PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ITS AFFECTS ON STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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By
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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Dr. John Borba Professor of School Administration	Date
Dr. Chet Jensen Professor of Education	Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lifelong friend and sister, Nancy Salmeron, for encouraging me to take this venture with her in education. Ever since we were children pretending to be teachers, she guided and lightened my load by gearing me to the rewarding possibilities that can come in education.

This work is also dedicated to the loyal father of my children, Aaron Lopez, who remained dedicated to love and care for our extremely energetic children. Your fidelity, love and patience have eased the duty of balancing family, work, and school.

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Finally, this work is dedicated to my mother, Eloisa Martinez, to my father, Fernando Martinez, to my brothers, Luis Martinez, Jose Martinez, and to my youngest sister, Yesenia Garcia, for their moral and loving support. Together, they encouraged me to pursue my dreams and to continue serving as a role model to all children who also come from humble beginnings.

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ABSTRACT

Traditional forms of parental involvement include participating in school activities such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), back-to-school nights, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, or volunteering at the school. Parental involvement has become a priority on school campuses nationwide because of the positive effect on student academic performance suggested by some researchers and the legal mandate of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 to implement parent participation strategies. The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences existed in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were involved in school and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school. The sample consisted of 30 fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school and 30 fourth grade students whose family members were not involved. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to compare the ELA and mathematics district benchmark mean scores between the two groups. The results suggested that students of highly involved family members significantly outperformed those with family members who were not involved based on scores of the cumulative end-of-year district benchmark tests for ELA and mathematics for grade 4. The mean difference for ELA was 32.33 p=.001 and 52.73 (p=.001) for mathematics.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Research indicates that parental involvement is an effective strategy to ensure student success (Barnard, 2004; Desimone, 1999; Hill & Craft, 2003; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Parental involvement has many positive effects on students other than academics, including increased motivation, self-esteem, and self-reliance, which may lead to academic success regardless of economic background. Conversely, research affirms that inadequate or no parental involvement contributes to low student achievement and engagement (Bower & Griffin, 2011). In essence, parents, siblings, and other significant relatives can create rich learning environments to enhance children's academic development.

Traditional forms of parent involvement include participating in school activities (e.g., Parent Teacher Associations [PTA]), back-to-school nights, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, or volunteering at the school. According Bower and Griffin (2011), "Parental involvement through activities such as providing nurturance to their children, instilling cultural values, and talking with their children, do not align with traditional forms of parental involvement as defined by school" (p. 1)

Statement of the Problem

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) mandated that schools close the student achievement gap by placing a high demand on parental involvement. Lack of communication hinders parent participation in schools. Factors that contribute to this lack of communication include the inability to speak, read, and understand English in an academic or personal school setting and the belief of parents that they are overstepping their boundaries by questioning authorities or upholding the rights of their children in schools (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008). For example, some school sites do not have systems in place that promote parental involvement as an "invaluable asset" for student achievement. In addition, research suggests that schools often struggle with effectively involving parents in promoting their children's achievement (e.g., limited bilingual staff, correspondences, newsletters, school calendars, lunch menus not written in the spoken language), which results in minimal communication with parents (Smith et al., 2008).

According to Dohner-Chávez, (2006), "Aside from ethnicity or economic background, parental involvement in a child's education has a profound effect on academic success" (p. 43). The need for adequate guidelines, strategies, and techniques to involve parents in school is crucial and should be a priority of any administrator. If public school educators want parents to assume more responsibility, schools need to take proactive approaches that identify solutions to remove barriers to parental involvement (Smith et al., 2008). Parents are an important asset to

improving academic achievement, and they should be given the tools necessary to be active in their children's schools. This researcher explored the effects of parental involvement as a variable in promoting student achievement.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study:

Does parental involvement contribute to student academic success in school?

Hypotheses

The researcher tested the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in English language arts (ELA) achievement between fourth graders whose family members were highly involved in school activities and fourth graders whose family members were not involved in school activities.
2. There is no significant difference in mathematics achievement between fourth graders whose family members were highly involved in school activities and fourth graders whose family members were not involved in school activities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences exist in ELA and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school. The findings of this study provide useful information regarding parent participation in schools.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it offers additional research that may indicate student achievement is directly correlated to parental involvement. In turn, academic achievement may serve to motivate parents and families to continue or become more involved in school activities. Parents, students, and educators can use these findings to develop programs and strategies to increase parental involvement in schools.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to fourth grade students who attended one elementary school located in central California during the 2012-2013 academic year. For the purpose of this study, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and student attendance were not considered. The experience of the fourth grade teachers was also not considered.

Definition of Terms

English language arts. English language arts is a subject that includes reading, writing, and speaking.

Parents. For the purpose of this study, parents include family members, siblings, guardians, aunts and uncles, and grandparents who are involved in school for the benefit of a specific student.

Performance. Performance refers to students' academic efforts and is measured using test scores.

School-initiated. School-initiated refers to efforts made by site based educators to encourage communication and participation with families for the benefit

of students. Examples of school-initiated involvement opportunities include back-to-school nights, open houses, patriotic and cultural celebrations, holiday programs, student study team meetings, PTA activities, award ceremonies, weekly bulletins, individual class activities (e.g., parent volunteers, fieldtrip chaperones, homework assistance, and reading to students), and district-sponsored classes for parents.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to school boards, parents, teachers, administrators, students, local business owners, community groups and leaders, professional organizations, youth organizations, the faith community, and media.

Summary

Chapter I offered an introduction to the role of parent involvement on student motivation and academic achievement. The purpose of this study was discussed and the research question and hypotheses were detailed. The limitations and delimitations were stated and terms were defined. Chapter II provides a review of the literature and discusses relationships between parental involvement and student achievement. Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used in this study including a description of the sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV reports the data analysis, which includes a comparison of ELA and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school activities and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school activities. Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Numerous variables support student achievement; however, studies have indicated that one of the most critical components is parental involvement (Hara & Burke, 1998). Overall, educators acknowledge that parental involvement is key to successful student academic performance. Schools are doing their best to encourage parents to get involved in their children's academic activities and schoolwork (Griffith, 1996). The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences exist in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were involved in school and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school. The findings of this study may provide useful information regarding parent participation in schools. The following research topics are discussed to provide reasonable justification for the importance of parental involvement: (a) general overview of parental involvement based on Epstein's six types of involvement, (b) the history of parental involvement, and (c) case studies and research that address the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement.

Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement

Educators agree that parental involvement is essential to students' academic growth; however, definitions of parental involvement vary. A traditional definition

of parental involvement includes participating in activities at school and at home, such as volunteering at school; communicating with teachers; assisting with homework; and attending open houses, back-to-school nights, and parent-teacher conferences (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Epstein et al., 2009; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) defined parental involvement as "supporting student academic achievement or participating in school-initiated functions" (p. 78).

Epstein et al.'s (2009) framework consists of six types of parental involvement. The basic obligation of parents (*Type 1*) refers to a family's responsibility of ensuring the child's health and safety (e.g., parenting, child rearing, continual supervision, discipline, and guidance at each age level) and to providing positive home conditions that support learning and behavior. The basic obligation of schools (*Type 2*) refers to communication with the school about academic progress (e.g., memos, notices, report cards, conferences).

The basic obligation of schools (*Type 3*) pertains to parental participation in the school setting (e.g., events, workshops, or programs for their own educational growth). The basic obligation of schools (*Type 4*) applies to communication with parents initiating, monitoring, and assisting in their children's homework or learning activities. The basic obligation of schools (*Type 5*) refers to parents accepting decision-making roles in committees that monitor school improvement (e.g., Parent Teacher Association [PTA], advisory councils, or other committees or groups at school). The basic obligation of schools (*Type 6*) involves collaborating with the

community, which pertains to integrating various community agencies and resources that support school programs (e.g., Title 1, after-school programs, parent institute committee) (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1997).

History of Parental Involvement

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, indicates that parents have a considerable role in promoting the academic achievement of their children. Regardless of this legislation, schools should and are encouraged to strengthen their efforts in developing innovative ways to involve parents in their children's academic growth. Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012) noted the duty of a school to promote parental involvement has become a passive act, rather than a genuine effort. In addition, parents are often scapegoats when trying to find the blame to student achievement. For example, some educators blame parents for the children's academic failures (e.g., "If only the parents helped at home" or "Parents just don't care about school"). Despite these remarks, research continues to credit parental involvement as a way to increase academic achievement effectively. Studies show that parents are, in fact, a strong independent variable in motivating their children to learn (Gonzalez-DeHass, 2005; Williams, & Holbein, 2005).

Parental involvement corresponds to many constructs of school such as engagement, which includes attending parent-teacher conferences, contributing to extracurricular activities, monitoring student grades, imparting parental values, helping with homework, and providing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012) noted that schools have failed to engage parents fully.

For example, many schools do not provide literature in a second language or interpreters at conferences for parents whose primary language is not English. Academic leaders need to embrace parents as vital stakeholders within the educational system and encourage teamwork and collaboration.

Case Studies on Parental Involvement and Student Achievement

Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) argued that when parents are involved in their children's schools, academic motivation and achievement increase. Students' interest in learning, competence, and understanding of a subject area, improves and promotes student achievement. Haas and Reiley (2008) examined ways to increase homework completion among middle school students using selected interventions. One intervention required students to complete daily homework planners and parents to sign the planners for verification. Students who were consistent with the study requirements received a Gotcha slip from school staff as positive recognition. The findings indicated that most parents cooperated. Despite a few nonparticipants, the homework planners, in conjunction with a Gotcha slip, created a dialog between teachers and students as well as between teachers and parents. Haas and Reiley also found that not all students knew how to fill out the homework planners accurately, and the increased communication with parents served to improve these students' organizational skills and increase homework completion rates.

Hara and Burke (1998) investigated whether inner city third grade students experienced significant and sustained academic growth when their parents were more directly involved with the school. They conducted an assessment to determine what

the elementary school needed to do to ensure an effective parent involvement program. The process included research, planning, implementation, and program evaluation. The researchers used Epstein's framework for building parental partnerships as the model best suited for setting program goals and conditions. The five-step implementation process included: (a) create an action, (b) obtain funds, (c) identify a starting point, (d) develop a 3-year plan, and (e) continue planning to improve the program. Parents and the community were made aware of the program, and the researchers administered a needs assessment survey to parents and third grade students. They used the results of the survey to implement a program that encouraged parent participation in the following school related activities:

- Offering parenting workshops (among the most popular activities)
- Gathering and analyzing data for activity planning purposes
- Developing parent outreach training programs
- Obtaining information from the needs assessment analysis
- Planning alternatives for parents with special needs
- Seeking funding for additional program implementation
- Establishing open houses (in-school and throughout the community)
- Hosting family nights (e.g., meet teachers at the public library or using the school library and computer labs with children)
- Creating popular nutrition workshops
- Promoting parent discussion groups
- Offering Rabbit Ears Radio activity

- Publishing parent-oriented newsletters and providing communication activities
- Organizing student skits for and with parent involvement. (Hara & Burke, 1998, p. 223)

The needs assessment survey identified the need for various activities; however, some obstacles emerged, such as "Absences of adequate budget, faculty limitations which narrowed the number and scope of activities, lack of available time for teachers and activity development" (Hara & Burke, 1998, p. 227). Despite these limitations, students demonstrated growth through the program implementation. For example, third grade reading achievement increased by 4 months as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Grade equivalent mean scores in reading also increased from 2 years and 7 months in 1995 to 3 years and 1 month in 1998. Overall, students whose parents were involved improved in reading more than their counterparts whose parents were not involved. Hara and Burke (1998) also found increased student participation in school activities, improved attendance, and enhanced self-esteem. Furthermore, parent involvement increased by 43% during program implementation.

Bower and Griffin (2011) used the Epstein model as a strategy to study parental involvement in a high poverty, high minority elementary school. The study involved a student body of 347 students of multiethnic backgrounds. Five teachers and two members of the administrative team were interviewed for this study. The researchers used a digital voice recorder and transcribed responses to the questions

verbatim. Collected data also consisted of field notes based on observations of formal parental involvement activities within the school environment. Communication and home learning consisted of weekly reports sent to parents and personal calls made by teachers and the administrator to invite parents to school events.

Bower and Griffin (2011) found low parent attendance despite efforts by the school to include them in activities. Engagement was not apparent in the study, and the researchers observed a lack of communication between parents and teachers. The researchers determined that schools and teachers did not build effective relationships with parents. Further, Bower and Griffin noted that the Epstein model does not fully capture the essence of how parents want to participate in their children's school activities. They suggested additional studies to provide information on improving communication and encouraging involvement among parents.

Georgiou and Tourva (2007) examined the relationship between parents' perceptions of their children's academic achievement, their beliefs of being involved, and their actual involvement. Participants included 313 Greek Cypriot parents of children attending elementary through high school. The majority of parents were female (66.13%), and the average age was 36.7 years. The sample encompassed 145 parents with children in elementary school (fifth or sixth grade) and 168 parents with children in high school (ninth or tenth grade). The average age of elementary students was 11.2 years and that of high school students was 15.6 years. Parents held at least a university degree, a professional or semi-professional job, and family income ranked above average compared to local standards.

Georgiou and Tourva used two instrumental scales to collect data. The first was the Parental Attributions Scale (PAS), which was developed by O'Sullivan and Howe (1996) and later adapted to an attribution theory proposed by Weiner (1985). The 21-item scale examined characteristics or attributions that parents make about their children's achievement. Respondents were asked to rate items on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = *absolutely agree*, 4 = *agree*, 3 = *ambivalent*, 2 = *disagree*, 1 = *absolutely disagree*). The second instrument was the Parental Involvement Scale (PIS), based on a self-report inventory developed by Campbell and Mandel (1990) and adapted to the Greek language and culture by Flouris (1991). Items referenced school-related activities that parents engaged in at home and at school. The PIS identified three sub-categories related to: a) child's homework (e.g., examining homework), (b) supervision of child's every day activities (e.g., television viewing), and (c) development of interests and hobbies (e.g., art, music, and sports). The second part of the PIS also included questions that referred to visiting schools, speaking with teachers, and attending school events.

Georgiou and Tourva found that parental involvement was conductive to a child's success in school. In other words, if the parents believed they could make a difference, they were more likely to get involved in their children's academic pursuits. Those parents who believed that only teachers could help their children succeed academically tended to stay away from any type of school involvement.

Griffith (1996) examined the relationship between parental empowerment and student academic performance. Specifically, he examined the association between

parental involvement and empowerment and school characteristics using the school as the unit of analysis. He recruited a sample of 41 elementary schools in a large metropolitan school district where the relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement were expected to be the highest. Participants completed a 41-item survey that consisted of Likert scale and open-ended questions from national and regional surveys on school climate and satisfaction. Open-ended items referred to school programs (e.g., Chapter 1, special education, gifted and talented) academic grades, parental expectations, and demographic characteristics (age, gender, race, and ethnicity). The survey also asked about parents' participation in school activities (Griffith, 1996).

The results revealed that schools with higher levels of parental involvement and empowerment tended to have higher student criterion-referenced test (CRT) scores (Griffith, 1996). Additionally, in this study schools with higher levels of parental involvement had fewer, but more experienced, teachers than did schools with less parental involvement. Griffith (1996) also noted that schools with high percentages of African Americans and Hispanic students who were enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program experienced lower parental involvement and lower CRT scores. Although further research is needed to incorporate concrete measures of the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance, overall, the results showed a positive relationship between parental empowerment, involvement, and student academic performance (Griffith, 1996).

Summary

Chapter II included the definition of parental involvement based on Epstein's six types of involvement model. Parental involvement and its implications for improving children's academic performance were discussed. Finally, studies on parental involvement and student achievement were presented. Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used in this study including a description of the sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences exist in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school. The methods and procedures are discussed in the following sections: (a) demographic information, (b) sample of population,

(c) instrumentation, (d) data collection method, and (e) statistical analyzes. The data used to compare achievement of both groups were obtained from ELA and mathematics assessments administered as district benchmarks. This researcher collected data following a 6-week period of skills instruction in the spring of 2013. The study focused on fourth grade students whose classroom teachers identified them as having either highly involved or uninvolved family members.

This study was limited to fourth grade students who attended one elementary school located in central California during the 2012-2013 academic year. For the purpose of this study student gender, socioeconomic status (SES), attendance, and experience of fourth grade teachers were not considered. At the time of this study, the selected elementary school had a student population of 652. Student enrollment by ethnicity was 83.3% Hispanic, 6% Asian, 4.3% multiracial, 3.1% White, and 2%

African American. English language learners comprised 66.3% of the student population and students with disabilities comprised 8.9%. The school had three instructional coaches who served four kindergarten, four first grade, four second grade, four third grade, three fourth grade, three fifth grade, and three sixth grade classes. All 28 teachers at the site were fully credentialed and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) compliant. The selected school used the California Treasures (http: //treasures.macmillanmh.com/california/teachers) reading program and the California Harcourt School Publisher Math (http://www.harcourtschool.com/hspmath/ca/) program.

Sample Population

This study included 60 fourth grade students. Classroom teachers identified 30 students who had highly involved family members and 30 students whose family members were not involved. Teachers then paired the list of students to their benchmark test scores. At this point, the names of the students were removed and each participant was assigned a number to maintain student confidentiality. Highly involved family members were identified as parents, siblings, guardians, aunts and uncles, and grandparents who were involved in the school for the benefit of a specific student. These family members attended conferences and requested parent-teacher meetings regarding their children's educational goals or concerns at least once a month (i.e., via phone, internet, or written note). Highly involved family members also attended award ceremonies, assemblies, and other school related activities (e.g., read weekly bulletin information, responded to weekly or daily behavioral notes,

attended individual class activities, served as chaperones on fieldtrips, and assisted with homework). Family members identified as uninvolved did not attend conferences or keep appointments for parent-teacher meetings to discuss their children's educational goals or concerns. Uninvolved members rarely or never attended award ceremonies, assemblies, school related activities, or individual class activities. These family members also did not volunteer on fieldtrips as chaperones or assist with homework. Teachers indicated that uninvolved members rarely responded to notes with comments; however, on occasion, they did respond to notes sent home that required their signature of acknowledgment.

Instrumentation

The researcher analyzed the results of the cumulative end-of-year ELA and mathematics district benchmark tests for Grade 4. The district benchmark tests were developed by district staff. The tests are aligned with the former California Academic Content Standards in ELA and mathematics to assess student progression and mastery of these standards. The cumulative multiple choice test is given every six weeks of instruction.

Data Collection

The English language arts and mathematics benchmark tests are scored by another credentialed teacher, and later reported as a raw score to the classroom teachers through the SchoolCity Inc. Standardized Test Analysis & Reporting System. Credentialed teachers administered benchmark tests to all students in the

classroom at the same time. A different credentialed teacher scored the ELA and mathematics benchmark tests in a separate room, and reported the results to the classroom teachers through the SchoolCity Inc. Standardized Test Analysis & Reporting System (http://www.schoolcity.com/).

Statistical Analyzes

This researcher tested the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in ELA achievement between fourth graders whose family members were involved in school activities and fourth graders whose family members were not involved in school activities.
2. There is no significant difference in mathematics achievement between fourth graders whose family members were involved in school activities and fourth graders whose family members were not involved in school activities.

The final sample consisted of 30 fourth grade students whose families were highly involved in school and 30 fourth grade students whose family members were not involved. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 (SPSS) to analyze the benchmark data for each group. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to compare the ELA and mathematics mean scores between the two groups. Alpha was set at the $p < .05$ level of significance.

Summary

Chapter III presented the methods and procedures used in this study including a description of the sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV reports the results of the analyses.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences exist in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school. The results of this study may be useful to teachers and administrators who wish to develop programs that encourage greater parent participation in schools. The sample consisted of 30 fourth grade students (Experimental Group) whose families were highly involved in school and 30 fourth grade students (Control Group) whose family members were not involved. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 (SPSS) to analyze the benchmark data. This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyzes.

Findings and Discussion Related to the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant difference in ELA achievement between fourth graders whose family members were highly involved in school activities and fourth graders whose family members were not involved in school activities. To test this hypothesis, this researcher conducted an independent *t*-test to compare the ELA mean scores between the two groups. Significance was as set at the $p < .05$ level of significance. The data analysis revealed that the Experimental Group

significantly outperformed the Control Group. The mean difference was 32.33 (p=.001) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Independent t-Test for End-of-Year Fourth Grade District Benchmark: English Language Arts

	n	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Experimental	30	357.43	44.86	3.572	.001*
Control	30	325.10	39.54		

*p<.05

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant difference in mathematics achievement between fourth graders whose family members were highly involved in school activities and fourth graders whose family members were not involved in school activities. To test this hypothesis, this researcher conducted an independent *t*-test to compare the mathematics mean scores between the two groups. Significance was set at the $p < .05$ level of significance. The data analysis revealed that the Experimental Group significantly outperformed the Control Group. The mean difference was 52.73 ($p = .001$) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Independent T-Test for End-of-Year Fourth Grade District Benchmark: Mathematics

	n	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Experimental	30	392.60	64.679	3.572	.001*
Control	30	339.87	48.539		

*p<.05

Summary

Chapter IV presented the results of the *t*-tests used to accept or reject the null hypotheses of this study. The results suggest that students whose family members were highly involved in school activities scored significantly higher in ELA and mathematics than did those whose family members were not involved in school activities. Chapter V presents a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences exist in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics achievement between fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school and fourth grade students whose family members were not involved in school. Chapter V is divided into four sections: summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future study.

Summary of the Study

Traditional forms of parental involvement in school include activities such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), back-to-school nights, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering at the school. Parental involvement has become a priority on school campuses nationwide due to research that suggests involving parents in their children's school activities had a positive effect on school achievement (Georgiou & Tourva, 2007). Motivation for schools to increase parental involvement is partly attributed to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) which encouraged schools to afford meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in their children's education, thereby improving school-wide academic achievement.

This study sought to determine whether significant differences existed in ELA and mathematics achievement between fourth graders whose family members were highly involved in school activities and those whose family members were not involved in school activities. To determine the effects of family member involvement on student achievement in ELA and mathematics, this researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 (SPSS) to analyze the benchmark data.

Conclusions

The sample consisted of 30 fourth grade students whose family members were highly involved in school and 30 fourth grade students whose family members were not involved. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to compare the mean scores in ELA and mathematics between the two student groups. Significance was set at $p < .05$. The results suggested that fourth grade students of highly involved family members significantly outperformed those of family members who were not involved based on the cumulative end-of-year district benchmark tests. The mean difference for ELA was 32.33 (p =.001) and 52.73 (p = .001) for mathematics.

Implications

Research suggested that family involvement in students' schooling is a positive and important factor that contributes to academic achievement. Decades of research strongly supported that family involvement promotes academic achievement. Redding (2006) stated, "There is substantial evidence that family engagement in children's learning is beneficial" (p. 149). However, despite their best efforts, schools need to do more to motivate parent involvement. Some strategies may

include, but are not limited to, allowing parents to participate in governance activities, developing parent outreach training programs, completing needs assessments, planning involvement support for parents whose children who have special needs (e.g., English proficiency, gifted and talented, special education), hosting family nights (e.g., meeting teachers at the public library, using the school library and computer labs with their children), creating student nutrition workshops, promoting parent-discussion groups, or publishing parent-oriented newsletters.

Recommendation for Further Study

This researcher offers the following recommendations for further study on the effects of family involvement on academic achievement:

1. Conduct a qualitative study to determine involvement activities that attract parents to participate in their children's schools.
2. Conduct a qualitative study to determine the most meaningful and useful activities based on parents' perceptions.

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