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Home-School Connection: Impact of Parental Involvement on Learning Outcomes in Primary Education

Article Details

ABSTRACT

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This study evaluates the role of parental involvement in the academic performance of primary school students in Karachi, Pakistan, with a specific focus on the parents' level of education, occupation, and confidence in providing educational support. Utilizing qualitative phenomenology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 parents to discuss their involvement in their child school activities and the challenges they face. Students tend to achieve higher academic performance when their parents possess higher levels of education, as these parents are more equipped to assist with homework and engage in school activities. The extent of parental involvement is influenced by the type of employment, with individuals in flexible work arrangements able to engage more, while those with inconsistent hours face constraints. The engagement of parents in their children's school activities is shaped by their confidence in their ability to offer educational support, especially in the context of transformative teaching methods. Even with limitations in place, parents who engage actively in their children's education are likely to observe enhancements in their academic achievements. The findings of the study suggest that educational institutions ought to adapt their strategies for parental engagement to accommodate the diverse needs of families and offer support as needed.

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement has long been recognized for its positive impact on children's academic achievement (Epstein, 1991; Fan & Chen, 2001). The belief that parental involvement enhances student success has led to an extensive body of literature on the subject (Jeynes, 2003; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Both policymakers and researchers widely agree that parental involvement plays a critical role in fostering academic success (Graves & Brown Wright, 2011; Mattingly et al., 2002). Despite the widespread belief in the importance of parental involvement, there remain unresolved issues within the research on the subject (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). One of the most troubling aspects of current research is the inconsistency in findings regarding the relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement (Watson, Sanders-Lawson, & McNeal, 2012). Some studies show a positive relationship, while others report a negative or non-existent connection. From an ecological perspective, positive interactions between families and schools contribute significantly to children's cognitive and socio-emotional growth (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Empirical studies have demonstrated a positive association between parental involvement and academic achievement, particularly in terms of improving self-esteem, academic performance, school retention, and attendance (Garbacz, et al., 2017; Ross, 2016). Furthermore, programs aimed at increasing parental involvement in education have been shown to have beneficial impacts on children, families, and school communities. Parent-school partnerships offer a framework for understanding the roles and relationships between families and schools, which can significantly impact children's development (Christenson & Reschly, 2010; Imran et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2023).

Research consistently supports the positive effects of family-school partnerships, which contribute to academic achievement and other positive outcomes (Epstein & Sanders, 2000; Hotz & Pantano, 2015; Sebastian, Moon, & Cunningham, 2017). Meta-analyses have provided strong evidence of the positive influence of parental involvement on academic achievement, across diverse populations and educational levels (Castro et al., 2015; Jeynes, 2016; Jabeen, Ali, & Ahmad, 2023). Although there are varying definitions of parental involvement, research generally agrees on its positive impact on academic success. For instance, a meta-synthesis of nine meta-analyses by Wilder (2023) found consistent positive effects of parental involvement, regardless of the definitions or measures used. However, most studies on parental involvement are from English-speaking countries and are based on cross-sectional and correlational designs

(Garbacz et al., 2017).

So the purpose of the study is to examine the perceptions of parents about their involvement in children school activities and how they impact their child learning outcomes at primary level in Karachi, Pakistan.

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental involvement is broadly defined as parents' awareness of and active engagement in their children's schoolwork, understanding the relationship between parenting practices and student success, and demonstrating a commitment to their children's education (Kenga & Kimani, 2024). Home-based involvement includes activities such as helping children with homework, discussing school-related matters, expressing high academic expectations, encouraging academic success, and creating a supportive learning environment at home (Altschul, 2012; Ali et al., 2020). The quality of parent teacher interactions correlates high with the level of parent involvement in the academic development of the children. Students frequently discover that parental participation in their education plays a great role in helping them to make significant career and discipline decisions, and which subsequently contributes to the better results (Azhar, 2024; Azhar, et al., 2022).

Academic benefits are realized among students when parents are engaged meaningfully in their educational activities (Juma 2016; Haider, Ahmad & Ali, 2024). Parental engage is critical not only to produce academic achievement but also to promote academic achievement and continued completion process of homework by children has provided significant returns when parents are still directly concerned in their educational activities (Azhar, 2024; Azhar, et al., 2022).

PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Parental level of education is a decisive factor in the educational attainment of their children (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013). Parents' level of education is important to schooling as parents want their children to maintain the status quo (Mallan, 2009; Ali, Shah & Ahmad, 2023). However, educational background most of all refers to the style and content of learning which has been achieved. Whether it be because of the place they dwell or the region they are, it may differ from western and religious form of education (Azhar & Imran, 2024). Children with parents who receive some schooling are likely to do better in school according to analysis by Nannyonjo (2007). From his findings, children of parents who had not concluded elementary education were likely to fare far much worse in schools than those whose parents had

completed senior four, senior six or university.

Okumu, Nakajjo and Isoke (2008), in a study of socio-economic determinants of second cycle schools, found that high academic attainment of a mother and father significantly reduces chances of second cycle school dropout for students in rural and urban areas. This trend may indicate that the mothers more educated spend more time in association with their kids, while the ones less educated spend more time on housework. The relationship between the generations is weak when it comes to the schooling indicator. There is a relationship between the level of schooling of parents and the quantity and quality of time that they spend with their children. Students with families where parents have less education tend to systematically perform worse than students whose parents have more education (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013; Naeem, Ali, & Ahmed, 2022). In families where parents experience difficulties in reading and writing, there is a danger that low literacy is passed on to the next generation (Cooter, 2006).

PARENT'S OCCUPATION

Occupation of parents influences academic performance of their children. Conducive family environments normally promote academic attainments of the students. Moreover, employment can reduce the length of parental involvement in communication with one's offspring and meanwhile offering academic help. Research conducted by Hassan (2009) indicated that there is a relationship between parental occupational status and academic performance of their wards. According to Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2005), high occupational status people have more resources to meet the needs of their homes, while the low occupational status people have limited resources for the same. Parents with higher occupational status and educational attainment may also have higher aspirations and expectations for their children's occupation and education, which in turn can influence their commitment to learning (Afful & Lategan, 2014; Dilshad, Shah, & Ahmad, 2023).

Juma (2016) concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between parents' occupation and students' academic performance. Children of people involved in professions which are labeled as "skilled" such as education, healthcare, and finance, have shown better academic work as compared to their counterparts whose parents are involved in "unskilled" work, small-scale trading, subsistence farming, hard manual labor in construction, and commodity loading. Usaini and Abubakar, (2015) conducted a study on the impact of parents' occupation on academic performance of secondary school students in Malaysia. From the results, it was evident that students whose parents were formally educated tend to outperform

students whose parents have little formality in education. People who pursue unskilled occupations usually earn a little less, and they may need to work additional shifts to be able to afford their families financially. A research was carried out by Arshad, Attari and Elahi in (2012), which was an attempt to determine the impact of occupations of the parents on English language proficiency of the children within Pakistan. It has been discovered that the nature of occupations parents undertake correlates positively with their offspring's formative English language development, although particular occupations lead to different results. Parents said that their working commitments limited them when it came to paying for their children's schooling and managing financial affairs and attending to basic needs. Parents' financial commitments can make it challenging for day students and so they have many responsibilities at home.

CONFIDENCE FROM PARENTS

Parent aspirations are dreams or goals that the parents have to achieve so that their children succeed in the future. Those parents who have high hopes for their children's future are more ambitious to work harder to facilitate their hopes. Indeed, evidence from Research suggests that educational and occupational aspirations are associated with the ways in which parents shape children's activities, time, and learning Environment (Murphey, 1992). Parenting Self-Efficacy-The construct of self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 2006). The self-efficacy studies performed in several countries show that individuals have a high level of self-efficacy in a certain area. They make an effort in that respect, retain perseverance in dealing with difficulty and demonstrate resilience in response to adversity.

Those with higher self-efficacy will have a lower tendency to experience self-defeating thought processes, thus reducing their stress and despair levels, as compared to an individual with lower self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is different in its influence on different domains. Certain experiences in a given field form an individual's confidence in his/her ability to excel. Much has been written on parenting self-efficacy, with all studies reiterating its important influence on effective parenting behavior in the western cultures (Ahmad, et al., 2021; Ali, et al., 2020; Ahmad, 2018). Parents with high Self-efficacy are generally more optimistic, authoritative, and consistent in their Interactions with their children than those with lower parenting self-efficacy (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Bandura, et al., 1996; Thomas, Khan & Ahmad, 2022). Additionally, theoretical formulations have identified parenting self-efficacy as a key determinant of parental

involvement in schooling (Eccles & Harold, 2013; Hoover- Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Empirical work suggests that Parents with high self-efficacy are more likely to monitor their children's school- Work and to participate actively at the school (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001).

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative phenomenology study examines the impact of parental involvement on the learning outcomes of primary school students in Karachi, Pakistan. The research utilized individual semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data, employing effective research methods as outlined by Creswell (2014). The interview protocol, developed with expert input, included open-ended questions and prompts designed to explore how parental involvement affects students' learning outcomes at the primary level. The study involved 12 parents, with two participants selected during the pilot phase and 10 during the main research phase, using convenience sampling. According to Fraenkel et al. (2012), qualitative research typically involves sample sizes ranging from 1 to 20 participants. The interviews, which lasted between 20 to 35 minutes, were recorded, and the transcriptions were reviewed and verified for accuracy with participants' approval. To ensure reliability, the researchers collaborated with expert judges to conduct inter-coder testing, achieving an agreement rate exceeding 80% (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Patton, 1990). Analysis was done through the placement of the interview transcripts within the emerging themes and application of triangulation of data to enhance the reliability of the results. The use of this method allowed the researchers to develop and understand the connection between parental involvement and the learning outcome of students.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION

To look at the view of the parents concerning their involvement in educating their children, the first question of the interview was about their educational background in regard to their input in their education at home and in school. They responded to this query by saying:

PARTICIPANT NO. 1

“My background ends at high school, which is why sometimes it is hard for me to help my kid with more complicated subjects. But I still participate in my child's education process by frequenting parent –teacher meetings and providing help with basic skills such as reading and math. Being involved, even if it doesn't have to be sometimes complex, makes my child feel encouraged and supported”.

PARTICIPANT NO. 3

“Pedagogically qualified and having a master’s degree I can comfortably assist my child with homework from various fields. I encourage them to read widely, to be curious about other subjects they and their school offer and to hold a positive attitude to their education. The fact that I finished my education has taught me something about the value of education, and I prove it by not being idle in my child’s school, I instill discipline and love of learning in my child”.

PARTICIPANT NO. 5

“As an engineer, it is uncomplicated for me to help my child with math and science, things that are easy for me since I am an expert. The learning I accumulated during my engineering class enables me to explain difficult ideas in an understandable way and help my child to understand complex areas. I stay very interested in how they learn, not only in the practicalities of the subjects but also in the broader meaning of their education for their development”.

PARENT’S OCCUPATION

When asked about “In what way does your current employment affect the time and energy so you can allocate to your child’s learning program and studies?”

NO. 2

“Being a teacher makes it imperative for me to manage my time properly so that I can help my child’s learning. Establishing a balance between my working responsibilities and parenting is not easy, but I try to make a maximum contribution to our evening conjugal time”.

NO. 6

“As a driver with flexible working hours, I have the advantage of being able to dedicate time in the evenings to help my child with their homework. Although my job can be physically demanding, I make a conscious effort to prioritize my child's education, ensuring they receive the support they need. I believe that even with my exhausting work schedule”.

NO. 10

“My full time consultant job, together with the necessity to travel for work, limits my involvement in my child’s daily learning. Nevertheless, I tend to keep my spouse and teachers apprised of my child’s advance, while being informed about academic worry or any support required. Although my schedule is irregular”.

CONFIDENCE FROM PARENTS

When asked about the confident do they feel in helping their child with their schoolwork? They replied in following:

NO. 4

“Although I am not so sure that I can support my child with academics, I find myself struggling when problems present the need to utilize technology or even unfamiliar digital devices. I have some issues both conceptually understanding these subjects myself and on finding good sources or getting assistance from other people to best help my child”.

NO. 5

“I feel it is fine providing my child with advice in areas I have some experience. But, I always struggle with tracking the changing teaching methods employed in the school my child attends. While sometimes I doubt whether I help my child as much as I can”.

NO. 8:

“I am inclined to feel capable of helping my child one way or another but get into unease when faced with things that I have never seen before. When I have problems, I try to remain quiet then think about the practical solutions, which can involve watching instructional clip on the net or consulting with my child’s teacher”.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

When asked about the “Are there specific circumstances in which your endeavor has produced a different impact on the education of your child?? They replied in following:

NO. 2

“Giving continual support at school meetings and with homework has tremendously helped my child’s academic success. Their grades are clearly improved, and I’ve seen increased effort when they get to complete their tasks. My continued involvement has motivated my child to take serious the aspect of their academics and be responsible”.

NO. 4

“Supporting my child with mathematics and both answering test revisions have obviously generated a greater sense of confidence. They improve their performance on assessments, and they exhibit higher enthusiasm to attend school. I believe, that their full involvement of doing these tasks positively affected not only their school and general academic results, but also attitude towards education and school”.

NO. 10

“By attending school engagements regularly and hearing what my child’s teachers say, I am informed about their academic advancement. By participating in their education, I’ve provided my child (with) additional encouragement and a firmer sense of support”.

DISCUSSION

This research examines how such things as parent education and work affect the children's academic performance through the study of their participation in primary schooling. Although the consensus is that parental involvement is key for student success, different results in studies are noticeable, some illustrate good effects of the interventions where others even wonder at the correlation or lack significant findings (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Jeynes, 2016; Aslam, Iqbal & Ahmed, 2022). This study makes a contribution to the current discussion by focusing on primary education in Karachi, Pakistan and showing that though encountering challenges, parental participation has major implications on students' academic performance.

There is strong evidence that there is positive correlation between the level of parental education and the student achievement across several studies (Benner, et al., 2016; Okumu et al., 2008; Khoso, Oad & Ahmad, 2023). The study revealed that parents with further education, such as a Master's degree or above tend to be more confident in doing homework for their children which positively functions in their children's academic success. These results reflect past studies indicating that the more educated parents put higher academic expectations on their children, and are better prepared to support their children's success (Juma, 2016; Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013; Akram, Khan & Ahmad, 2022). As an example, a Master's degree holder had the capacity to provide educational support to the child in various areas, and instilled a good appreciation of learning which eventually led to academic success.

By contrast unless they had received very orderly schooling such as those with only high school diploma or low level schooling, found it difficult to support children who faced challenging coursework. These findings cooperate with the findings of Okumu et al. (2008), who highlighted the importance of parents' educational level in determining their level of engagement in school activities. Although they tried to help their children with such basics as attending meetings and with adding everyday skills, parents with a lower education level could not benefit from more demanding activities of education or online (Ahmad, Sewani & Ali, 2024; Ali et al., 2023;). Such restrictions may dilute the degree to which their Barclays contribution to academic success is.

Occupational jobs represent meaningful value in influencing the degree to which the parents are able to be involved in their children's educational life (Shah, Ali & Ahmad, 2024). As the research shows, the parents who are able to work flexible hours such as teachers or work from home are spending more time assisting with their children's homework and participating

in educational activities. Yet, parents who reported inconsistent work schedules or, more often, strenuous physical activity, such as drivers, consultants etc., on average tended to have fewer engagements in everyday school affairs while still staying in contact with teachers and helping students where possible through assessment (Ahmad, Noorani & Sewani, 2025; Akram, Fatima & Ahmad, 2024). The findings of this study are in line with the earlier works undertaken by Juma (2016) and Kalil & Ziol-Guest (2005) who established that the nature of parents' jobs influences their participation in school activities and the school performance of the children (Ahmad, Noorani & Ali, 2024; Raza & Ahmed, 2017).

Another important discovery in this study regards parents' self-evaluation of their ability to help with school tasks. Those parents uncertain about providing academic support especially when it comes to subjects who are enhanced by new instructional strategy of technology deemed the changing education environment as particularly problematic. From earlier studies, it has been demonstrated that school implementation of new technologies tends to leave parents less prepared to help the children to learn (Jeynes, 2016; Kolachi et al., 2024; Pirzada, Tabassum, & Ahmad, 2024). Although there are such difficulties, many study participants displayed the desire to close this gap as they tended to actively seek for support, such as using teacher consultations for example or using accessible online tools. This commitment to interventions when facing challenges is a pointer to the more significant point that parental involvements, regardless of immediate relevance to academics, add to positive academic outcomes through emotional, motivational boosts, guidance and counseling (Garbacz et al., 2017; Ahmad, Bibi, & Imran, 2023; Ahmad, Sewani & Khoso, 2024; Oad et al., 2024).

The outcomes of the study show that continued participation on the behalf of the parents leads to higher academic results, with the children having higher grades and better results on tests, and higher sense of confidence in their children. This is congruent with Epstein and Sanders, (2000) theory that emphasizes how prolonged and diverse parental engagement contributes to improving academic achievement. These findings are consistent with prior meta-analytic studies proving a consistent relationship between parental involvement and student achievement (Wilder, 2014; Jeynes, 2016).

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

It goes without saying, from this study, that the amount of parental involvement has a vital role to play in ensuring how well primary school pupils do in school. Unambiguously, the study reveals that parents, who are better educated, have stable jobs, and a future-oriented

involvement style is to advance their children academic success. Moreover, the study reveals that, despite facing challenges such as time barriers or experience shortcomings on the part of parents, involvement in children's education can still provide significant enhancing of both academics achievement and emotional maintenance. By comparison, parents with no academic background and irregular employment patterns could have difficulties remaining involved, but they are still significant in staying connected with educators supporting their children's motivational mindset towards learning.

It also conforms to the consensus in academic literature that schools and policymakers need to recognize heterogeneity of parental backgrounds while designing programs for parental participation enhancement. Due to the high variation in parental involvement at different education and employment levels, it becomes obvious that a uniform strategy may construe conducive participation among diverse populations. Customized support systems that deal with different situations of assorted families must be offered to improve the effectiveness of parental involvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Schools should have special programs to support parents with limited education empowerment to help their children in education better. Examples of these programs could include rather simplistic educational workshops aimed at teaching the parents to assist in doing the homework and to understand the modern trends in the education.
- The use of more flexible meeting times along with event periods by schools may be advantageous for parents working irregular schedules or having demanding jobs.
- With the increase in use of digital technologies in learning, schools should make presentations such as video tutorials and virtual workshops online available for parents so that they are updated on their children's work.
- Teachers should connect with parents regularly with a focus on those who might have a hard time getting directly involved. Guiding students through consistent feedback and the facilitation of dealing with areas of concern can keep up parents, despite inability of attending daily events at the school.
- Allowing parents to access training in modern technologies for modern education and teaching methods can make parents better able to aid children at home.
- It is crucial that schools which strive to be more inclusive welcome parents of varied backgrounds with support. Such an approach is likely to encourage more parents to be

involved.

- Having constant control of the effect of parental involvement schemes helps schools keep in touch with families' needs and education trends.

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