

Parents' Socialization of Preschool/Elementary School Children's Reading and Math Skills in Kosovo, Turkey, and the U.S.

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Introduction

- Young children's home-based reading and math activities are critical aspects of the development of their future reading and math skills (Sonnenschein et al., 2023).
- Most of the research has been done with US samples.
- This study expands on the present literature by investigating how parents in Kosovo, Turkey and the US socialize their children's (ages 4 - 9 years) academic development.
- These countries have different cultures, languages, religions, and educational histories.

Research Questions

1. Do parents' beliefs about reading and math socialization differ across countries?
2. Do parents' beliefs about reading and math socialization differ across academic domains, children's age, and gender?
3. How do the roles of mothers and fathers differ in assisting their children with reading and math across different countries??

Methodology

- After giving consent, parents from Kosovo (Southeastern Europe, $N = 162$), Turkey (Middle East, $N = 422$) and US ($N = 357$), completed a Qualtrics survey about:
 - importance of reading/math activities at home,
 - the importance of children achieving reading/math benchmarks,
 - parents' confidence to assist their children with reading/math, and
 - the frequency of children's home-based engagement in reading/math activities.
- Adapted from a survey developed for the Language Learning and Math Achievement (LLAMA) project (LeFevre et al., 2010). All questions were translated and back-translated to/from Albanian and Turkish.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics

	Child's sex (% female)	Child's mean age	Relationship to the child (% mothers)	Parents' mean age
Kosovo	48%	6.86	84%	36.18
Turkey	50%	5.95	91%	36.35
US	43%	7.03	99%	39.73

Results

RQ1: Do parents' beliefs about reading/math socialization differ across country?

ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences across the countries for:

1. Importance of helping with math:

- Parents in Kosovo rated the importance of helping with math higher than both US and Turkey parents, and Turkish parents rated it higher than the US.

2. Confidence to assist with reading:

- Both US and Kosovo parents reported higher confidence in assisting with reading than parents in Turkey,

3. Confidence to assist with math:

- Parents in Kosovo reported higher confidence in assisting with reading than both US and Turkey parents.

4. Importance of achieving reading benchmarks:

- US parents rated the importance of achieving reading benchmarks higher than both Kosovo and Turkey parents.

There were no other significant differences between the countries.

RQ2: Do parents' beliefs about reading and math socialization differ across academic domains, children's age, and gender?

- US children engaged in more reading than math activities, whereas children in Kosovo and engaged in more math than reading activities ($p < .01$).
- In contrast, assisting children with reading and achieving reading benchmarks was rated as more important than math in the three countries. Similarly, parents were more confident assisting with reading than math in all three countries.

Table 2

Means and Standard deviations for study variables.

	Kosovo (mean/SD)	Turkey (mean/SD)	US (mean/SD)
Reading activities engagement	3.39 (0.85)	3.19 (0.76)	3.38 (0.80)
Math activities engagement	3.64 (0.63)	3.40 (0.87)	3.00 (0.80)
Importance of assisting children with reading	4.36 (0.75)	4.28 (0.75)	4.23 (0.89)
Importance of assisting children with math	4.31 (0.80)	4.08 (0.80)	3.90 (1.02)
Importance of achieving reading benchmarks	4.03 (0.87)	4.15 (0.82)	4.46 (0.56)
Importance of achieving math benchmarks	3.67 (0.87)	3.81 (0.78)	3.85 (0.62)
Confidence in assisting children with reading	4.40 (0.74)	4.10 (0.83)	4.44 (0.85)
Confidence in assisting children with math	4.26 (0.76)	3.85 (0.94)	3.89 (1.17)

Note. Responses ranged from 1 (not important/confident) to 5 (very important/confident).

- There were no significant differences in parents' beliefs about reading and math socialization based on the age or gender of the child. ($p > .05$).

RQ3: How do the roles of mothers and fathers differ in assisting their children with reading and math across different countries??

Regardless of country, mothers, not fathers, typically assisted their children with reading/math. When fathers did assist, it was more with math (20%) than reading (5%).

Table 3

Means and Standard deviations for study variables.

	Kosovo (%)	Turkey (%)	US (%)
Who typically assists your child with reading at home?	91% mothers 4% fathers	92% mothers 5% fathers	89% mothers 8% fathers
Who typically assists your child with math at home?	77% mothers 14% fathers	68% mothers 27% fathers	69% mothers 28% fathers

Conclusion

- Recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives on parental roles and educational priorities is very important to facilitate effective strategies for promoting children's academic development across different contexts.
- While differences were noted between countries, it is unclear why parents in Kosovo and Turkey engage more in math than reading activities, yet appear to have higher levels of confidence in their reading abilities as well as rate higher importance for achieving reading benchmarks compared to math.
- Meanwhile, US parents emphasized doing reading activities more than math, rated reading benchmarks higher, and also had higher confidence to help with reading compared to math.
- Cultural values, educational systems, or societal perceptions of literacy and numeracy skills likely impact what parents in different countries prioritize, however, confidence levels may not.
- While parents did not indicate child gender differences in how they socialize math and literacy, gender differences were noted with the parents given that the fathers were more likely to support math.

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