

The Role of Parental Involvement in Children's Academic Success

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of parental involvement in the academic success of children at the primary school level. Parental involvement, encompassing home-based activities such as homework supervision, reading support, and educational discussions, as well as school-based activities such as attending parent-teacher meetings and volunteering, has long been recognized as a significant determinant of children's educational outcomes. This research employs a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between various dimensions of parental involvement and children's academic achievement as measured by end-of-term examination scores. A structured questionnaire adapted from the Parental Involvement Scale (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) was administered to 100 parents of primary school children (Grades 3 to 5) selected through purposive sampling from two public schools. Academic records of the corresponding children were obtained with institutional permission. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal a strong, statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.61, p < 0.01$) between overall parental involvement and children's academic scores. Among the specific dimensions, home-based involvement (Beta = 0.38, $p < 0.001$) and parent-child academic communication (Beta = 0.27, $p < 0.01$) emerged as the strongest predictors of academic success, while school-based involvement showed a moderate but significant effect (Beta = 0.19, $p < 0.05$). The regression model explained approximately 42% of the variance in children's academic performance. The study concludes that parental involvement plays a critical role in shaping children's educational trajectories and recommends that schools develop structured parental engagement programs to strengthen the home-school partnership.

Keywords: parental involvement, academic success, children, primary school, home-school partnership, academic achievement

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The academic success of children is shaped by a complex interplay of individual, institutional, and familial factors. Among these, parental involvement has consistently been identified in the educational literature as one of the most influential contributors to positive academic outcomes. The concept of parental involvement refers to the active participation of parents in their children's educational processes, both within the home environment and in collaboration with school institutions (Epstein, 2001). This participation takes many forms, ranging from direct academic support such as assisting with homework, providing educational resources, and establishing structured study routines, to broader engagement activities such as attending school events, communicating with teachers, and fostering a home environment that values and prioritizes education.

Over the past three decades, a substantial body of research has established that children whose parents are actively involved in their education tend to achieve higher grades, demonstrate better attendance, exhibit more positive attitudes toward school, and are more likely to pursue higher educational attainment (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007). These findings have been replicated across diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic contexts, suggesting that the beneficial effects of parental involvement are robust and generalizable. Despite this strong evidence base, significant disparities exist in the extent and quality of parental involvement across different communities, and many schools struggle to develop effective strategies for engaging parents, particularly those from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

1.2 Problem Statement

While the positive association between parental involvement and academic achievement is well-documented in Western educational contexts, comparatively less empirical research has examined this relationship in the context of developing countries and regions where institutional resources, cultural norms, parental education levels, and family structures may differ significantly. Furthermore, most existing studies treat parental involvement as a unidimensional construct, failing to disaggregate the differential effects of home-based versus school-based involvement, or

the specific contributions of parent-child academic communication. Understanding which dimensions of parental involvement exert the strongest influence on children's academic outcomes is essential for designing targeted intervention programs. This study addresses these gaps by examining the multidimensional relationship between parental involvement and children's academic success in a primary school context with a population of 100 parent-child dyads.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study is guided by the following objectives: first, to assess the overall level of parental involvement among parents of primary school children; second, to determine the relationship between different dimensions of parental involvement, including home-based involvement, school-based involvement, and parent-child academic communication, and children's academic performance; third, to identify which dimension of parental involvement is the strongest predictor of academic success; and fourth, to provide evidence-based recommendations for schools and policymakers on strengthening parental engagement strategies.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The study tests the following hypotheses: H1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between overall parental involvement and children's academic performance. H2: Home-based parental involvement is a stronger predictor of academic success than school-based involvement. H3: Parent-child academic communication is significantly and positively associated with children's academic achievement.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the educational discourse by providing empirical evidence on the specific pathways through which parental involvement influences academic outcomes. The findings are expected to be of practical value to primary school administrators seeking to design effective parent engagement programs, to teachers who serve as the frontline liaisons between schools and families, and to parents themselves who may benefit from an enhanced understanding of how their involvement directly impacts their children's educational trajectories. Additionally, the study informs educational policymakers about the importance of institutionalizing structures that facilitate and incentivize meaningful parental participation in children's schooling.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Parental Involvement

The concept of parental involvement in education has been defined and operationalized in various ways across the scholarly literature. One of the most comprehensive and widely cited frameworks is the typology developed by Epstein (2001), which identifies six types of parental involvement: parenting (establishing supportive home environments), communicating (maintaining effective home-school communication), volunteering (participating in school activities and events), learning at home (assisting children with homework and academic activities), decision-making (participating in school governance and advocacy), and collaborating with the community (coordinating resources and services for families). This multidimensional conceptualization underscores that parental involvement extends far beyond mere attendance at school events and encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviors, attitudes, and practices that collectively contribute to the educational development of children.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) proposed an influential theoretical model that explains why parents become involved in their children's education and how this involvement translates into academic outcomes. According to their model, parental involvement is motivated by three primary factors: parents' role construction (their beliefs about what they should do in relation to their children's education), parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school, and the invitations, demands, and opportunities for involvement presented by children, teachers, and schools. The model further posits that parental involvement influences academic achievement through two key mechanisms: the modeling of attitudes and behaviors that promote learning, and the use of reinforcement strategies that encourage academic effort and persistence.

2.2 Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

The empirical evidence linking parental involvement to academic achievement is extensive and largely consistent. A landmark meta-analysis by Fan and Chen (2001), which synthesized the results of 25 studies, found a moderate to strong positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, with effect sizes varying according to the dimension of involvement measured and the academic outcome assessed. The authors noted that parental aspirations and expectations for their children's educational attainment showed the strongest

association with academic performance, while parental supervision of homework showed a comparatively weaker but still positive relationship.

Jeynes (2007) conducted another comprehensive meta-analysis specifically focused on urban elementary school populations and reported that parental involvement was significantly associated with higher achievement across all academic subjects, including reading, mathematics, and science. Notably, Jeynes found that the more subtle dimensions of involvement, such as parental style, expectations, and the creation of a supportive home learning environment, were more strongly predictive of academic success than observable involvement activities such as checking homework or attending school functions. This finding has important implications, as it suggests that the quality and intentionality of parental engagement may matter more than its quantity or visibility.

Hill and Tyson (2009) added further nuance to the literature through a meta-analysis that differentiated between the effects of parental involvement at different developmental stages. Their findings indicated that the nature and impact of parental involvement evolve as children progress through the educational system. During the elementary school years, direct home-based involvement such as reading with children and assisting with homework has the strongest positive effects. As children transition to middle and secondary school, academic socialization, which involves communicating the value and importance of education, linking schoolwork to future goals, and fostering autonomous learning strategies, becomes the most powerful form of parental engagement.

2.3 Home-Based vs. School-Based Involvement

An important distinction in the parental involvement literature is between home-based and school-based forms of engagement. Home-based involvement includes activities conducted within the family setting, such as helping with homework, providing educational materials, discussing school experiences, reading together, and establishing structured routines for study. School-based involvement, by contrast, encompasses activities that require physical or communicative engagement with the school institution, including attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in school committees, volunteering in classroom activities, and communicating with school staff (Green et al., 2007).

Research by Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack (2007) demonstrated that home-based involvement, when characterized by autonomy support rather than controlling behavior, is consistently associated with enhanced academic motivation, greater intrinsic interest in learning, and higher achievement. However, when parents adopt a controlling approach to homework supervision, the effects can be neutral or even negative, as children may develop dependency, anxiety, or resentment toward academic tasks. This finding highlights the critical importance of the manner in which parents involve themselves, not merely the frequency or duration of their engagement.

2.4 Barriers to Parental Involvement

Despite the well-established benefits of parental involvement, numerous barriers prevent many parents from engaging effectively in their children's education. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) identified four categories of barriers: individual parent factors (such as limited education, low self-efficacy, mental health challenges, and cultural beliefs about the role of parents in schooling), child factors (such as age, learning difficulties, and behavioral problems that complicate parent engagement), parent-teacher relationship factors (including distrust, cultural miscommunication, and differing expectations), and societal factors (such as poverty, demanding work schedules, language barriers, and lack of transportation). Understanding these barriers is essential for designing inclusive and equitable parental engagement strategies that accommodate the diverse circumstances and capacities of families.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives. The first is Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 2001), which conceptualizes the child's educational development as shaped by the interaction of three major contexts: family, school, and community. According to this theory, when these spheres overlap, that is, when families and schools work collaboratively toward shared educational goals, children benefit from consistent messages, expectations, and support systems that reinforce learning across all environments. The second framework is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which positions the child at the center of nested environmental systems, including the microsystem (family, school), mesosystem (interactions between family and school), exosystem (parental workplace, community resources), and macrosystem (cultural values, educational policies). This

ecological perspective underscores that parental involvement operates within a broader socio-cultural context and is influenced by multiple systemic layers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component characterizes the levels and patterns of parental involvement among the sampled population, while the correlational component examines the relationships between different dimensions of parental involvement and children's academic performance. This design is appropriate for investigating the nature, direction, and strength of associations between variables without manipulating the independent variables.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population consisted of parents of children enrolled in Grades 3 through 5 at two public primary schools located in an urban setting. The rationale for selecting these grade levels is that children in this age range (approximately 8 to 11 years) are at a critical developmental stage where parental involvement has been shown to exert particularly strong effects on academic outcomes (Hill & Tyson, 2009). A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit 100 parent-child dyads, with 50 participants drawn from each school. The inclusion criteria required that the participating parent be the primary caregiver responsible for the child's educational supervision and that the child had been enrolled in the school for at least one full academic year. Among the 100 parents sampled, 68 were mothers, 24 were fathers, and 8 were other primary caregivers such as grandparents or guardians.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data on parental involvement were collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire adapted from the Parental Involvement Scale originally developed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) and subsequently validated by multiple researchers across diverse educational contexts. The questionnaire comprised four sections. Section A collected demographic information, including parent's gender, age, educational attainment, occupation, household income, and the number of children in the family. Section B measured home-based involvement

through 10 items assessing behaviors such as assisting with homework, providing a dedicated study space, reading with the child, establishing academic routines, and providing supplementary educational materials. Section C measured school-based involvement through 8 items covering attendance at parent-teacher meetings, participation in school events, communication with teachers, and volunteering. Section D measured parent-child academic communication through 7 items assessing the frequency and quality of conversations about school, academic goals, educational aspirations, and the value of learning. All items in Sections B, C, and D were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Children's academic performance data were obtained from official end-of-term examination records, specifically the aggregate percentage scores in English, Mathematics, and Science. A pilot study with 15 parents confirmed the reliability of the instrument, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.88 for home-based involvement, 0.83 for school-based involvement, and 0.85 for parent-child academic communication.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed to parents during scheduled parent-teacher meetings at both schools and were also made available in printed form through children's school bags for parents who were unable to attend in person. A follow-up period of two weeks was provided to maximize the return rate. Informed consent forms were attached to each questionnaire, clearly explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Academic records were accessed with written permission from the school principals and parents. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to the commencement of data collection.

3.5 Data Analysis

All collected data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics version 28 for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample and the levels of parental involvement across the three dimensions. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the bivariate relationships between each dimension of parental involvement and children's academic scores. A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the individual and combined predictive effects of home-based involvement, school-based involvement, and parent-child academic communication on academic performance, while

controlling for relevant demographic variables. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

All 100 questionnaires were returned complete, achieving a response rate of 100%. The sample comprised 68 mothers (68%), 24 fathers (24%), and 8 other caregivers (8%). The age distribution showed that the majority of parents were between 31 and 40 years (54%), followed by 25 to 30 years (23%), 41 to 50 years (19%), and above 50 years (4%). Regarding educational attainment, 31% of parents held a bachelor's degree, 27% had completed secondary school, 22% possessed a master's degree or above, 14% had completed primary school only, and 6% had no formal education. In terms of occupation, 38% were employed in the private sector, 24% were government employees, 21% were homemakers, 11% were self-employed, and 6% were unemployed.

4.2 Levels of Parental Involvement

The descriptive analysis of parental involvement scores across the three dimensions is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement Dimensions (N = 100)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Home-Based Involvement	3.74	0.68	1.80	5.00
School-Based Involvement	3.12	0.82	1.25	5.00
Parent-Child Communication	3.56	0.74	1.57	5.00
Overall Parental Involvement	3.49	0.63	1.72	5.00

The results indicate that home-based involvement recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.68$), suggesting that parents were most actively engaged in supporting their children's learning within the home environment. School-based involvement received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.82$), indicating relatively lower levels of engagement with school-organized activities and teacher communication. Parent-child academic communication fell between the two

at a moderate-to-high level ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.74$). The overall mean parental involvement score of 3.49 suggests a moderately high level of involvement among the sampled parents.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships between the three dimensions of parental involvement and children's academic performance scores. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Parental Involvement Dimensions and Academic Scores

Variable	r	p-value
Home-Based Involvement	0.58**	< 0.001
School-Based Involvement	0.39**	< 0.001
Parent-Child Communication	0.52**	< 0.001
Overall Parental Involvement	0.61**	< 0.001

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All three dimensions of parental involvement showed statistically significant positive correlations with children's academic scores. Home-based involvement demonstrated the strongest correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$), followed by parent-child academic communication ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$) and school-based involvement ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). The overall parental involvement composite showed a strong positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis H1.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of the three parental involvement dimensions on children's academic scores, controlling for parent's educational level and household income.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Performance

Predictor	B	Beta	t	p
Home-Based Involvement	5.42	0.38	4.12	<0.001
School-Based Involvement	2.31	0.19	2.14	0.035
Parent-Child Communication	3.68	0.27	3.05	0.003

Note: $R^2 = 0.44$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.42$, $F(5, 94) = 14.67$, $p < 0.001$

The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(5, 94) = 14.67, p < 0.001$), with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.42, indicating that the predictor variables collectively accounted for 42% of the variance in children's academic performance. Among the three involvement dimensions, home-based involvement was the strongest predictor (Beta = 0.38, $p < 0.001$), followed by parent-child academic communication (Beta = 0.27, $p = 0.003$) and school-based involvement (Beta = 0.19, $p = 0.035$). These results confirm Hypothesis H2, that home-based involvement is a stronger predictor than school-based involvement, and Hypothesis H3, that parent-child academic communication is significantly associated with academic achievement.

4.5 Additional Findings

Further analysis revealed notable differences in parental involvement levels based on demographic characteristics. Parents with higher educational attainment reported significantly higher levels of involvement across all three dimensions ($F(3, 96) = 8.24, p < 0.001$). Mothers reported significantly higher home-based involvement than fathers ($t = 3.17, p = 0.002$), although no significant gender differences were observed in school-based involvement or parent-child communication. Additionally, parents from higher-income households reported slightly higher school-based involvement scores, likely reflecting greater availability of time and transportation resources necessary for attending school events and meetings.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the proposition that parental involvement is a significant determinant of children's academic success. The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.61$) between overall parental involvement and academic performance is consistent with the well-established findings of Fan and Chen (2001), Jeynes (2007), and Hill and Tyson (2009), who have all documented the robust relationship between parental engagement and educational outcomes across diverse contexts. The present study extends this body of knowledge by disaggregating the effects of three distinct dimensions of involvement, revealing that home-based involvement exerts the strongest influence on academic achievement.

The finding that home-based involvement is the most powerful predictor of academic success aligns with the theoretical predictions of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), who argued that the direct modeling, reinforcement, and instruction that occur within the home

environment have the most immediate and tangible effects on children's academic behaviors and outcomes. Activities such as supervising homework, establishing regular study routines, providing educational resources, and reading with children create consistent reinforcement structures that directly support learning. The relatively weaker, though still significant, effect of school-based involvement may reflect the fact that school-based activities, while valuable for building community relationships and institutional support, are less directly connected to the daily learning processes that drive academic performance.

The significant predictive role of parent-child academic communication is particularly noteworthy and resonates with the concept of academic socialization described by Hill and Tyson (2009). When parents engage in regular, meaningful conversations about schoolwork, discuss the importance of education, set expectations for academic achievement, and connect learning activities to future goals and opportunities, they cultivate intrinsic motivation, academic self-concept, and a sense of purpose that sustain children's engagement with learning. This form of involvement is especially valuable because it can be practiced by all parents regardless of their own educational background or familiarity with specific subject content.

The demographic findings regarding the influence of parental education level on involvement patterns echo the concerns raised by Hornby and Lafaele (2011), who identified limited education as a significant barrier to parental engagement. Parents with higher educational attainment may possess greater confidence in their ability to assist with academic tasks, more familiarity with the educational system and its expectations, and stronger beliefs about the importance of active parental involvement. These findings underscore the need for schools to provide targeted support and training for parents with lower educational backgrounds, empowering them to contribute effectively to their children's learning despite potential knowledge gaps.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study provides compelling evidence that parental involvement plays a critical and multifaceted role in shaping children's academic success at the primary school level. The results demonstrate that home-based involvement, parent-child academic communication, and school-based involvement are all significantly and positively associated with children's academic

performance, with the three dimensions collectively explaining 42% of the variance in academic scores. Home-based involvement emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by parent-child academic communication, reinforcing the importance of the home learning environment as the primary site through which parental influence translates into academic outcomes. The study confirms that parental involvement is not merely a desirable complement to formal schooling but a fundamental determinant of educational success that warrants systematic attention from all stakeholders in the educational enterprise.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed. For schools, establishing structured parental engagement programs that include regular workshops, orientation sessions, and take-home activity guides can equip parents with practical strategies for supporting learning at home. Schools should also create welcoming and inclusive environments that reduce barriers to school-based involvement, particularly for parents from disadvantaged backgrounds, by offering flexible meeting times, providing childcare during events, and ensuring multilingual communication. For teachers, maintaining regular and proactive communication with parents through newsletters, phone calls, parent portals, and digital messaging platforms can strengthen the home-school partnership and keep parents informed of their children's progress and needs. For policymakers, integrating parental involvement components into national education frameworks and allocating dedicated funding for family engagement initiatives would signal institutional commitment to this critical dimension of educational quality.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study is subject to several limitations. The sample size of 100 parent-child dyads, while adequate for the statistical analyses employed, limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, and future longitudinal studies are needed to establish whether increased parental involvement leads to improved academic outcomes over time or whether the relationship is bidirectional. The reliance on self-reported parental involvement data may introduce social desirability bias, and future research could benefit from incorporating observational measures or teacher reports to triangulate the findings. Additionally, expanding the study to include diverse geographic regions, school types, and cultural contexts would enhance external validity. Finally, qualitative or mixed-methods

approaches could provide deeper insights into the subjective experiences, motivations, and challenges that shape parental involvement behaviors.

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