



More Than Homework Help: Filipino Secondary Students' Lived Experiences of Parental Involvement and Academic Performance

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Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study examined Filipino students' experiences with parental engagement and its relationship to academic success. Using interpretive phenomenology, the study looked into how students understood and made meaning of their parents' engagement in their schooling. Participants were selected specifically, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was then conducted, employing phenomenological techniques such as bracketing, horizontalization, and meaning clustering. The findings demonstrated that learners frequently regarded parental involvement as relational engagement and emotional support, rather than simply academic oversight. Four significant themes emerged: children's growing autonomy, parental expectations that serve both as pressure and motivation, academic performance monitoring, and parents' emotional presence. Although academic monitoring and expectations were perceived as potentially thrilling but also possibly stressful when deemed excessive, learners consistently identified understanding and encouragement as the most beneficial sorts of involvement. The study found that parental involvement had a greater emotional impact on learners' motivation and self-image than parents' behaviors alone, underscoring the need for autonomy-supportive engagement that aligns with children's developmental needs.

Keywords

Parental involvement, academic performance, phenomenological approach, emotional support

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic's disruption of mathematics education changed how students worldwide approached mathematical ideas, problem-solving techniques, and academic confidence. Long-term school closures, remote learning, and unequal access to digital resources have all been shown to widen learning gaps, especially in mathematics, a subject that heavily depends on conceptual scaffolding and guided practice (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Akseer et al., 2021; Shin et al., 2024). Research revealed that when schools progressively returned to traditional classroom settings, students not only returned with academic deficits but also with fragmented learning experiences, weakened foundational skills, and decreased interest in math classes (Borba, 2021; Sooknanan & Seemungal, 2023). These facts highlight the necessity for deliberate learning recovery techniques that go beyond continuity and promote meaningful re-engagement with mathematics on a global scale.

In every school setting around the world, parental participation is a key factor in a student's academic success. Students whose parents are involved in their education usually do better in school and are better able to adjust to their surroundings (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2010; Ates, 2021). Setting goals, monitoring academic progress, talking to both kids and schools, and providing both emotional and physical support are standard parts of this role. Aside from grades, these acts affect students' motivation, self-efficacy, and mental health (Nye et al., 2006; Cosso et al., 2022; Jeynes, 2024), among other things. So, studies from around the world show that parental involvement is a measurable educational benefit that significantly affects kids' academic growth.

On the other hand, research studies show that family involvement has different effects depending on the situation. There are strong links between parental involvement and academic success in many countries, including China, Ghana, Uganda, Italy, and South Africa. However, these links are influenced by factors such as emotional intelligence, academic self-efficacy, the school environment, and parental aspirations (Chowa et al., 2013; Mahuro & Hungi, 2016; Li et al., 2019; Longobardi et al., 2022). Also, new studies, especially those done during and after the COVID-19 outbreak, have shown how complicated and sometimes contradictory family involvement can be. Parental assistance has often made it easier for students to deal with problems at school, but it has also worsened stress and strain, which in turn harms both academic success and mental health (Kang et al., 2024; Peng et al., 2024).

Even though there are many scientific studies, important gaps remain. There is a general link between family involvement and better academic results, but the benefits depend on the situation and are not evenly distributed. Many studies have focused on specific aspects of parental involvement or direct links to academic success, but few have examined factors such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and mental health (Khajepour, 2011; Vahedi & Nikdel, 2011; Topor et al., 2010). Some studies have examined how family involvement and academic success change over time or across different school levels. However, most have examined only one way these relationships operate (Yang, 2025) or how they support overall patterns.

There is not enough quantitative research that takes into account a wide range of student groups, such as those with special educational needs and teens experiencing significant changes in their education right now (Flores de Apodaca et al., 2015; Serna & Martínez, 2019). To improve data-based educational policies and practices, these problems must be addressed. The goal of this study is to help us better understand the real-world link between parental participation and teens' academic success by examining the effects of parental involvement in a systematic way. The study's results are intended to strengthen partnerships between schools and families, help educators and policymakers develop strategies that view parental involvement as a clear, evidence-based way to improve academic outcomes, and encourage stronger school-family partnerships.

Statement of the Problem

Educational studies have repeatedly shown that when parents are involved, their kids do better in school. However, most recent research has focused on measurable outcomes and broad models of family involvement, often ignoring students' personal experiences. It's not well understood in the Philippines, especially at the secondary school level, how students see, understand, and give meaning to their parents' participation in their academic efforts. Secondary school is a significant time in a person's growth because it's when academic standards rise, and the challenges of freedom and self-identity become clear. Filipino parents often care a lot about their kids' schooling. But it hasn't been adequately studied how these kids experience and understand this involvement, such as whether it's as support, pressure, advice, or just being there. When people talk about education, they don't always consider how family participation is a human and relational matter. This is especially true when students' points of view aren't taken into account. So, a qualitative phenomenological study is needed that focuses on the real-life experiences of Filipino high school students regarding family participation and its impact on their academic success. Understanding how essential students consider family involvement to be could lead to better teaching methods that take into account both academic success and students' social and developmental needs.

Research Questions

This study was built around the research question below:

1. What do Filipino high school students actually think about when it comes to their parents being involved in their schoolwork?
2. How do Filipino high school kids feel about how involved their parents are in their education?
3. What do students think is the importance of family participation in their schoolwork?

4. How do students deal with parental demands, supervision, and mental support while they are in high school?
5. In terms of how well Filipino high school students do in school, what do they think parental participation is most important for?

Objectives of the Study

1. The main goal of this phenomenological study was to examine and explain what Filipino high school students really think about family participation and how that affects their overall academic performance.
2. To shed light on the real-life situations of Filipino high school kids when it comes to parental involvement in their schoolwork.
3. To look into how students think about and understand different ways that parents are involved in their secondary education.
4. To find out what students think about how vital family participation is to their academic success.
5. To identify themes that run through all students' experiences with family demands, supervision, and mental support.
6. To explain what family participation really means to Filipino high school students as they live it and experience it.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design

This study used a qualitative research method to examine what Filipino high school students actually thought about parental participation and how it affected their academic performance. A qualitative method would be best because it would allow for a deeper understanding of what parental participation in their daily school lives means to the participants. The research followed an interpretive phenomenological approach, which seeks to understand how people make sense of their experiences in specific social and cultural settings. This aligned with the study's focus on lived experiences.

Participants

Participants in this study were forty secondary school students in the Philippines enrolled in junior or senior high school in private schools. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, ensuring they had direct, meaningful experiences with parents involved in their school lives. One must be a high school student currently enrolled; two must live with or regularly contact at least one parent or guardian; and three must be ready to share personal experiences related to parental involvement and academic success. The number of subjects was based on "data saturation," meaning that adding more interviews did not yield any new important themes.

Instruments

A semi-structured interview guide made by the researcher was used to collect the data. The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed, thoughtful responses about their experiences with family involvement, the forms it took, and how they thought it affected their academic performance. Follow-up and probing questions were used to elicit more information from their answers and ensure they understood what was being said. Before the data were collected, the interview guide was reviewed to ensure it was transparent and valuable, and flexible enough to allow people to discuss events they considered important.

Data Gathering

Individual, in-depth conversations were used to collect data. These could have taken place in person or online, depending on the subjects' access and availability. Before the interviews began, subjects were informed about the study's goals, that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time without consequences. All subjects provided informed consent, and for those under 18, parental or guardian permission was also required. With the subjects' permission, interviews were recorded on audio and then typed up word-for-word to ensure accuracy. Each conversation lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Analysis

Iterative and indirect methods were used to analyze the collected data. The researcher began by reading the texts repeatedly to become familiar with the data. The first codes were made to find the most important statements and repeated ideas about family participation and academic success. Then, these codes were combined to create larger themes that showed how the subjects' stories shared similar patterns of meaning. During the analysis, reflexive notes were used to track the choices and changing readings made. This ensured the results remained true to the participants' stories.

Trustworthiness

The study's reliability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used to demonstrate its rigor. More time spent with the data and member checking, in which some participants were asked to review and confirm how their answers were interpreted, enhanced the study's credibility. Transferability was discussed by providing full, detailed accounts of the study setting and the subjects' experiences. An audit trail of the study methods, data analysis steps, and reflective notes was maintained to ensure the results could be relied on and confirmed.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, strict ethical guidelines were followed. The appropriate institutional groups gave their permission for the study to go ahead. The participants' privacy and secrecy were protected by assigning them fake names and removing any information that could be used to identify them from recordings and reports. Also, all the data were kept safely, and only the expert had access to them. The study followed the ideals of respect, beneficence, and justice, ensuring that the people who took part were treated with respect and that their stories were accurately told.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interview data showed that Filipino high school students viewed family participation as a complex, highly relational event. Parents were thought to be involved in more ways than just watching their kids do their homework or supervising them in school. It meant giving mental support, setting goals, giving advice, and taking turns doing chores. The data showed four main themes: parental involvement as mental support, parental involvement as academic monitoring, parental standards as both motivation and pressure, and how high school students deal with being on their own. The main ideas that emerged showed a strong link between parents' activity and students' feelings about their schoolwork.

1. How parents can help their kids feel better.

Participants mostly said that parents were involved by providing mental support rather than by teaching them directly. Students said words of support, motivation, and care made them feel driven and confident in their studies. Many participants said they were more likely to keep going when they were having trouble in school if they knew their parents were personally invested in their education.

This result matched an earlier study that showed parental involvement is more than just doing things; it also provides students with mental support (Jeynes, 2010; Porumbu & Necşoi, 2013). As in earlier studies, the results showed that social support increased students' interest in school by making them feel safe and like they fit in (Topor et al., 2010). Based on the data, mental support was more helpful for students than direct academic help, especially during the tough middle school years.

2. The Role of Parents in Supervising Their Children in School

Students also said that parents were involved by keeping an eye on their schoolwork and marks, telling them of due dates, and talking to them about how they were doing in school. Some of the people who took part thought that these activities were good ways to remind them of their responsibilities. Others, on the other hand, saw

them as normal expectations that were already a part of their family life. This result backed up an earlier study that found parental monitoring, a common way to be active, was linked to academic success in a number of situations (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jaiswal & Choudhuri, 2017).

The students' stories, on the other hand, showed that how academic tracking was presented had a significant impact on its effectiveness. People were encouraged by monitoring that was kind and helpful. On the other hand, controlling or repeated watching could sometimes cause worry. This result backed up the idea that family presence is not simply good or bad. Instead, what happens rests on how the kids understand what their parents are trying to do.

3. The Role of Parental Expectations in Driving and Stress

Many of the participants said that family standards were an important part of their involvement. Many students said that the high standards set by their parents pushed them to do well in school. They saw these hopes as signs of trust and faith in their future.

On the other hand, some students said they felt pressure when standards were too high or weren't stated outright but were implied strongly. Previous research has shown that family expectations are a strong yet complex part of participation (Jeynes, 2024; Peng et al., 2024), and this dual experience aligned with those findings. Expectations often drove people, but students' stories showed they could also make them anxious, especially when doing well in school was linked to family pride or loss. The results showed how important it is for parents to be involved in their children's education in a healthy way, especially when the children are still teenagers, figuring out who they are in school.

4. Negotiating freedom in high school.

Often, participants discussed how they managed their freedom in high school. Even though their parents were still involved in their lives, the students said they wanted to be on their own more and more. Some participants liked how their parents eventually decreased their role, letting them make decisions about their schoolwork while still being there to help. This result backed up earlier studies that found that maternal involvement changes as kids get older (Otani, 2020; Serna & Martínez, 2019).

Students' own experiences showed that when they were given support to become more independent, they felt more responsible for and in charge of their own learning. When participation was too strict, it was seen as limiting, which could hurt drive. The results showed how important it is for parents to be involved in secondary school in ways that fit their child's stage of development. The study's results showed that Filipino high school students thought family involvement was more of a relationship-based process than a set of fixed actions. The way a student knew and felt about their parents' role affected not only how well they did in school, but also how well their parents did.

By looking at the issue from the perspective of students, this study provided a clearer picture of how parents participate in secondary education in the Philippines. The results showed that parents who were involved in their teens' lives in healthy ways provided emotional support, respectful advice, and awareness of their teens' growing need for freedom. These results, added to an earlier quantitative study, show the personal experiences behind the known link between parental engagement and academic success.

The study showed that Filipino high school students saw parental participation as more than just a list of academic chores. They saw it as a relationship-based, meaning-driven process. Emotional presence has been stressed as a highly valued form of involvement. This supports earlier research showing the importance of psychological support in increasing students' interest in school. Students' stories revealed that emotional support and presence made them more motivated and resilient. Many people had mixed feelings about academic tracking, even though it was common. Monitoring worked well for students when presented as advice and support, but it caused stress when it felt forced. Aspirations pushed students to do well in school, but they also

caused stress, especially when seen as duties that required making sacrifices for the family. This duality was similar to other studies that showed how parental standards can be both inspiring and emotionally challenging. The results showed that goals were critical when they were combined with mental support and good communication. Students liked it when parents adjusted their level of involvement as their kids got bigger, helping them become more independent while still being there for them. This method aligned with developmental views and emphasized the importance of parenting that supports adolescent agency. The data showed that parental involvement had the greatest effect when it aligned with students' growth needs. This phenomenological study helped us understand how parental involvement affects academic achievement by showing us the real-life experiences that support well-known factual links. The study stressed the importance of students' perspectives by showing that academic success was affected not only by what parents did, but also by how Filipino teens felt about those actions in their relationships.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This in-depth study examined the personal experiences of Filipino high school students to understand how they felt about family participation and how it affected their academic success. The results showed that students didn't view parental involvement as a set of separate academic tasks, such as keeping an eye on homework or grades. Instead, they saw it as a relationship and emotional dynamic marked by care, guidance, expectations, and shared accountability. Emotional presence was considered the most critical form of participation. Students emphasized how important it was to have parents who listened carefully, encouraged them, and helped them when they were having trouble in school. Parents' demands and their need to watch over their kids often pushed them to work harder and stay focused, but these things could cause stress and worry if they were seen as too controlling or excessive. According to the students, the effects of family participation were significantly influenced by how parents talked to them and how their actions were perceived. In particular, polite, supportive involvement was shown to boost both drive and self-confidence. On the other hand, overly demanding involvement tended to limit students' sense of independence.

As a result, this study emphasizes the importance of parents' involvement in their children's lives during the high school years, in ways that are both developmentally appropriate and socially helpful. Parents are told to think of their role as a relationship with the school, balancing academic oversight with open communication and positive reinforcement to ensure their kids feel supported as they become more independent. Schools and teachers can also improve ties between families and schools by guiding parents toward ways to get involved that respect teens' privacy and by creating spaces where students' ideas are valued. Additionally, guidance counselors can play a significant role in helping students and parents manage the stress of school and improve communication. Later studies could add to these findings by examining issues from the perspectives of parents and teachers, comparing different regions of the Philippines, or using a mix of research methods. Overall, the results show that parental involvement has the most significant effect on academic success through students' emotional states and their sense of being understood. This shows how important it is to put students' opinions first in educational practices and policies.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest, whether financial, professional, or personal, that influenced the conduct, findings, or reporting of this study.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed to the overall conduct and writing of this study.

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