



Research Output Journal of Arts and Management 3(3):74-78, 2024

ROJAM Publications

PRINT ISSN: 1115-6112

<https://rojournals.org/roj-art-and-management/>

ONLINE ISSN: 1115-9065

Exploring Parental Involvement in Education: Strategies for Building Strong Partnerships

Khadija Samira M.

Faculty of Education Kampala International University Uganda

ABSTRACT

Parental involvement is a crucial element in the educational development and success of students, influencing academic achievement and overall school climate. This essay explores various strategies for building strong partnerships between schools and families, particularly focusing on engaging parents from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Through a review of theoretical frameworks, including Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and an analysis of different types of parental involvement, the essay highlights the significance of understanding parents' perspectives and the challenges they face. Practical solutions for overcoming barriers such as communication issues and cultural differences are discussed, emphasizing the need for schools to foster inclusive and effective outreach efforts to enhance parental participation.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Educational partnerships, Socioeconomic status Ecological Systems Theory, School-home collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to better understand parental involvement in education and to explore strategies for building strong partnerships with families. In today's educational landscape, schools and districts face pressure from policy-makers, government officials, and adhering to governmental laws to improve student achievement nation-wide. Increasing parental involvement in education through outreach is crucial in addressing socioeconomic concerns. Targeting students whose family income is at the poverty level or lower is an approach that several states are taking to be compliant with legislation reforms such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). However, schools often face constraints with fiscal resources and need to focus on developing partnerships with families. This perception is extremely relevant, in order to improve the quality of education with the limited resources available. Research suggests that schools do not necessarily need funding to augment parental involvement, but parental involvement is more focused on how well schools can outreach to families and nurture these relationships to best support children's education [1]. Parental involvement has been examined through several lenses and perspectives, specifically through research on whom, how much, and what type of parental involvement influences student achievement. Schools, researchers, psychologists, and sociologists have all studied how the family unit or home-life impacts a child's educational experience and overall success. Several studies have noted that parents with economic resources, such as socioeconomic status and literacy levels, have the knowledge, confidence, and education to be involved in their children's schooling compared to less affluent families. In terms of the types of parental involvement targeted through outreach, the most common types include assisting with homework (academic involvement), volunteering at school (school-based involvement), attending school events and meetings (school-level involvement), providing enrichment opportunities at home (home-based involvement), and positively reinforcing education (consulting involvement). Furthermore, involvement is rarely examined in terms of interests or intentions to be involved. Parents could be actively involved, but their involvement may not be attuned to what a school values as important involvement [2].

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Understanding the importance of parental involvement in education is paramount. Parental involvement refers to the engagement of parents in their children's education, including activities such as attending school events, helping with homework, and communicating with teachers. It encompasses diverse activities, whether direct involvement in school-related events or indirect support at home, and it occurs in various ways and degrees in different cultures. This is evident in the research done by Mali et al. (2017), which focuses on Hispanic mothers' involvement in a suburban New Jersey school district, emphasizing the need for school efforts to engage parents. It expresses that to fully understand parental involvement, one must consider parents' views, and students' perspectives in understanding parental involvement are essential. Every school has different parents involved in its children's education with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs about their role as parents. Parents' visions of involvement inform their perceptions of school practices as welcoming or unwelcoming. In New Zealand, it appears that schools with culturally diverse student populations do not have a good understanding of the need for, or importance of, parental involvement (PI); thus, it is important to recognize the impact of this involvement on the student's success. Parental involvement is a key factor influencing the quality of educational experiences and academic performance of students [3].

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This section will delve into the theoretical frameworks that underpin parental involvement in education. The focus will be on the different perspectives and theories that shed light on how parental involvement is understood, viewed, and interpreted in the educational environment. In particular, the Ecological Systems Theory will be discussed in more detail, as it serves as a framework for understanding the complex interactions and influences that shape parental involvement in this environment [4]. Parents have always been an integral part of schools as teachers, advocates, and supporters of their children's education. When parents engage in educational activities with their children, the incentive to obtain an education is reinforced and enhanced. Unfortunately, not all parents participate willingly. In many schools, especially in the Title I elementary schools funded by government grants due to high poverty, schools outnumber middle-class students and the White ethnic group. In schools with a higher population of low income and ethnic minority students, it can be observed that very few parents attend school meetings, functions, or conferences. This indicates that mediation strategies of parental involvement have not been successful in ensuring engagement [5]. These impressive findings lead to questions regarding the disparities between parental involvement of diverse parent groups and those of middle-class White and affluent ethnic groups. It begs the question of how these differences are constructed, understood, and interpreted, given that this phenomenon is anything but neutral. To summarize the difference in perspective, parents from non-dominant group backgrounds view school as a place of distrust and hostility due to prior bad experiences from their own schooling system. On the other hand, schools view parental involvement as an opportunity for academic improvement. Consequently, school-centered outreach strategies dominated by the school's perspective are viewed as constraining and unsatisfactory [6].

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

As schools have been inundated by waves of reform since the mid-1980s, the systems that link schools and communities have been disrupted, with the result that schools have become isolated from families and neighborhoods on one hand and from universities and private institutions on the other hand. A good understanding of this phenomenon must take into consideration Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. In this theory, there exists an intricate net of personal relationships that together constitute the microsystem layer as well as a wider net of social or societal phenomena comprising the exosystem and macrosystem; coherent functioning across all levels is crucial to growth and development. Individual children can be seen as interconnected nodes in a vast social net. In terms of development, key developmental relationships and experiences occur within the microsystem. The higher level systems must support and nourish the lower level systems; without the proper resources, structures, and conditions, the local systems cannot function properly. In regard to the linking systems, in society at large there are traditions of reciprocity and shared norms that at their best ensure that children live in acceptable neighborhoods and good schools. Where schools partner with families this is based on a commitment to reciprocity, and where schools partner with external institutions it is based on a commitment to the wider societal expectations regarding schooling. A school is not an isolated cabinet; it exists and takes care of only part of society's youngsters [7].

TYPES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

While numerous factors, including family background and prior schooling experiences, affect how involved parents become, most research falls short of discussing different types of parental involvement. A categorization based on how parents become involved in their children's education (i.e. as academic support, as organizational support, as encouragement to participate in school activities) aims to rectify this shortcoming in research drawn primarily from European and North American contexts by providing a broad perspective on parental involvement through school-home partnerships and parental engagement in child-rearing in the home context [8]. The infrastructure of home-school partnerships in Sweden will be examined along this dimension of parental involvement, while also taking into account country-specific circumstances. A home-school partnership approach is taken to consider how both parents and teachers are jointly responsible for the partnership process. A more comprehensive categorization of parental involvement in the partnership process will be presented, followed by a presentation of various forms of parents' home context engagement. It is proposed that this more coherent and comprehensive approach is useful not only for research on home-school partnerships but also for understanding children's educational trajectory more broadly [9].

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Academic support is a substantive category that includes six practices (establishing a daily study time, monitoring homework, checking homework, encouraging working on extra studies if needed, encouraging the study of difficult subjects, and relating children's lessons to real life). All of the students agreed on the importance of academic support. They pointed out that when they fail their studies, it has the largest negative effect on their perceived learning environment. It is surprising that so many understand the significance of academic support, yet not all parents are active in this regard. A critical issue in teacher training involves helping teachers work with families and communities. Moreover, it is difficult for education policy to support parental involvement in connection with studies. According to, economic pressures, lack of strategies for home-school cooperation, perceived incapacity, discrimination, and cultural differences may hinder effective home-based parental involvement at the school level [10].

BENEFITS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is a term that describes the many ways that parents can be involved in their children's education. Involvement can encompass actions that occur at home, such as reading to children, providing education-related support, and monitoring homework completion or school attendance, as well as actions in schools and in the community, such as volunteering or attending school meetings. Researchers have studied involvement in many ways: the measurement of different types of involvement, the effects of involvement on student achievement, perspectives of parents and school staff regarding involvement, and strategies for increasing involvement [11]. What A Way to Build a Partnership, an ERIC/CUE digest, discussed the many types of parental involvement, focusing primarily on those that occur at home, and then looked at differences in perceptions of involvement between teachers and parents. This digest expands that look at parental involvement by discussing the diverse benefits of involvement with an emphasis on influences on achievement. Educational equity, improved parent-child relations, and improved school climate are other benefits considered. Taken together, they provide evidence that strong partnerships between parents and schools can contribute to better outcomes for students [12].

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The relationship between parental involvement and student achievement has been debated for decades. Some literature suggests that parental involvement has a statistically significant positive relation to students' academic achievement and therefore hypothesized that higher levels of parental involvement will be associated with higher academic achievement. They reviewed literature examining the relationship between five indicators of parental involvement and academic achievement. Their analysis combines parental involvement at home with school-based involvement. Most of the reviewed studies investigated the link between parental involvement and elementary school achievement in math and reading. With only five studies on secondary school achievement, the review found a positive association between parental involvement, measured across a wide variety of indicators, and students' academic achievement. There are no indications of a negative link between parental involvement and achievement [13].

Parental expectations and aspirations represent the degree to which parents presume that their child will perform well in school. Lee and Bowen (2018) examined the level and impact of five types of parental involvement at home and at school and found that these variables together explained 9% of the variance in reading and math achievement. Parental expectations showed the most powerful impact on achievement in the domains studied. Achievement goals from parents seem to have a positive influence, but academic pressure from parents is also associated with lower self-concept in math and reading. By

contrast, studies found that parental encouragement and support is positively associated with student academic achievement. This parental involvement variable is defined as the provision of support and encouragement, such as praising children's performance and efforts. Encouragement and support significantly predicted higher academic achievement. Parental support such as providing an appropriate environment and materials conducive to learning seem to have a positive significant relationship with academic achievement [14].

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Numerous challenges impede parents' progress toward effective involvement in their child's education. Barriers holding parents back can include education, occupation, socioeconomic status, language, or cultural differences. Communication barriers that restrain parents' involvement in school instruction are particularly noticeable. Feeling they do not fit in and the absence of invitations to school resources leave parents feeling more excluded from their children's education. Existing relationships between the school and parents are often strained due to embarrassment or fear of stigma when zero funding for lunch assistance policies arrives. Teachers express difficulty in finding the best way to communicate and connect with each individual family and often unintentionally offend parents' values or beliefs. Even as linguistically diverse families try to reach out to teachers through translators, teachers' reluctance fuels feelings of isolation. Parents may find verbal communication a threat to their parent-teacher relationship and harbor suspicions that their children pass on misconstrued views [15]. Several solutions can overcome these obstacles to parental involvement. Schools can consider economically challenged parents' busy work schedules and convenience when scheduling student-parent-teacher conferences. Time slots for meetings after school hours or school personnel conducting home visits also help these parents feel welcome. Parent-teacher committees limit misconceptions and misunderstandings of various cultures by examining, discussing, and addressing these potential issues directly. Furthermore, the school can assist with transportation for Spanish-speaking parents hesitant to attend meetings without friends or neighbors. Schools providing multilingual translators for forms and meetings fosters parental participation. Home-school liaison offices or families gaining an understanding of their parent-teacher relationship on a neutral playing field can encourage parents to focus on collaboration rather than blame [16].

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Effective communication is crucial for strong and positive parent-school partnerships to be developed and maintained. However, many challenges and barriers restrict effective communication and parental involvement. This section will focus specifically on communication barriers as a key challenge in parental involvement in education [17]. Communication is essential for any working relationship, including schools and parents of their students. Effective communication should be emphasized to build positive parent-school partnerships. Unfortunately, many challenges and barriers exist that do not allow for effective communication between schools and the parents of their students. Parents can sometimes feel undervalued and unimportant to the very education of their child. Understanding how communication could be restricted to the parent is a step in overcoming these challenges and barriers. After understanding the barriers, it is then essential to come up with a plan to overcome these obstacles to create a more effective teacher-parent relationship [18]. Much research has shown that the parents often feel excluded from the educational decision-making. It is not uncommon for a parent to receive calls from the school after their child has misbehaved or not understood something, but those same parents never hear from the school when their child has excelled in passing a major test. Many parents feel that they would be much more involved in their child's education if they had frequent communications with the school on the positive as well. Parent communication with the school should not be limited to note cards only sent out by the school and never returned by the parent. Also, understanding the English language can be a major barrier to effective communication. By recognizing these barriers, an attempt can be made to overcome them and keep all parties involved [19].

CONCLUSION

Parental involvement in education is a multifaceted issue that significantly impacts student achievement and the overall educational experience. Schools must prioritize the development of strong partnerships with families by understanding and addressing the diverse needs and challenges that parents face. Effective communication, culturally sensitive outreach, and the application of theoretical frameworks such as the Ecological Systems Theory are essential in fostering meaningful parental engagement. By implementing strategic initiatives that promote inclusive participation, schools can enhance the

educational outcomes for all students, particularly those from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

REFERENCES

1. Marschall MJ, Shah PR. Linking the process and outcomes of parent involvement policy to the parent involvement gap. *Urban Education*. 2020. nyu.edu
2. Gubbins V, Otero G. Parental involvement and low-SES children's academic achievement in early elementary school: New evidence from Chile. *Educational Studies*. 2020. [\[HTML\]](#)
3. Enteria OC, Tagyam RP. Parental involvement in the education development of indigenous people in selected elementary schools in the Northern Part of Mindanao, Philippines. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports*. 2020 Aug 13;13(3):16-27. 251news.co.in
4. Tanhan A, Strack RW. Online photovoice to explore and advocate for Muslim biopsychosocial spiritual wellbeing and issues: Ecological systems theory and ally development. *Current Psychology*. 2020. academia.edu
5. Parrett WH, Budge KM. Turning high-poverty schools into high-performing schools. 2020. [\[HTML\]](#)
6. Henderson LJ, Williams JL, Bradshaw CP. Examining home-school dissonance as a barrier to parental involvement in middle school. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*. 2020 May 4;64(3):201-11. [\[HTML\]](#)
7. Hyslop IK. The 1980s: a storm builds and breaks. *A Political History of Child Protection*. 2022. [\[HTML\]](#)
8. Smits DW, Van Meeteren K, Klem M, Alsem M, Ketelaar M. Designing a tool to support patient and public involvement in research projects: the Involvement Matrix. *Research involvement and engagement*. 2020 Dec;6:1-7. springer.com
9. Lukkari O. Home-school cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic: the perspective of elementary school special education teachers in Finland. 2021. jyu.fi
10. van Alten DCD, Phielix C, Janssen J, Kester L. Self-regulated learning support in flipped learning videos enhances learning outcomes. *Computers & Education*. 2020. sciencedirect.com
11. Van Laere K, Van Houtte M, Vandenbroeck M. Would it really matter? The democratic and caring deficit in 'parental involvement'. In *Working with Parents and Families in Early Childhood Education* 2020 May 21 (pp. 31-44). Routledge. core.ac.uk
12. Bartolome MT, Mamat N, Masnan AH. Exploring kindergarten teachers' perspectives in parental involvement in the Philippines. *Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal*. 2020 Jun 17;9(1):44-58. upsi.edu.my
13. Pinquart M, Ebeling M. Parental educational expectations and academic achievement in children and adolescents—a meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*. 2020. [\[HTML\]](#)
14. Li W, Xie Y. The influence of family background on educational expectations: A comparative study. *Chinese Sociological Review*. 2020. [\[HTML\]](#)
15. Zaidi R, Oliver C, Strong T, Alwarraq H. Behind successful refugee parental engagement: The barriers and challenges. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 2021. erudit.org
16. Blair A, Haneda M. Toward collaborative partnerships: Lessons from parents and teachers of emergent bi/multilingual students. *Theory Into Practice*. 2021. researchgate.net
17. Saltmarsh S, McPherson A. Un/satisfactory encounters: Communication, conflict and parent-school engagement. *Critical Studies in Education*. 2022. [\[HTML\]](#)
18. Vellymalay SK, Devisakti A. Strengthening Family-School Partnerships through Effective School-Led Communication and Parental Trust. *The International Journal of Humanities Education*. 2020;18(1):43. [\[HTML\]](#)
19. Bogetz JF, Trowbridge A, Lewis H, Shipman KJ, Jonas D, Hauer J, Rosenberg AR. Parents are the experts: a qualitative study of the experiences of parents of children with severe neurological impairment during decision-making. *Journal of pain and symptom management*. 2021 Dec 1;62(6):1117-25. jpsmjournal.com

CITATION: Khadija Samira M. Exploring Parental Involvement in Education: Strategies for Building Strong Partnerships. *Research Output Journal of Arts and Management*, 2024 3(3):74-78.