

A Study of Parental Involvement in their Children's Education

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Abstract

The present study examines parental involvement in their children's education. Altogether, 131 parents (62 males and 69 females) were randomly selected for the study. Data obtained from parents of elementary school students on the 'Parent Involvement Scale' developed by Rita Chopra and SurabalaSahoo was used to measure parental involvement in their children's education. Results indicate that mothers had more involvement in their children's education as compared to fathers. No significant differences were found in parental involvement with regard to their educational qualification and their working status.

Keywords: *Parental involvement, Children's education, Elementary school students*

Introduction

Among the factors that shape and influence a child's life, family is the most crucial factor in a child's life. Right from birth, parents and families take care of their children by providing for their needs and protecting them from all manner of harm. Parents and family form a child's first relationships. They are the first teachers a child has in life and act as role models in experiencing and understanding them. Families play an essential role in nurturing and teaching children during their early years and ensuring that they are ready to learn as they begin attending school. Thus, children succeed when parents can actively promote their growth and development. The way a child is loved, cared and nurtured at home provides the opportunities for a child to thrive better in their life. The impact of a family's manner or method of upbringing upon a child's development is like laying a foundation, which may help shape a child's future.

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The relationship that parents establish with their children has a powerful influence in shaping the child's personality. Nurturing family relationships lay the foundation for all other relationships, for they help children learn to trust others and seek out friendships and connections. These early lessons pave the way for forming and maintaining successful personal relationships which bring comfort and contentment. Through observation and participation in the family's daily activities, the child learns about relationships, manners, self-esteem, worth, and loyalty. It is essential to teach good values and habits in the child, but it is also necessary to provide a conducive and secure environment to ensure that the child can abide by what parents have taught him. A family is a child's first source of learning, and parents must ensure that they equip their child with all the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in life. No single way or manner is considered perfect for raising a child, and nobody is perfect; however, one can strive to do the right things to provide the child with optimal conditions for growth and development.

Parental involvement in the education of students begins at home, with the parents providing a safe and healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support, and a positive attitude about school. Several studies indicate increased academic achievement with students that have involved parents (Epstein, 2009; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Rumberger et al., 1990; Swap, 1993; Whitaker & Fiore, 2001). Students whose parents are involved in their education are more successful, have a positive attitude towards the school, and have better self-esteem and self-confidence. Lack of parental involvement can lead to poor students' performance, violent behaviour, high rates of suspension, and lower graduation rates (Balfanz, Herzog & Mac Iver, 2007). The key to enhancing children's academic achievement is increased by parental involvement (Hara and Burke, 1998).

Many researchers recognize the critical role that a strong positive bond between homes and schools plays in children's development and education (Richardson, 2009; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009). The theories put forward have been supported and confirmed by numerous studies showing that good cooperation between schools, homes, and communities can lead to academic achievement for students and reforms in education. Research has also shown that successful students have solid academic support from their involved parents (Sheldon, 2009). Sanders and Sheldon (2009) maintain that schools become successful when a strong and positive relationship among students, parents, teachers and the community has been established. All students are more likely to experience academic success if their home environment is supportive (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009).

Rationale of the Study

Parental involvement in education has long been a topic of interest among those concerned with optimal developmental and educational outcomes for preschool and elementary school children. In modern society, both parents equally share the economic aspiration of the family and have jobs. Consequently, they do not have enough time to spare to talk to their children about their problems and needs, pay proper attention to their day-to-day activities, or provide emotional support and encouragement. As a result, children are deprived of the

good parental care and support that they need. On the other hand, the modern world and the changes that come with it impact students, especially adolescents. Due to the lack of adequate care, attention, and support from parents, children are compelled to spend more time on television and social media and sometimes engage in undesirable activities, which harm them. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of society and educational thinkers to understand students' educational and developmental needs and ensure that they are monitored and guided to secure their future. It is also necessary to understand which type of parental care and support has the most crucial role in children's academic performance and academic self-concept. The educational process of children does not begin when children begin to attend school. Children's education begins and continues at home. Home is the first school for children, and parents are their first and lifelong teachers.

Parental support is an indispensable factor in maximizing the potential of students to achieve academic success. Therefore, enhancing parental involvement in education has become a fundamental issue in educational policy and research. Parental involvement and partnerships between the family and the school came to be regarded as one of the most successful educational strategies by which student achievement is guaranteed. Since research findings have established the correlation between parental involvement and academic success, especially at the elementary school level, there is a focus on improving student success while reducing educational inequities. However, current knowledge regarding the nature and extent of parental involvement in elementary education is inconsistent and limited in scope. Presently, although parental involvement has been widely supported in educational policies and practices, its implications are not always clearly established. Therefore, research into the nature, extent, and impact of parental involvement in their children's education is essential and relevant since various forms significantly impact their overall academic development.

It is crucial for parents and educational researchers to understand what students expect and which type of parental involvement activities are closely related to their academic performance and success. Students' academic performance is primarily influenced by the mere presence or absence of parental involvement and the quality of parental involvement practices. In the present study, considering different indicators of parental involvement in previous studies, the researcher has conceptualized parental involvement based on three dimensions, i.e., school involvement, home involvement, and involvement through PTA. The present study aims to establish further insight into parental involvement in their children's education at the elementary stage and to detect good practices. It will focus on the role played by both the mother and father individually and on the working status and parents' educational qualifications.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been generated:

1. What is the level of parental involvement in their children's education?
2. What is parental involvement in their children's education with reference to gender?

3. What is parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their working status?
4. What is parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their educational qualification?

Statement of the problem

The problem has been stated as "Parental Involvement in their Children's Education."

Objectives

In light of the research questions cited earlier, the objectives for the present study have been framed as follows:

1. To find out the level of parental involvement in their children's education.
2. To compare parental involvement in their children's education with reference to gender.
3. To compare parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their working status.
4. To compare parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their educational qualification.
5. To make suggestions for improvement in parental involvement.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the parental involvement with reference to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the parental involvement with reference to their working status.
3. There is no significant difference in the parental involvement with reference to their educational qualification.

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was used for the present investigation since the study's primary purpose is to determine parental involvement in their children's education.

Tool used for data collection

The tool used for the present study was Parent Involvement Scale (PIS) developed by Rita Chopra and SurabalaSahoo.

Population

In the present study, the population comprises of all the parents of elementary school students enrolled in schools affiliated with the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE).

Sample

The sample selected comprises of 131 parents who have one or more children attending elementary school-going children. From the selected samples, there were 69 female respondents and 62 male respondents.

Analysis of data

The responses obtained from the respondents were classified, tabulated and analysed by the standard scoring procedure. Data analysis was completed using appropriate statistical techniques. Following the objectives and hypotheses of the present study, the findings were interpreted meaningfully and presented as follows:

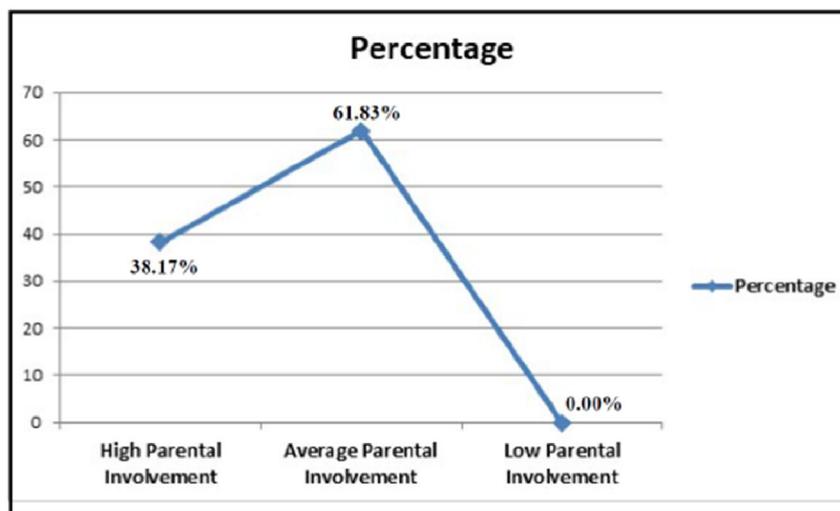
The level of parental involvement in their children's education

The scores obtained from parents of elementary school students on the 'Parent Involvement Scale' were scored and tabulated. Based on their responses, parental involvement was classified into three levels according to the norms of the scale. The scores above the 66th percentile were categorised as high parent involvement, the scores between 33rd percentile and 66th percentile were categorised as average parent involvement, and the scores below 33rd percentile were categorised as low parent involvement. The following table - 1 presented reflects the level of parent involvement in their children's education in Aizawl district.

Table No.1

Level of Parental Involvement in their Children's Education in Aizawl

Category	Range of score	No. of parents	Percentage
High Parent Involvement	81 and above	50	38.17
Average Parent Involvement	49-80	81	61.83
Low Parent Involvement	48 and below	Nil	Nil
Total	102	131	100



As shown in Table - 1, out of the 131 parents of elementary school children in the Aizawl district, 50 parents (38.17%) had high parent involvement, and 81 parents (61.83%) were categorised as having an average parent involvement. The overall finding shows that the majority of the parents had average parent involvement, and it was also found that none of them was found to possess low parent involvement.

Parental involvement in their children’s education with reference to gender

To compare the parental involvement with reference to gender, the mean and standard deviation of both the fathers and mothers was calculated. The t-value was then established in order to ascertain the difference between the two groups. The following Table - 2 shows the comparison of parents involvement with reference to gender.

Table No.2
Comparison of Parent’s Involvement with reference to Gender

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE _{MD}	t-value	Sig. level
Fathers	62	72.08	10.625	8.673	1.658	5.23	**
Mothers	69	80.75	8.006				

** means significant at 0.01 level

As shown in table - 2, the ‘t’ value for the significance of the difference between the mean scores of fathers and mothers is 5.230. Since the calculated ‘t’ value was greater than the critical ‘t’ value, there was a significant difference in parental involvement with reference to gender. Hence, the null hypothesis (No.1) that states there is no significant difference in parental involvement with reference to gender was rejected as the difference was found at a 0.01 level of significance. A comparison of the parental involvement scores revealed that the

difference favoured mother, as their mean score was higher than father. It shows that mothers had more involvement in their children's education as compared to fathers.

Parental involvement in their children's education with reference to educational qualification

To compare the parental involvement in their children's education with reference to educational qualification, the mean and standard deviation of both the undergraduate and graduate parents was calculated. The t-value was then established in order to ascertain the difference between the two groups. The following Table - 3 shows the comparison of parental involvement in their children's education with reference to educational qualification.

Table No. 3

Comparison of Parent's Involvement with reference to their Educational Qualification

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE _{MD}	t-value	Sig. level
Under Graduate	73	75.49	10.93	2.61	1.764	1.48	NS
Graduate	58	78.1	9.252				

**NS means not significant*

As shown in table – 3, the 't' value for the significance of difference between the mean scores of under graduate and graduate parents is 1.48, whereas the required 't' value, with df =129 , to declare the difference as significant is 1.98 at 0.05 level of confidence. Since the calculated 't' value was below the criterion 't' value, there was no significant difference between these two groups with regard to their involvement in their children's education. Therefore, the null hypothesis (No.2) that there is no significant difference in parental involvement with reference to their educational qualification was accepted. Comparing their mean scores, those who have completed their graduation were found to have higher involvement in their children's education than the under graduates, but this is only a chance factor.

Parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their working status

To compare the parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their working status, the mean and standard deviation of both working and non-working parents was calculated. The t-value was then established in order to ascertain the difference between the two groups. The following Table - 4 shows the comparison of parental involvement in their children's education with reference to their working status.

Table No.4

Comparison of Parent's Involvement with reference to their Working Status

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE _{MD}	t-value	Sig. level
Working	49	74.57	9.104	3.319	1.762	1.884	NS
Non-working	82	77.89	10.765				

NS means not significant

As shown in table – 4, the 't' value for the significance of difference between the mean scores of working and non-working parents is 1.88, whereas the required 't' value, with $df = 129$, to declare the difference as significant is 1.97 at 0.05 level of confidence. Since the calculated 't' value was below the criterion 't' value, there was no significant difference between these two groups with regard to their involvement in their children's education. Therefore, the null hypothesis (No.3) that states there is no significant difference in parental involvement with reference to their working status was accepted. On comparing their mean scores, the non-working parents possessed a higher involvement than working parents, although this is only a chance factor

Conclusion

The majority of the parents had average involvement in their children's education at the elementary stage. Mothers were found to be more involved in the education of their children than fathers. Thus, schools should prepare and inform parents of the necessary conditions for their maximum involvement in their children's education. Both parents should make an effort to spend as much time with their children and give love and affection. It will help create a conducive learning environment for their children at home.

Recommendations

As per the findings of this study, the following suggestions have been given:

Parents:

- Parents should try to create a conducive learning environment for their children at home.
- Parents should make an effort to spend as much time as possible with their children and give them love, affection, and encouragement.
- A Parental Association may be formed and supported to encourage and increase parent engagement in their children's education.
- Parents should make an effort to participate regularly in the parent-teachers meet and the decision-making process and contribute to planning activities for their children in school.

- Parental involvement can create confidence and appreciation among students. Therefore, parents should get involved as much as possible in their children's education.

Teachers:

- There should be a close relationship and regular contact between teachers and parents to inform them and advise their children's performances.
- A home visit by teachers is suggested, which will help parents in the process of home-based teaching.

Schools:

- Schools should prepare and inform parents about the necessary conditions for maximum involvement in their children's education.
- A School Management Committee should be organised, which will provide a much-needed platform for parents or guardians to address their grievances, share their experiences, and participate in decision-making processes concerning their children.
- The school authorities should ensure that parents participate and get involved in the entire process of educating their child regularly by maintaining the appropriate steps to be undertaken and rewards to be gained.
- Parent-teachers meetings should be regularly organised so that parents are well-informed about their children's improvement. The school, media and other organisations should create awareness about how parents' involvement in their children's education may improve students' achievement.
- The school, media and other organisations should create awareness about how parents' involvement in their children's education may improve students' achievement.

Study Habits:

- It is the responsibility of both teachers and parents to cultivate good study habits among their children. Therefore, it is suggested to direct their attention to creating and implementing strategies and other activities to improve study habits among children.

Encouragement and Reward:

Both parents and teachers can give encouragement and reward. It can develop a positive attitude towards education among students.

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