

Rethinking Parental Involvement in Developing Countries: Toward Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Education

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how parental participation in their children's education has changed over time in emerging nations. It achieves this by gathering 24 real-life studies from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East conducted between 2001 and 2024. The results fell into four broad categories: disparities across regions, factors that make it impossible to engage, things that make it easier to participate, and effects on schooling. We accomplished this by applying PRISMA 2020-based Boolean search techniques across Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus. We also used the CASP Qualitative Checklist to assess quality. Parents cannot get active because they do not have enough money, cannot read or write, or do not follow cultural customs. Parents find it easier to do that when the school speaks to them kindly, the teachers are kind, and everyone follows the regulations. It is recognized that when families are involved, students are more motivated, more likely to go to school, and healthier emotionally and socially. Nonetheless, its direct impact on academic achievement remains ambiguous. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parental involvement model guided the study. This highlights how vital it is to learn about various cultures and think about how families may support one another when they are not in school. Some factors that spring to mind include parental participation, academic performance, developing nations, education policy, meta-synthesis, and family engagement.

Keywords: education, parental involvement, academic performance

INTRODUCTION

People have long known that how well kids do in school is greatly affected by how involved their parents are in their education. Numerous meta-analyses and systematic research have demonstrated its benefits on academic performance, motivation, and emotional and social development (Blair, 2014; Fan & Chen, 2001; Castro et al., 2015; Jeynes, 2012; Wilder, 2014). However, there are many ways to become involved, and each works differently. In affluent nations, there is a strong emphasis on school volunteering, academic support, and consistent communication between parents and educators. In East Asia, however, academic socialization and organized connections have been adequate (Kim, 2020). However, in many parts of the world, challenges persist that make

it hard for families to engage with schools. Some of these problems stem from differences in income, cultural values, and institutional constraints (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Wilder & Jacobsen, 2019; Yang et al., 2023).

Migration, cultural traditions, and the economic situation in the Philippines significantly affect how involved parents are with their kids. Studies show that Filipino parents who have little money often provide emotional and motivational support at home, even when they cannot send their children to school because they cannot afford it (Garcia & de Guzman, 2020). A comparative analysis reveals that Filipino parents participate more than their Western counterparts. Extended family members often help with their children's schooling (Blair, 2014). More data from Southeast Asia backs up these patterns. It shows that poverty and the labor movement make it harder for parents to get directly involved, but they do not change parents' hopes for their children's achievement (Nguon, 2012; Bartolome et al., 2017). These results reveal that the methods people use to become active in their communities are typically unofficial, part of the culture, and are not acknowledged by schools.

There is a lot more writing on the issue, but we still do not know much about how parents are active in developing nations. The majority of studies and meta-analyses conducted thus far have been conducted in Western or high-income settings (Fan & Chen, 2001; Castro et al., 2015; Lahaie, 2008). This suggests that there has been little research on the impact of cultural, political, and economic factors on family-school ties in low- and middle-income countries. We may gain a lot from regional studies in Uganda, Cambodia, Chile, and Sri Lanka (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016; Nguon, 2012; Lara & Saracosti, 2019; De Silva et al., 2018), but they are generally done on their own and do not integrate into the broader picture. We still do not fully understand what dads, grandparents, and other community members do, nor do we fully grasp how digital technologies can make it easier for people to take part in communities that lack resources.

This study addresses these weaknesses by assembling a substantial corpus of empirical data on parental engagement in emerging nations, specifically in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. The study enhances our understanding of familial support for education across several contexts by analyzing patterns, obstacles, facilitators, and thematic influences. This is significant since it may help develop judgments and rules that are not solely dependent on how things are done in the West. It can also help individuals identify informal and locally specific contributions and urge for fair and open practices. The study's primary goal is to provide teachers, lawmakers, and development groups with real information on how to improve the relationship between families and schools and to give parents more power as co-teachers in their children's education.

Research Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Look at how active parents are in developing nations and how this differs from one area to another.
2. Learn what stops parents with low and medium incomes from becoming engaged.
3. Learn what makes interactions between families and schools function smoothly.
4. Investigate the impact of parental involvement on children's motivation and academic achievement.
5. Use the data to ensure that educational policies and procedures are fair and take into consideration the needs of students from diverse cultures.

Research Questions

1. How does family impact manifest in various regions of emerging countries?
2. What are the challenges that make it hard for parents to be active, both the same and different?
3. How can parents get involved in schools that lack adequate funding?
4. How does a student's motivation and capacity to do well in school change when their family is involved?
5. How can we draw on ideas from diverse fields to establish schools that are welcoming and respect all cultures?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A qualitative meta-synthesis technique was used to aggregate and analyze empirical research on family participation in K–12 schooling in developing nations. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parental involvement model guided the study (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Lavenda, 2011; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013). The technique was used to discern lessons across diverse settings that transcend particular case studies, uncovering more extensive patterns and contrasts. Twenty-four peer-reviewed papers were reviewed between 2001 and 2024. These investigations included meta-analyses, qualitative research, and case studies. We employed Thomas and Harden's (2008) approach to thematic synthesis to identify recurring

themes and construct an interpretative framework that illustrates the dynamics of parental participation in both general and specific contexts.

Inclusion Requirements

Studies were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) they came from low- or middle-income countries as defined by international development standards; (b) they looked at how parents or families were involved in K–12 education; (c) they were published in English and went through peer review; and (d) they used empirical methods like interviews, surveys, case studies, or systematic reviews. We did not include studies that did not meet these guidelines or did not disclose enough information about how they accomplished the work. This procedure ensured that all circumstances and methods were portrayed fairly.

Data Sources

We searched Google Scholar, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), and Scopus, as they include extensive research in the social sciences and education. We used Boolean search strings that combined words like "parental involvement" OR "family engagement" OR "home–school partnership" with "developing countries" OR "low-income" OR "middle-income" and "education" OR "academic achievement." We also reviewed the reference lists of the included studies to find additional sources. Repeated screens removed research that were duplicates or not useful. It was easy to choose, and you may do so again by following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

Data Analysis

Findings from many investigations were integrated using thematic synthesis. After thoroughly reading each article, the most essential results were selected, classified, and organized into subject groups. Then, these groups were combined to identify both the similarities and differences in how parents were involved across different areas. Cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and national education policies were among the external factors examined, as they affected the outcomes. The work was graded using the CASP Qualitative Checklist (Long et al., 2020), and another person reviewed it and decided whether the scores were fair. It was easy to handle data and code concerns with NVivo software (Allsop et al., 2022). It also helped you arrange and logically compare findings.

Ethical Considerations

This study amalgamated results from prior studies and did not directly engage human subjects. As a result, official ethical approval was not required. Still, ethical standards were maintained by ensuring that original research was accurately reported, sources were credited correctly, and the quality of the methodology was carefully checked.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The essential idea is that parents are active in different ways depending on where they reside. In Africa, when parents become involved, it typically indicates deeper flaws in the system, such as schools not receiving sufficient funding or institutions not trusting one another. Studies in Ghana and Uganda show that parents often perceive schools as unwelcoming or hard to reach, which makes it harder for them to stay in touch with their children (Donkor, 2010; Suzuki, 2002; Mahuro & Hungi, 2016). This lack of confidence is made worse by unpredictable politics and a bad economy, which make it tougher for families to put education first. Parents in Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines and Cambodia, are less likely to attend school because they work long hours or must relocate for employment (Nguon, 2012; Garcia & de Guzman, 2020). Parents make up for it by providing their kids with emotional support and using home-based learning methods that schools often do not recognize. This indicates that individuals are still interested, but not in the same manner that Western definitions of engagement entail. Chile and other parts of Latin America illustrate how having many family members and gender roles can affect how people live. Most of the time, moms are in control of their children's education, with aid from dads and other family members (Lara & Saracosti, 2019). The concept of "parental involvement" must be expanded to include contributions from the entire family. Research from Sri Lanka demonstrates that familial support helps maintain children's interest in disciplines such as science, even during periods of diminished engagement (De Silva et al., 2018). This indicates that parents can shape how pupils think and act, even with limited resources, if they are committed and dedicated. Because areas are diverse, not everyone should have to follow the same laws regarding schooling. Instead, they should learn about the numerous ways individuals get involved based on their culture, such as social, group, or subject-focused participation, and develop solutions that support these methods of doing things. Schools should not make families adopt rigorous Western ways of doing things. Instead, they should use adaptable frameworks that recognize the contributions of different kinds of families.

Poverty makes it hard for parents to be involved. The biggest challenge is still poverty, which makes it impossible for parents to provide their kids with what they need or to take time off work to attend school functions. Families who are having difficulty making ends meet often prioritize survival over schooling, making them less visible in formal school settings (Goshin & Mertsalova, 2018). Parents who cannot read or write correctly also lack the courage to help their kids with their homework. Many parents think they are not doing enough to help their kids with their chores or to talk to their teachers, which makes their kids less likely to get involved (Wilder & Mobley, 2017). When cultural norms hold that only teachers can make educational decisions, parents are less likely to become engaged. In patriarchal countries, dads often do not engage in child-rearing, so limiting their ability to offer support (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). It is tougher to blend in when you are an immigrant and do not speak the language well, especially in places where people from different countries meet. Families who do not know how schools communicate often misunderstand the standards, which makes them mad and pulls them away (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016). Schools need to discover ways to communicate with everyone, get kids active in ways that consider literacy, and employ tactics that are right for their culture. During lessons, teachers should stress the importance of understanding others and of change. Also, governments should work to address socioeconomic factors that discourage young people from attending school.

School opportunities make it easier for parents to get involved. If you want to know whether parents will be involved, look at what the school offers. Parents feel respected when teachers talk to them, and they are more willing to get involved (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Being culturally aware makes individuals more engaged by noticing unofficial aspects, including listening, teaching, and offering emotional support. For example, in the Philippines, parents' actions at home are crucial for their children's education; however, schools frequently neglect this aspect (Garcia & de Guzman, 2020). Policies that formalize family-school interactions have a greater effect on parents. Structured initiatives that link parents and teachers have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing children's academic performance in East Asia (Kim, 2020). Setting objectives, discussing standards, and demonstrating resilience are all facets of academic socialization that work best when kids are young (Hill & Tyson, 2009). This sort of participation boosts motivation and long-term achievement. These leaders suggest that schools should frequently contact families, that teachers should learn about other cultures, and that rules should help families and schools get along. If parents are recognized for their unofficial contributions and motivated to foster friendships at school, their engagement can become a sustained catalyst for equity.

Parental involvement influences how well learners do in school. Many meta-analyses show that family participation helps kids do better in school, though the effect varies by type (Fan & Chen, 2001; Castro et al., 2015). It is more likely that home-based activities, such as monitoring homework and promoting positive conduct, will lead to success than school-based assistance (Wilder, 2014; Jeynes, 2012). Indirect impacts are equally important. Parental involvement in their children's lives makes children more motivated, positive, and responsible, which, in turn, affects their schoolwork (Topor et al., 2010; McNeal, 2014). Longitudinal studies demonstrate that early parental involvement significantly predicts enduring academic performance (Englund et al., 2004). This emphasizes how crucial it is to get aid straight away. The findings demonstrate that schools should do more to encourage pupils to get active both at school and at home. Policies should not simply advise parents to volunteer or send their kids to school. They should also tell parents to engage in activities that help their kids feel good about themselves and gain more drive.

Parental involvement concerns how rules and actions interact. When resources are limited and situations differ, standardized methods of family participation are useless. Laws need to be adjusted to match the place and the people who live there, who come from diverse cultures. Schools should recognize and value informal actions, such as offering emotional support and advocacy, as valid forms of involvement. Teachers need to learn to understand diverse cultures and to persuade families who are not active to get involved during their training. Governments and NGOs could eliminate formal barriers by offering flexible meeting times, multilingual communication, and community support networks. Policies and practices must evolve to see parents as collaborators rather than individuals with issues. By recognizing different ways to participate, schools may promote fairness, resilience, and long-lasting academic success.

A Brief Summary of Policy

A New Approach to Enhancing Inclusivity and Cultural Responsiveness in Education: The Role of Parental Engagement in Developing Nations

Important Information

- Parental participation regularly improves a child's academic performance, motivation, and social and emotional well-being (Fan & Chen, 2001; Wilder, 2014; Castro et al., 2015).
- People in underdeveloped nations may contribute in less formal ways, including by speaking out, learning at home, or offering emotional support. This is especially true in countries where cultural norms, poverty, and migration make it impossible for kids to attend school (Garcia & de Guzman, 2020; Nguon, 2012; Lara & Saracosti, 2019).
- There are distinct trends in different regions of the world. In Africa, there is distrust of the government and little communication. Families in Southeast Asia emphasize emotional support, whereas families in Latin America depend on their extended family for help.

Problems

- Poverty, parents who cannot read or write, and stringent educational systems are all structural hurdles that make it less probable for people to participate (Goshin & Mertsalova, 2018).
- Cultural norms sometimes exclude dads or discourage parental involvement in educational matters (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).
- It is tougher to learn and participate in school when you are a refugee and do not speak the language (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016).

What Works

- When schools invite parents to get involved and relate to them in ways that respect their culture, parents are more likely to do so (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).
- Parents setting goals and standards for their kids through academic socialization has a significant impact on their growth, especially during their teenage years (Hill & Tyson, 2009).
- Policies that formalize family-school links, as in East Asia and Latin America, help things run more smoothly (Kim, 2020; Lara & Saracosti, 2019).

How to Write Policies

- It is important to know that parents may be active in good ways, including telling tales, establishing boundaries, and offering emotional support at home.
- Teach teachers how to get pupils to participate in ways that are respectful of their families and conscious of the many cultures they come from.
- Offer aid to working and immigrant families by being able to talk to them in more than one language and meeting at different times.
- Make it a permanent aspect of state education policy to have families and schools work together, especially in places with low resources.
- Help fund an additional study into how digital tools, dads, and grandparents can help everyone get involved.
- People in poor nations do not usually see their parents become active, yet it has a tremendous impact. Schools may make families full-time teachers by switching from models that focus on issues to ones that focus on partnerships. To make schools strong, friendly, and effective for everyone, they require fair regulations grounded in culture.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research demonstrates that parental engagement remains a crucial factor influencing student success in underdeveloped countries. However, the types and levels of severity vary widely depending on the culture, economy, and institutions involved. Families constantly support each other by being there for each other, learning at home, and speaking out. This is the case throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. People may not be able to take part directly because they are poor, do not read well, or have other challenges in society, but families do it nonetheless. These results contest participation paradigms focused on the West and support the idea that varied, context-specific methodologies are equally efficacious. This study illustrates that involvement is not a static phenomenon, but a dynamic process shaped by the interwoven systems of family, school, and society. It does this by situating the results within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the maternal involvement model developed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler.

Schools need to adopt flexible, culturally sensitive strategies that take into account the role of informal parents and minimize the obstacles currently in place to strengthen these contributions. Schools should aggressively urge families to work together. Meetings should be flexible so that working parents may attend, and communication

should be offered in more than one language. States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should formalize family-school collaborations so that all pupils receive the same education. To achieve this, teachers need to understand other cultures and how to convince families that do not care much about school to care more. There should be more continuing investigations in low- and middle-income communities in the future. It is also vital to consider the responsibilities of dads, grandparents, and other community members, as well as how digital technologies might help equalize access. By employing these strategies, lawmakers and teachers can ensure that parents are involved in their children's education in a way that will last and help them achieve higher grades.

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Conflict of Interest

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