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The role of parental involvement affect in children’s academic performance

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Abstract

This study examined the role that parental involvement has on children’s academic performance. Different types of parental involvement were assessed, including volunteering, home involvement, attending parent classes, school political involvement, talking to staff, talking to teachers and etc. The data were collected by parental involvement questionnaire scores and by academic performance grades. The sample was included 200 boy students in Tehran. Overall, the results indicated that those who did the self-report survey, went to the parent class, or were involved in more home-type involvement (such as checking child’s programming, talking whit child at home about classroom, lessons and friend topics, or engaging in educational activities outside of school and etc.) had children that performed better in different kind of areas of the parental involvement questionnaire or had better grades. It is hoped that the results of this study will give parents and educators a better understanding of how particular kinds of parental involvement affects children’s performance. © 2011 Elsevier Ltd. Open access under CC BY-NC-ND license.

Keywords: Parental involvement; Academic performance;

1. Introduction

Academic achievement is undoubtedly a research after the heart of educational psychologists. In their attempt to investigate what determines academic outcomes of learners, they have come with more questions than answers. In recent time, prior literature has shown that learning outcomes (academic achievement and academic performance) have been determined by such variables as; family, school, society, and motivation factors (Aremu, 2000) This fact largely contributes to the limited body of knowledge regarding which aspects of parental involvement help student education and just what components of this involvement are most important (Epstein, 2001).

2. Parental involvement and academic performance

On parental involvement and academic achievement, studies have shown to date that the two constructs seems to be positively related. Findings have demonstrated that parent’s involvement in the education of the children has been found to be of benefit to parents, children, and schools (Campbell, 1995). Rasinki and Fredrick’s (1988) concluded that parents play an invaluable role in laying the foundation for their children’s learning; Zang and Carrasquillo (1995) also similarly remarked that when children are surrounded by caring, capable parents and are able to enjoy
nurturing and moderate competitive kinship, a foundation for literacy is built with no difficulty. Cotton and Wikelund (2005) ably capped it by asserting that the more intensively parents are involved in their children’s learning; the more beneficial are the achievement effects. Thus, it is believed that when parents monitor homework, encourage participation in extracurricular activities, are active in parents –teacher associations, and help children develop plans for their future; children are more likely to respond and do well in school.

Based on the results of Sixty-six studies, Henderson and Berla (1994) were of the opinion that repeated evidence has confirmed that the most accurate predictor of student achievement is the extent to which the family is involved in the child’s education, and not the family’s level of income.

As a matter of fact, McMillan (2000) noted that parental pressure has a positive and significant effect on public school performance. This becomes particularly obvious when the exactness of the parental pressure is brought to bear on the children’s academic performance. Similarly, Schickedanz (1995) also reported that children of passive parents were found to perform poorly academically.

Valez in Ryan (2005) reported that academic performance is positively related to having parents who enforce rules at home. The obviousness of the research findings reported in this study is that family involvement improves facets of children’s education such as daily attendance (e.g. Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Simon, 2000), student achievement (e.g. Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Sheldom & Epstein, 2001, Simon, 2000; Van Voorhis, 2001) behaviour (e.g. Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Simon, 2000) and motivation (e.g. Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Brooks, Bruno &Burns, 1997).

It is on this note that (Deutsher and Ibe, n.d) posited it was expected that parent involvement would have a large role on children’s performance. The foregoing, have shown that one of the greatest barriers to high academic achievement for a good number of students, is lack of parental involvement in children’s education.

In sum, research has shown that parents do want to get along with their children’s education knowing fully well that such involvement could promote better achievement. However, parents need a better little direction as to how they can effectively do this.

According to a magazine reports (2002), six types of programs could be utilized by schools to build strong parental skills. These are: one, school can assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills; two, schools can communicate with families about school programs and students’ progress and needs; three, school can work to improve families as volunteers in school activities; four, schools can encourage families to be involved in learning activities at home; five, schools can include parents as participants in important schools decisions, and six, schools can coordinate with business and agencies to provide resources and services for families, student, and the community. The importance of these programs further attest to the fact that student’s academic performance is dependent upon the parent-school bond. Thus the importance of parental involvement on academic performance cannot be over emphasized. The stronger the relationship is, especially between the parents and their wards’ education, the higher the academic achievement.

Adeyemo (2005) saw reason in this by stressing that there is need to foster home school partnership. In his attempt to give more meaning to his contribution on parental involvement and children’s education, (Epstein, 1997) put up a model in which he analysed how children learn and grow through three overlapping spheres of influence: family school and community. According to him, these three spheres must form partnership to best meet the needs of the child. Epstein (1997) again identified six types of involvement based on the relationships between the families, school and community. These are: parenting (skills), communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. He stressed it clearly that these six types of involvement need to be included to have successful partnerships (between the home and the school).

Baker and Soden (1997) remarked that much of the research that examined the relationships between parent involvement and children’s education assesses parent involvement by utilizing one particular measure, such as counting the number of parents that volunteer, coming to meetings, or coming to parent-teacher conferences. Other studies utilized measures that consists of a view closed-ended questions that target particular aspect of parent involvement and often focus on the number of times parents participate in some particular events (Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Griffith, 1996; Grolnick & Slowiczek, 1994; Zellman &Waterman, 1998).

According to Baker and Soden (1997), this type of measure does not allow for a rich picture of parent involvement, nor generate new ideas.
3. Goals and perspective

Parental involvement has been shown to be an important variable that positively influences children’s education. More and more schools are observing the importance and are encouraging families to become more involved. Because of this recent trend, it has become essential to understand what is meant by parental involvement and in what ways it has an influence on children’s education. A comprehensive view of involvement is presented by Epstein’s model. Epstein (1997) discussed how children learn and grow through three overlapping spheres of influence: family, school, and community. These three spheres must form partnerships to best meet the needs of the child. Epstein defined six types of involvement based on the relationships between the family, school, and community: parenting (skills), communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Epstein stressed the fact that all of these six types of involvement need to be included to have successful partnerships. Much of the research that examines the relationships between parental involvement and children’s education assesses parental involvement by utilizing one particular measure, such as counting the number of parents that volunteer, coming to meetings, or coming to parent-teacher conferences (Baker & Soden, 1997). Other studies utilize measures that consist of a few closed-ended questions that target a particular aspect of parental involvement and often focus on the number of times parents participate in particular events (Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Griffith, 1996; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). According to Baker & Soden (1997), this type of measure does not allow for a rich picture of parental involvement, nor generate new ideas. In the project summarized by this paper, many of these measures were included. Also added were home-related activities that encourage children’s education. Home-related activities included parents working with children on their homework, parents talking to children about school-related topics, and parents taking kids on field trips. In addition, this study had open-ended questions to give the parents an opportunity to explain more about their involvement. The various areas of parental involvement were examined as they relate to Epstein’s six types of parental involvement. Research has indicated that family involvement improves facets of children’s education such as daily attendance (e.g. Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Simon, 2000), student achievement (e.g. Brooks, Bruno, & Burns, 1997; Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Henderson, 1987; Herman & Yeh, 1980; Sheldon & Epstein, 2001a; Simon, 2001; Van Voorhis, 2001; Zellman & Waterman, 1998), behavior (e.g. Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Henderson, 1987; Sheldon & Epstein, 2001b; Simon, 2000), and motivation (e.g. Brooks, Bruno, & Burns, 1997; Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). It was expected that parental involvement would have a large role on children’s performance. In this particular study, the relationships between family involvement and student performance were examined.

4. Method

4.1. Population and sample

The population of this investigation consisted in 3 area of Tehran, Iran. From this population a sample of 200 boy students was drawn through a randomized process from 10 schools by multistage cluster sampling and questionnaire conducted on them.

4.2. Instruments

The family involvement questionnaire constructed by Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Child (2000) was used as a measure of parental involvement. It is a forty-two item scale with response anchor based on Likert 4 point format. The three scale factors demonstrated adequate internal consistency with Alpha coefficient .70. The reliability indices for the three subscales are: .85 for Section A, .85 for Section B and .81 for Section C. Also Parents were asked about how they are involved in the academic performance of their children. Finally, based on marks given to each student by their teacher in the semester prior, they were asked to report their marks for Literature and Mathematics. Marks were categorized in a range of scores from 0 to 20.
5. Results

After extracting data from the questionnaires and analysis of data collected, following results were obtained:

Base on first goal of this study correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement examined and result showed in table 1.

Table 1: Correlation between academic achievement and parental involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variables</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Academic performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be observed in the above table, parental involvement and academic achievement have positive and significant correlation.

According to the second goal of this research we are going to know academic performance of children with high parental involvement is better or with low parental involvement. Result of “T test” about this hypothesis showed in table 2:

Table 2: difference of average academic performance between family with high parental involvement and with low parental involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAR</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family with high parental involvement</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>16.26</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>5.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family with low parental involvement</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in the above table is shown, academic performance of children in family with high parental involvement is better than children in family with low parental involvement.

Also academic performance Differences of children in family with high parental involvement and low parental involvement is shown in graph 1:

Figure 1: Differences of average between academic performance and parental involvement

6. Conclusion and discussion

The accumulated evidence supports the importance of parental involvement in children’s education. Some parents have the skills to foster both cognitive growth and achievement motivation. More importantly, parents who do not
have these skills can readily acquire them. The research shows that when teachers and educational administrators are strongly committed to drawing parents into their children’s education, the academic outcomes for children can be very positive.

This project examined the role that parental involvement has on children’s performance. This study used multiple measures to examine parental involvement. It examined various areas such as volunteering, home involvement, attending parent classes, etc. Parental involvement has been shown to be an important variable in children’s education, and more schools are trying to encourage increased involvement. It therefore becomes essential to understand what types of parental involvement have the most impact on children’s performance. Also, using various measures to examine parental involvement has been a powerful tool. In this study, only about half of the parents filled out the survey (most likely the more involved ones) and by using the behavioural measures a richer picture of all the parents could be included. It is hoped that the results of this study will give parents and educators a better understanding of how particular kinds of parental involvement affects children’s performance.

References


