

The Effect of Parental Participation on the Academic Achievement of Female English as a Second Language Middle School Students in the Persian Gulf

Nada Baydoun, Ed.D.

Abstract

A **quantitative correlational study** explored the relationship between parental participation and academic achievement. Data were collected from 42 parents of female ESL students in the Persian Gulf region. Although results indicated a **non-significant correlation** between reported parental involvement and students' academic averages overall, it found **significant correlation** for a subsample of Saudi parents.

Problem

Female ESL adolescent students **were not succeeding academically** at a private girls' school in the Persian Gulf region.

Approximately **10% of the total body of current students** had failed in at least two core subjects for the past 3 years at the research site.

Purpose

To help **close the gap between theory and practice** because literature reported that parental participation in fact decreases when children reach middle school (Antonopouloua, Koutroubaa, and Babalisb, 2010; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Mo & Singh 2008).

To **educate parents** about the importance of their engagement in their middle school daughters' academics.

To examine the claim that the impact of parental participation is **cross-cultural** and **cross-racial**.

Relevant Literature

Conceptual Frameworks

- **Model of the effects of parental engagement on academic outcomes** (Plunkett, Behnke, Sands, & Choi, 2009)
- **Motivational Model** (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994).

Related Research

Parental participation in ESL adolescents' academics resulted in:

- **higher grades and academic achievement** (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Epstein, 2007; Epstein, as cited in Galassi & Griffin, 2010)
- **reduced dropout rates, and fewer assignments in special education programs** (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Sanders, 2009; Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & Lardemelle, 2010)
- **improved reading and writing skills, higher student attendance rates, and better preparedness for classes** (Epstein, 2007)
- **more positive school climates** (Sanders, 2009)
- **reduced gap between 1st language and ESL students' academic achievements** (Hayes, 2011)
- **impact of parental participation may be cross racial and cross cultural** (Costigan, Hua, and Su, 2010; Derderian-Aghajanian & Cong Cong, 2012; Guo, 2006; Guo, 2010).

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the magnitude and direction of the relationship between active parental participation and ESL middle school students' academic achievement in the Persian Gulf region?

RQ2: What are the barriers that obstruct effective parental participation in ESL middle school students' education in the Persian Gulf region?

Procedures

Sample

- A snowball sample of **42 parents** of grades 6-8 girls.

Survey

- *Middle School Parent Participation Survey* was used to measure both the independent variable of **parental participation** and the dependent variable of **students' academic achievement**.
- I modified the instrument from a subset of the **Korea Education Longitudinal Survey (KELS)**'s scales.

Data Collection

- I distributed the **paper-and -pencil survey** to participants.
- The setting was a **conference hall** in a local hotel.

Data Analysis

RQ	Data Elements	Statistical Approach
RQ1	Correlated data from Question 7 of section B with data from Questions 8-19 of section "C" in the survey	Pearson product-moment correlation
RQ2	Addressed this research question through (questions 20-25) of section "D" in the survey	Frequency counts and percentages
	Addressed participants' responses in question 26 of the survey (open-ended question)	Content analysis of themes

Findings

Cronbach's alpha (α) = .81

Correlation was not significant $r = .135, p = .396$

27 parents reported that **time constraints** was the main barrier as compared to **10 parents** who cited **transportation**

Only 11 parents provided comments to the **open-ended question**

Parents' comments focused on **communication, homework, high parental expectations, volunteering, and segregation**

Limitations

Outside variables could be attributed to **changing participants' perceptions** during the limited time of the study.

The **sample size** might have been too small.

Psychological, emotional, or physical factors might have influenced female students' academic achievement.

Participants' gender may have been a factor because the sample included **7 fathers** and **35 mothers**.

Conclusions

Understanding **the role of parental participation** is critical to help ESL students excel academically.

Parental participation is very complex because several factors affect parents' willingness to participate in their **children's academics**.

The results of this study indicated that the impact of parental participation is **cross-cultural and cross-racial**.

Social Change Implications

Ensuring that female middle school students complete their education is important for the **advancement of the developing country** where I conducted my study.

This study's results appear to support the role that **parental participation** plays in **ESL students' academic success**.