limited to specific domains while excluded from others.

Table No. (09): Areas in Which Parents (Fathers and Mothers) Allow Children to Express Their Opinions and Take Them Into Consideration According to the Occupation Variable.

Domains	M Ed Sec (Implementing Child's Opinion)	M Ed Mid (Implementing Child's Opinion)	M Ed Prim (Implementing Child's Opinion)	F Ed Sec (Implementing Child's Opinion)		F Ed Mid (Implementing Child's Opinion)		F Ed Prim (Implementing Child's Opinion)		M Ed Sec	M Ed Mid	M Ed Prim	F Ed Sec (Allowing Opinion)	F Ed Mid (Allowing Opinion)	F Ed Prim (Allowing Opinion)	Listening to Opinion (Mothers)	Listening to Opinion (Fathers)	Allowing Opinion (Mothers)	Allowing Opinion (Fathers)
Domain	M Sec Impl	M Mid Impl	M Prim Impl	F Sec Impl	F Mid Impl	F Prim Impl	M Sec	M Mid	M Prim	F Sec Allow	F Mid Allow	F Prim Allow	Listen (M)	Listen (F)	Allow (M)	Allow (F)			
School	55.8	64.3	45.5	45.1	78.6	64.3	50.0	40.9	60.3	61.2	47.6	39.3	54.4	56.6	52.4	70.2			
School quality	67.4	46.7	34.6	58.2	60.0	35.3	47.2	45.5	63.8	67.2	38.1	39.2	54.0	60.0	55.2	62.9			
Clothing quality	66.7	64.7	53.1	63.1	66.7	56.5	66.7	54.5	82.8	82.1	57.1	60.7	62.3	58.6	58.6	72.6			
Friends' quality	43.1	29.4	34.6	41.1	26.3	42.1	44.4	31.8	51.7	50.7	32.3	42.9	32.1	28.1	45.7	64.5			
Leisure places	70.2	70.6	46.2	66.2	68.8	52.6	47.2	62.6	74.1	76.1	47.6	46.4	50.7	62.0	62.8	70.2			
Housing location	18.2	20.0	22.2	18.5	33.3	40.0	22.2	18.2	13.8	16.4	22.8	14.3	76.1	15.1	22.8	17.7			
Home furniture	46.5	33.3	22.2	47.9	15.4	25.0	27.8	22.7	29.7	40.3	19.0	25.0	16.4	22.0	60.2	30.6			
Sports clubs	74.5	80.0	78.1	72.4	60.0	60.0	47.2	50.0	72.4	68.7	47.6	50.0	40.3	58.6	19.0	64.5			
Family budget	16.1	33.3	22.2	17.1	–	33.3	22.2	9.1	20.7	22.4	4.8	21.4	68.7	17.2	26.7	19.4			
Family problems	17.1	55.6	31.2	20.0	33.3	35.7	25.0	18.2	21.0	26.9	22.8	28.6	22.4	22.1	–	22.2			
Allowance amount	49.0	33.3	44.4	50.0	40.0	33.3	52.8	40.9	44.8	29.3	42.9	42.9	26.9	41.4	–	51.6			

If the previous table data confirmed that the space allowed by parents (fathers and mothers) for children's (boys and girls) participation is governed by the system of labor division determined by family culture, then the data in this table reveal a significant gap between the degree to which fathers and mothers allow children to express their opinions and the degree to which these opinions are actually taken into account across different domains.

This gap appears more clearly in the fathers' sample compared to the mothers' sample. It indicates the dominance of male authority in decision-making within the family, reflecting the prevailing culture within the social structure. Regarding gender differences between parents, a clear distinction emerges between fathers and mothers in allowing children freedom of choice in various domains. The data show that the choice of clothing ranked as a high priority among fathers, with **72.6%**, compared to **58.6% among mothers**.

In second place comes granting children freedom to choose entertainment places, which is equal in importance to choosing the school, as both issues were recorded at **70.6% among fathers**, compared to **63.8% among mothers** for entertainment choices, while reaching **65.4% in school choice**. These three areas are followed in rank by allowing children to choose friends, sports clubs, and cultural clubs. The percentages of allowing children to express their opinions in these areas reached **64.5% among fathers**, compared to **45.7% among mothers** regarding friendship choices, and **60.3% for freedom in choosing sports and cultural clubs**.

Next comes allowing children to determine the amount of daily pocket money, which ranks at the bottom of the list, followed by other areas such as family problems, home furniture selection, family budget, and place of residence in terms of allowing opinion and taking it into consideration.

As for differences in parental attitudes (fathers and mothers) toward allowing children to express their opinions and taking them into account according to educational level, the results did not reveal significant variation in this ranking based on parents' education.

When moving from the level of allowing opinion to the level of actual implementation, the data reveal that the actual adoption of children's opinions is lower than the level of merely allowing them to express their views. This is a general trend across all domains included in the list.

Examining these data in light of parents' educational level shows a clear positive relationship between education and the tendency to allow children to express their opinions across all domains, as well as to actually take these opinions into account. This increases steadily with higher levels of parental education. This is expected and logical given the role of education in changing attitudes toward participation and in granting greater freedom to children.

However, differences appear in these responses according to gender. Mothers tend to adopt a more conservative position than fathers regarding allowing children to express their opinions in all domains. The data clearly show that mothers are more restrictive than fathers in this regard. In contrast, mothers appear more responsive than fathers in actually considering children's opinions, except in two areas where fathers show higher levels: school choice and type of school.

This finding aligns with prevailing cultural frameworks in society, where women occupy a weaker position than men within the dominant system of power relations in a patriarchal society. As a result, the

female voice becomes more influential only in matters related to clothing, entertainment places, and sports and cultural clubs.

Finally, the same table data reveal a discrepancy between what families allow in principle (verbal permission) and what is actually implemented in practice.

11- General Conclusion

In light of the theoretical model of the study (the participation model), which explains the levels of children's participation and the role of gender in defining these roles, and in accordance with the study's objectives, the study reached a set of findings summarized as follows:

The results revealed that parents confirmed the existence of three main institutions responsible for introducing children to their right to participation (the family, followed by the school, and then the media institution). Both fathers and mothers emphasized that the family is the first institution in which the child's personality is formed and the primary setting where children learn the foundations of participation in life. Thus, the family constitutes the initial space for building the child's personality. This reflects that parents are the first and most influential educators in shaping children's values and attitudes, and that the lessons learned at home about participation pave the way later for learning responsibility and civic values.

The study also revealed that parents' attitudes toward allowing children's participation according to children's gender (boys and girls) show a tendency toward differentiation between males and females in decision-making participation, although with a slight difference. This can be attributed to the fact that gender-based discrimination is still deeply rooted in the cultural structure of society. Undoubtedly, this differentiation represents one of the key limitations imposed on children's freedom to participate. Nevertheless, the results show a general tendency toward granting children opportunities to participate in decision-making, and this tendency increases with higher parental education levels.

The findings also indicated that there are no differences between fathers and mothers regarding the degree to which children are allowed to express their opinions about family matters. This suggests a general trend toward giving children opportunities to express their views. Highly educated parents were more supportive of children's participation in expressing opinions, which is expected and logical given the role of education in changing attitudes toward participation and in granting greater freedom to children.

The results further showed clear differences between fathers and mothers in their attitudes toward the levels of participation allowed for children, ranging from listening to children, helping them express their opinions, and taking their views into consideration. Mothers were found to grant higher levels of participation to children across all stages compared to fathers. This reflects male dominance in family authority structures. The findings also showed that the willingness to grant greater opportunities to children increases with higher educational levels of both fathers and mothers, meaning that increased education within the family expands the space within which children can engage in participation.

The results also revealed a clear gender-based division of labor within the family: boys are more involved in activities such as purchasing items from outside the home, while girls are more involved in organizing and arranging the household. This indicates that the family continues to reinforce gender-based principles in the division of labor through the comparison of tasks assigned to children within the household. It was also found that critical decisions concerning the child are still exclusively made by adults, and that the

extent of children's participation within the family depends on the degree to which adults allow them to contribute to decisions affecting their lives.

Although there is increasing acceptance of children's inclusion and actual participation in decision-making related to their lives, there remains difficulty in defining how children participate, as well as the levels and domains of their participation. This indicates the persistence of traditional perspectives and stereotypical gender roles within the family. These patterns reflect deeply rooted cultural norms in society at large. Here, it is important to note that the modern understanding of participation—as participation in shaping life or decisions related to children's lives—should not be separated from the traditional patterns of participation that have historically characterized family culture.

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