

Parental Involvement in Learners' Education: Significance, Benefits, and Barriers

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the extent of parental involvement in the educational process within Christian schools in the Philippines. Employing a descriptive survey design, data was gathered from 80 participating parents. The results indicate that parents are actively engaged in their child's education, participating, on average, once a week. Notably, a substantial level of parental involvement was identified, perceived as advantageous for the learners, notwithstanding the challenges faced by parents. The findings underscore the importance of parental contribution in fostering a positive educational environment in Christian schools in the Philippines.

Keywords: Parental involvement; Christian schools; Basic education

Introduction

Parental involvement in education is a multifaceted concept, encompassing the commitment and active participation of parents in both the school and their child's academic journey. Schools often integrate parents into various activities, viewing parental engagement as a means of providing support to students, while teachers associate it with improved student behavior (Harris & Goodall, 2017). Peters (2012) highlights that successful schools are often characterized by high levels of parental engagement.

In the Philippines, education holds significant importance across social class levels, with Filipino parents recognizing its pivotal role in their children's success. Despite this commitment, retention remains a concern, particularly as students often do not progress beyond elementary grades (Blair, 2014). Past research indicates that parent involvement in the Philippines lacks specificity, emphasizing the need for enhanced practices, particularly those fostering active parental participation in their child's learning both at home and school (Nierva, 2009). Ochoa and Torre (n.d.) suggest that parenting programs should focus on improving communication between parents and children, fostering non-confrontational dialogue, and providing opportunities for children to express their thoughts and feelings.

While numerous studies have explored parental involvement globally, including MwaiKimu (2012), Nihat Şad & Gurbuzturk (2013), Sapungan & Sapungan (2014), Blair (2014), Nierve (2009), Teale (2011), Sclafani (2014), Glickman (2004), Neuman (2002), and Garcia (2018), there is a notable gap in research specific to the context of Philippine Christian schools. This study addresses this gap by investigating the extent of parental involvement in the educational process within Christian schools in the Philippines.

The findings aim to contribute insights that can enhance the level of parental involvement in their children's education, ultimately fostering a more supportive and collaborative learning environment.

Methodology

Research Design

This research utilized a descriptive research design, employing survey methods to explore parental involvement in the education of Christian elementary-level learners. The descriptive approach was selected to elucidate the nature, importance, benefits, and obstacles associated with parental engagement. This method allows for flexibility in capturing diverse perspectives, utilizing instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations, as outlined by Creswell (2015). The study concentrates on the diversity of parental involvement, aiming to comprehensively grasp its scope and influence. By

adopting this approach, the research facilitates a concise yet detailed exploration of the various ways in which parents contribute to elementary education.

Research Locale and Participants

The research was carried out on five (5) Christian elementary schools in La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines during the school year 2020-2021. The study included a total of eighty (80) parents whose children were enrolled in various Christian elementary schools in La Trinidad, Benguet, for the academic year 2020-2021.

Research Instrument

The research utilized a questionnaire adapted from the studies of Antoine (2015), Garcia (2014), Sapungan (2014), and Dickerson (2014). The items in the questionnaire were sourced from these published papers ensuring content validity and reliability. Given the established credibility of the selected instruments and the rigorous sourcing from published materials, a separate test of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire was deemed unnecessary.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained the necessary permissions before conducting the survey. With assistance from friends who were also co-teachers in five schools where the survey was conducted, the researcher successfully floated and retrieved the questionnaires. Throughout the distribution and retrieval process, informal interviews were conducted with school parent officers and teachers to gather additional information, clarify responses, and verify data. A total of one hundred eighty forms were distributed, completed, and collected. The researcher's community contacts played a pivotal role in retrieving the forms, employing various methods such as online and printed forms.

Data Analysis

Following the retrieval of the questionnaire copies, the responses were tallied, categorizing the data into specific problems. The information was organized in tables that included all the items for each problem, numerical values, statistical limits, descriptive equivalents, and symbols used. The statistical treatment employed in the study encompassed frequency counts and weighted mean calculations.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a central role in ensuring the integrity and fairness of the study. Informed consent stands as a paramount ethical principle, necessitating clear communication about the research purpose, procedures, and potential impacts on participants. Upholding confidentiality is imperative, promising that participants' personal information will be treated with utmost care. Voluntariness is emphasized, assuring that participation is entirely optional and that individuals can withdraw without repercussions. Respect for diversity underscores the importance of acknowledging and valuing the varied cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds of participants. Equity considerations aim to prevent the marginalization of specific groups, ensuring a comprehensive representation of experiences. Beneficence guides the research to contribute positively to both academic knowledge and the well-being of participants. Non-exploitation principles guard against the misuse of vulnerable populations, striving to address barriers rather than perpetuate inequalities. Accuracy and transparency are paramount, emphasizing truthful reporting of findings and acknowledging study limitations. Thus, providing feedback to participants and disseminating findings transparently contribute to the ethical conduct of the research. On-going reflection on ethical considerations throughout the research process ensures that unforeseen issues are promptly addressed, upholding the study's integrity and its positive impact on participants.

Results and Discussion

Frequency of Parental Involvement in Learners' Education

Table 1 presents the observations of parents on the frequency of parental involvement in learners' education. The table indicates that the group of parents observed parental involvement in learners' education with an average weighted mean of 2.25, interpreted as once a week. This finding suggests that parental involvement in learners' education occurred every week, indicating that parents were actively engaged in the educational activities of the learners, particularly in their academic subjects. The timing of positive parental involvement and support in a learner's schooling is also deemed crucial.

As per Englund's (2014) study, it suggests that the influence of parental involvement on younger children might be more pronounced compared to its impact on older learners. This underscores the significance of parents providing support right from the commencement of their child's educational journey. While the importance of parental involvement spans across all age groups, it appears to exert a more substantial effect when introduced during the early years of a child's education.

Table 1: Frequency of parental involvement in the learners' education

Statements	Daily	Once a Week	Rarely	Mean	Interpretation
1. How often do you and your child talk about future goals?	35	22	23	2.15	Once a Week
2. How often do you and your child talk about problems that he or she may be having at school with peers, and teachers?	28	45	7	2.26	Once a Week
3. How often do you and your child talk about what content is being taught in the classroom?	31	44	5	1.94	Once a Week
4. How often do you and your child talk about the importance of learning to do things independently?	37	38	5	2.40	Daily
5. How often do you assist your child with assignments and studying at home?	30	45	5	2.31	Once a Week
6. How often do you help your child correct assignments and assessments that have already been graded?	26	44	10	2.20	Once a Week
7. How often do you help your child engage in educational activities outside of the class?	41	34	10	2.51	Daily
Overall Mean				2.25	Once a Week

Furthermore, the table reveals that respondents rated their frequency of assisting their child in educational activities outside the classroom, yielding a computed weighted mean of 2.51. Following closely was the frequency of discussions about the importance of independent learning, with a computed weighted mean of 2.40, indicating a daily occurrence as interpreted by the respondents. This underscores the active engagement of parents in their child's educational pursuits, promoting a conducive environment for discussing lessons. The implication is that parents or guardians were actively participating in their child's learning, fostering a continuous and professionally involved approach to education. These findings strongly suggest a positive correlation between active parental involvement and higher academic success for learners, particularly when the child actively seeks and appreciates their engagement.

Moreover, respondents rated certain variables as once a week, such as assisting with assignments and studying at home (weighted mean of 2.31) and discussing problems at school with peers and teachers (weighted mean of 2.26). This indicates that parents are involved in helping with assignments every week and engage in weekly discussions about school-related issues. Additionally, helping correct assignments and assessments with a weighted mean of 2.20 suggests positive parental involvement in reviewing the child's homework. However, variables like talking about future goals (weighted mean of 2.15) were rated lower, indicating less parental involvement in these aspects. Furthermore, discussing the content being taught in the classroom received a weighted mean of 1.94, signifying a lower frequency of parental involvement in this area.

Importance of Parental Involvement in Learners' Education

Table 2 outlines the respondents' perceptions regarding the significance of parental involvement in learners' education. The average weighted mean, with a score of 2.39, indicates that parents highly value their involvement in their children's education, contradicting the assumption that parental involvement in elementary school is only moderately important. The observations suggest a warm reception of parents in school activities, collaboration with teachers on learning resources and information about their children, and active engagement in their children's educational journey. This underscores the pivotal role of parental involvement in establishing educational goals and providing academic support for learners. Research supports the idea that parents significantly influence the social learning process, particularly during the early stages of their children's lives. Higher levels of parental education correlate with increased involvement, potentially stemming from a better understanding of school-related challenges and stresses. Educated parents are better equipped to navigate these challenges, leading to reduced stress in their lives.

Upon scrutinizing specific variables, parents perceived certain aspects as highly important. Developing a relationship with their children's teachers and maintaining regular communication with them garnered a weighted mean of 2.55. Similarly, the involvement of teachers in classroom activities for collaborative improvement was considered very important, with a weighted mean of 2.52. Advocating for enhancements in school resources through engagement with local school boards and government was also deemed significant, receiving a weighted mean of 2.46. Parents actively participating in helping their children comprehend homework demonstrated engagement in their children's school lives, as reflected in a weighted mean of 2.37. Additionally, accessing and utilizing children's academic scores to ensure they are on track (weighted mean of 2.36) and opportunities for parents to be educated about curriculum and school functioning (weighted mean of 2.36) were perceived as very important. Respondents rated promptly contacting teachers when an

academic problem arises as important, with a weighted mean of 2.35. However, the least prioritized aspect was viewing the parent portal or similar tools, receiving a weighted mean of 2.21, suggesting that the respondents did not consider the parent portal as a high priority.

Table 2: Importance of parental involvement in learners' education

Statements	Very Important	Moderately Important	Least Important	Mean	Interpretation
1. Accessing and using children's academic scores to ensure they are on track	37	35	8	2.36	Very important
2. Frequently viewing the parent portal (or whichever tool their school uses)	26	45	9	2.21	Moderately important
3. Developing a relationship with children's teachers and keeping in touch with them often	44	36	0	2.55	Very important
4. Advocating for improvements in the school building and with local school boards and state and federal government to ensure schools have the resources they need to provide a world-class education to every student	37	43	0	2.46	Very important
5. Contact the teacher as soon as an academic problem arises.	32	44	4	2.35	Very important
6. Help their child understand homework	34	42	4	2.37	Very important
7. Opportunities for parents to be educated about curriculum and school functioning	33	43	2	2.36	Very important
8. Teachers are willing to involve parents	43	36	1	2.52	Very important
Overall Mean				2.39	Very important

Aligned with the significance of fostering communication between home and school, Bartolemes (2017) emphasizes the pivotal role parents play in their child's cognitive development, particularly in the early years. The influence of family background is identified as a potent factor shaping parental involvement, underscoring its importance, especially during primary school years. Supporting this notion, research cited by Epstein (2011) asserts that heightened parental involvement in children's reading at home correlates with a substantial improvement in children's reading achievement. This underscores the critical role of parental engagement in cultivating positive educational outcomes.

Benefits of Parental Involvement in Learners' Education

Table 3 outlines parents' observations regarding the magnitude of the benefits arising from parental involvement in learners' education. Contrary to the assumption of only moderate benefits, the table reveals that parents perceive learners to be significantly and very much benefited from parental involvement, with an average weighted mean of 2.43. This suggests an exceptionally positive impact of parental engagement, with respondents indicating a high level of contribution to both school and academic programs. In alignment with Evangelista's (2018) assertion, collaborative efforts between principals, teachers, and parents foster well-defined support and participation, contributing to the progress of pupils and the overall school community.

The findings underscore the substantial impact of parental support on fostering positive outcomes for learners. As emphasized by Hilado (2013), the ideal collaboration between schools, community-based organizations, and families involves meaningful engagement, where families actively contribute to their children's learning and development, ultimately leading to student success. Empirical studies consistently highlight the pivotal role of parents in promoting both school engagement and enhancing their children's academic performance.

The results emphasize that schools have a responsibility to invest in parents, ensuring their connection, providing opportunities for support in their learners' education, and encouraging involvement in the school community. Differentiating instruction and incorporating various ways to interact with parents is essential, recognizing that not all

parents will participate in the same manner. Schools should find additional opportunities for parents, especially in education and remedial classes, to foster a shared balance of responsibility for student learning and achievement.

Table 3: Benefits of parental involvement in learners' education

Statements	Highly Benefited	Moderately Benefited	Least Benefited	Mean	Interpretation
1. Children tend to achieve more, regardless of ethnic or racial background, socioeconomic status, or parents' education level	39	29	2	2.21	Highly Benefited
2. Children generally achieve better grades, test scores, and attendance	35	44	1	2.42	Highly Benefited
3. Children consistently complete their homework	45	33	1	2.52	Highly Benefited
4. Children have better self-esteem, are more self-disciplined, and show higher aspirations and motivation toward school	33	45	2	2.38	Highly Benefited
5. Children's positive attitude about school often results in improved behavior in school and less suspension for disciplinary reasons	43	37	0	2.53	Highly Benefited
6. Fewer children are being placed in special education and remedial classes	29	45	6	2.28	Moderately Benefited
7. Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals work together to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the culture in school	44	33	3	2.51	Highly Benefited
8. They have better scores and grades in all evaluations	32	46	2	2.37	Highly Benefited
9. They are proud that their parents are actively involved in school activities	43	37	0	2.66	Highly Benefited
10. They can regularly inform their parents on how they perform in pupil evaluation	36	42	2	2.42	Highly Benefited
Overall Mean				2.43	Highly Benefited

Barriers Encountered in Parental Involvement in Learners' Education

Table 4 provides insights into the perceived seriousness of barriers faced by parents in their involvement in learners' education. The general observation by parents on the degree of seriousness of encountered barriers is described as moderately serious, reflected in an average weighted mean of 2.02. While these issues are considered moderately serious, they still pose threats to efforts aimed at resolving problems in educational learning.

Various research studies, including those conducted by Okeke (2014) and Yoder and Lopez (2013), have identified numerous challenges to effective parental involvement. These challenges encompass factors such as a shortage of time, absence of childcare, the absence of a welcoming school policy, limited parental understanding of how to participate, intimidating school structures, language barriers, constraints in family resources, parental immaturity, and feelings of marginalization. These factors collectively create significant barriers, impeding the collaboration and engagement between schools and parents.

To surmount these barriers, it is advisable for schools to create a welcoming environment where staff demonstrates respect and responsiveness towards parents. The establishment of respectful and open two-way communication between schools and homes is crucial in overcoming these challenges. By treating parents as partners rather than mere clients, schools can foster strong community relationships and significantly enhance parental involvement, consequently contributing to improved student learning outcomes. This approach recognizes the importance of collaboration and mutual respect in creating an inclusive educational environment.

Table 4: Barriers encountered in parental involvement in learners' education

Statements	Very Serious	Moderately Serious	Least Serious	Mean	Interpretation
1. Unaware of the various volunteer opportunities	16	39	25	1.89	Moderately Serious
2. Conflict with my work schedule	31	29	20	2.14	Moderately Serious
3. Childcare responsibilities	26	29	25	2.01	Moderately Serious
4. Feeling unwelcome at the school	9	37	34	1.69	Moderately Serious
5. Lack of parent education to help with schoolwork	31	34	15	2.20	Moderately Serious
6. Parents feel they lack the knowledge and skills to help with their children's schoolwork	25	39	16	2.11	Moderately Serious
7. Parents sense cultural and power gaps between home and school.	23	40	17	2.07	Moderately Serious
8. Parents believe that their involvement is no longer needed.	21	42	17	2.05	Moderately Serious
Overall Mean				2.02	Moderately Serious

Conclusion and Recommendation

In summary, the study brings attention to significant insights into parental involvement in learners' education. Despite parental concerns about their capability to support their children, their role in shaping academic success is crucial. The frequency of parents accessing the portal emerges as a key factor influencing their engagement in their children's education. The study also highlights substantial benefits arising from parental involvement, positively impacting academic achievements regardless of socioeconomic or ethnic background. However, a significant barrier identified is the sense of unwelcome at the school, impeding effective parental engagement. Based on these findings, recommendations include a focus on enhancing learners' expressive communication and listening skills, fostering collaboration between parents and teachers, and providing accessible parental involvement ideas, particularly for single parents. Overcoming barriers, such as the feeling of being unwelcome, requires proactive efforts from educators, ultimately contributing to the academic success of students.

The study's recommendations highlight the imperative for parents and teachers to jointly cultivate expressive communication and listening skills in learners, preparing them for the future. Educators are encouraged to continually improve schools and engage learners' families through straightforward parental involvement ideas, particularly benefiting single parents. Building a positive relationship between parents and teachers, regardless of background, is emphasized as crucial for academic success. Additionally, teachers and administrators should identify and address barriers hindering parental involvement, offering motivation and support to empower parents in fostering quality engagement and contributing to their students' academic achievements.

Contribution of authors

This paper has a single author and confirms that the author reviewed this study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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