

Relationship of Parental Involvement in English Homework with English Reading Comprehension of 6th Graders

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parental involvement in English homework and English reading comprehension of sixth graders. The participants were 125 sixth grade students and parents of these students who completed a parental involvement survey. The results of survey were correlated with the students reading level as determined by the reading comprehension test. Out of 125 students, 106 surveys were returned, 84.8 percent response rate. The data were than statistically correlated to determine a correlation utilizing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test. Results of this study indicated strong positive correlation between parental involvements in English homework and English reading comprehension of sixth graders. So it is concluded that parental involvement plays an important role in student's home work of English reading comprehension.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, English Homework, English Reading Comprehension

Introduction

In recent decades various school improvement efforts have sought to enhance student learning through parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et.al, 2001). No Child Left Behind Act, 2002 defines parental involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-ways and meaningful communication involving academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring: (1) The parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (2) That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (3) The parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child” (Webster, 2010).

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Types of Parental Involvement

There are four common types of Parental Involvement which are related to Parents' involvement in school, home, Parent participation in school, Parent involvement at home, Parent involvement in school and learning, and Parent participation in school activities (Christenson & Reschly, 2010).

Epstein's framework of six type of parental involvement

Parenting	Providing housing ,health, nutrition, safety; Parenting skills for all ages; Home conditions to support learning; Information to help schools know child and family.
<i>Communicating</i>	School-home Home-school
Volunteering	In school help in classrooms or as audience
<i>Learning at home</i>	Help with homework, subject skills, other skills and talent
<i>Decision making</i>	Membership of PTA or other committees and advisory groups.
Collaborating with the community	Community contributions to schools and families; Family and school contributions to the community.

(Epstein, 1991)

Parental Involvement in Children Education

Jeynes (2005) believed that higher parental involvement equaled higher student achievement outcomes, when compared to less involved parents. The National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) (2003) stated, "Numerous studies have shown that parent participation in education is positively and significantly related to student achievement." Parental involvement is widely regarded as a fundamental contributor to children's school success and long term educational achievement (Christenson & Reschly, 2010)

Model of Parental Process

Level 5	Child students' outcomes	
	Skills and knowledge	
	Personal sense of efficacy for doing well in school	

Level 4	Tempering/mediating variables Parent's use of developmentally appropriate involvement strategies	Fit between parents involvement action and school expectation
Level 3	Mechanism through which parental involvement influences child outcomes Reinforcement	Instruction
Level 2	Parents choice of involvement form, influenced by	
Specific domain of parents skills and involvement for child	Mix of demand on total parental time energy (family employment)	Specific invitation and demands for knowledge and school
Level 1	Parent's basic involvement decision, influenced by	
Parent's construction of the parental role	Parent's sense of efficacy for helping his/her children succeed in school	General invitation and demand for involvement from child and school.

(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandier, 1995)

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandier (1995) suggested that specific variables create patterns of influence at critical point in parental involvement process. Their model includes parent's choices of involvement forms, major mechanism through which parental involvement influences educational and related developmental outcomes in children, the major mediated variables that improve or reduce the influence of involvement and major outcomes of child learning. Although this model of involvement of process is composed of several levels of construct operating between parents initial choice to become involved (level 1) and beneficial influence of the involvement on students outcomes (level 5) (Smith & Pellegrino, 2000).

Homework

Department of Education and Art (2004) defines that:

“Homework is an activity that school students are asked to complete outside of lesson time”.

Homework can improve student's study skills, improve their attitudes towards school, and demonstrate that learning can take place outside of formal schooling. However the time on homework needs to be responsive to the student's age and development. A 'more homework the better' view is misleading and should not be the basis for policy and practice. Parents can influence the homework environment, through creating appropriate conditions for learning and encouraging their children to complete homework tasks. Providing appropriate conditions to individual homework styles can positively influence homework completion and academic performance (Queensland, 2004). Cooper (2001) suggests that public attitudes toward homework are cyclical and are related to broader social, national and international economic trends than to research on homework effectiveness. The concept of parental involvement in English homework tasks is a way to include parents in the educational community (Daza&Garavito, 2009). Walker et. al (2004) affirm that homework can be a powerful tool for (a) letting parents & other adults know what the child is learning, (b) giving children and parents a reason to talk about the events that occur at school, and (c) giving teachers an opportunity to hear from parents about the children's learning.

As homework is a learning opportunity for a child. Parents should never deprive their children of the opportunity to gain confidence by doing the homework for them or helping them too much. It is also essential that parents have a realistic understanding of their children's abilities and insist they always work to of that ability (Ryker& Roger, 2009).

Parents appear to involve themselves in their children's homework for three major reasons: they believe that they should be involved; they believe that their involvement will make a positive difference; and they perceive invitations to involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). A research on parental involvement in children's homework by Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Battiato, A., Walker, J.M.T., Reed, R.P., DeLong, J.M., and Jones, K.P.(2001) focused on understanding why parents become involved in their children's homework, what strategies they employ, and how such involvement contributes to student learning.

It appears that parental involvement in homework is beneficial to students and positive parental involvement in homework is associated with higher levels of student achievement (Queensland, 2004). Parental involvement in children's homework appears to influence student outcomes because it offers modeling, reinforcement and instruction that support the development of attitudes, knowledge and behaviors associated with successful school performance (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). The parental activities may be quite varied, ranging from simple

responses to teachers' requests to committed engagement in programs designed to increase support of student learning at home (Queensland, 2001). When combined with observation and understanding of the child's developmental level and accomplishments, parental involvement is likely to support students' senses of competence and ability, which is in turn related to positive student learning outcomes (Grolnick&slowiaczek, 1994). There appear to be an adverse effect on Students' academic achievement when homework is poorly completed. Students' writing scores, literacy outcomes and attitudes can improve when students engage in 'interactive homework' with family members (Queensland, 2004).

Reading Comprehension

"Reading is a multidimensional process that involves the eyes, the ears, the mouth, and most importantly, the brain. (Brassell & Rasinki, 2008). "Reading as an activity which involves the comprehension and interpretation of ideas symbolized by written or printed language"(Debore&Dallmann, 1961).There are three (3) types of comprehensions (a) literal; the meaning that firstly comes to the mind after reading, (b) inferential; that relates to the actual meaning, (c) critical; the critical point of view that consists of both positive and negative points (Brown, 2007).

Parental involvement in children reading can therefore be regarded as a vehicle for the realization of a number of aims to do with children's learning in particular, and with home-school relations in general (Topping, 1985).

Reading Comprehension refers to the ability of perceive meaning from printed word. Tompkins (2010) categorized comprehension into two factors (a) Reader and (b) Text. Reader factors include the background knowledge that readers bring to the process, while text factors include the author's ideas are organized and presented. Both the factors affect comprehension.

Type	Factors	Role in Comprehension
Reader	Background knowledge	Students activate their world and literacy knowledge to link what they know to what they're reading.
	Fluency	Students have adequate cognitive resources available to understand what they're reading when they read fluently.
	Comprehension Strategies	Student actively direct their reading, monitor their understanding, and troubleshoot problems when they occur.

	Comprehension Skills	Students automatically note details that support main ideas, sequence ideas, and use other skill.
	Motivation	Motivated students are more engaged in reading, more confident, and more likely to comprehend successfully.
Text	Text Structures	Students recognize the important ideas more easily when they understand the patters that authors use to organize text.
	Text Features	Students apply their knowledge of the conventions and literacy devices used in texts to deepen their understanding.

(Tompkins, 2010)

This research has proven that Parental Involvement in English homework and English reading comprehension encourages the child to read aloud at home and at School. Helping hand of Parents in English homework and English reading comprehension motivates children more to achieve high scores rather than only School or a home tutor. For achieving positive results high scores in academic career, the basic element is Parental Involvement that gives the confidence and encouragement to the child to go higher and higher.

Method

Research design

The study adopted correlation research approach. Such an approach does not involve the manipulation of variables in the study. It neither adds to nor subtract from the existing facts. It only carefully observes and records information as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted.

Participants

One hundred and twenty-five (125) students were taken from all schools, as the sample. Five (5) Govt. Girls high Schools were selected through random sampling technique, of Lahore city. From 125 students of 6th grade, a Reading comprehension test was taken in their classrooms by giving them the time of thirty (30) minutes for the test. All 125 students were given a questionnaire to get solved from their parents. Out of 125 students one hundred and six (106) students returned that questionnaire. So, in this way the sample got reduced from 125 to 106 as the researchers considered only those students whose parents filled the questionnaire

because they had to check the relationship between students' Reading Comprehension test scores with their parental involvement survey questionnaire.

Instruments

Two instruments were developed to collect the data for the study. An English Reading Comprehension test (ERCT) was developed by the researchers, which consisted of two (2) sections; one section had a passage written in English, the other section consisted of some questions related to the passage. Second section had three (3) parts; first part had multiple choice questions, second part had words meaning. Five (5) multiple choice questions were given with four (4) options. Students were asked to mark (✓) on the right option. In the second part, four questions were asked from the passage given. The last question was to give a moral or a title to the passage while for other questions; participants had to infer the answers from the passage. In question no. 4 five words from the passage were given to them to write their meanings.

The other instrument was a Parental Involvement Questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed by the researchers for the parents to fill. All the participants (125) were given the questionnaire to get it filled from their parents. Out of 125 students, 106 questionnaires were returned, 84.8 percent was the response rate. Eight (8) questions were to check either parent help their child in doing English homework or not. Six (6) questions were related to parent's general support in the subject of English. Eleven (11) questions were related to English Reading Comprehension.

The instrument was validated in the light of the comments of supervisor and experts. The reliability of the instrument was .86 Cronbach's Alpha, which was acceptable to launch the study at large scale.

Procedure

Researchers personally visited all those Schools which were selected randomly as the sample of the study. The instrument used to measure each student's reading comprehension through the reading comprehension test. The test was given to all participants (6th graders). The test was given individually, and a quiet testing environment was used. A questionnaire was sent home with all Students for their Parents to complete. Out of 125 Students, 106 questionnaires were returned, 84.8 percent response rate.

The data collected from the Parental Involvement questionnaire was organized and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS], a commonly used Statistical Analysis program. Using the data obtained from the

Parental Involvement survey and the Students English reading comprehension test, Pearson Product Moment Correlation test was used for the data analysis. The results obtained from the statistical analysis were examined to determine if there is a relationship between Parental Involvement in homework with reading comprehension or not.

Results

The collected data has been analyzed using different statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation, percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

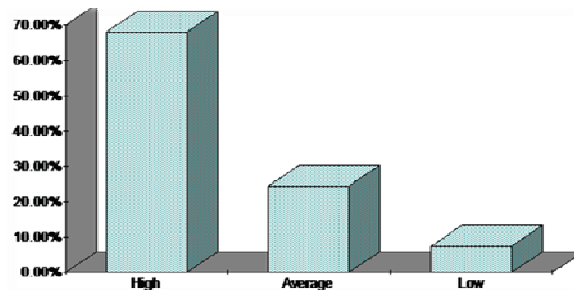
Table 1 contains descriptive statistics; Percentage and Mean score of the variables. As shown in Table 1, 63.3 percent parents generally support their child in the subject of English ($M=2.60$). 65.2 percent parents help their child in English homework ($M=2.71$). 59.0 percent parents help their child in English Reading comprehension ($M=2.68$).

Table 1: Mean score and Percentage: Parental Involvement, English Homework and English Reading Comprehension

Variables	Percentage	Mean
Parental Support	63.3	2.60
English Homework	65.2	2.71
English Reading Comprehension	59.0	2.68

$N=106$

Figure 1 - Results in English Reading Comprehension Test



The results of the reading comprehension test showed that 72 students out of 106 scored high marks in the English reading comprehension test that was 67.92%, 26 students out of 106 have scored average marks in the English reading comprehension test that was 24.52%, and 8 students out of 106 have scored low marks in the English reading comprehension test that was 7.54%.

Table 2: Mean score, Standard Deviation and Correlation: Parental Involvement and English Reading Comprehension test achievers

Variables	SD	Mean	r	Sig.
Parental Involvement	.252	2.67		.000
English Reading Comprehension test scores	17.09	76.94	.765**	
<i>p</i> <0.01 level (2 tailed)				N=106

Table 2 shows that overall mean score of parental involvement was 2.67 (SD= .252). The overall mean score of English reading comprehension test scores was 76.94 (SD= 17.09). When both variables (Parental involvement and English reading comprehension) were correlated, the result showed, the value of Pearson Product Moment Correlation $r=.765^{**}$ at the 0.01 level. So, it is concluded that there is strong positive and significant relationship between parental involvement and English reading comprehension of six graders.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement in homework and reading comprehension of sixth graders. The significant impact of parental involvement on academic achievement is best understood when it is realized that most parents have involved in their child education.

The parental involvement survey result shows that mostly parents involved in their child English homework and English reading comprehension. The reading comprehension test which is conducted by the 6th graders, results divided in to three levels; high, average and low. There is maximum number of students (72) who have high marks in the reading comprehension test and 26 students have average marks. Only 8 students have low marks in reading comprehension test. Overall mean score of parental involvement was 2.6755 which show high parental involvement in their Childs academic achievements. This finding is in consonance with the work of Cotton and Wikelund (2001) stated that “The research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children learning is positively related to achievement”. The key findings of the study were: children whose parents showed a high level of involvement had higher test scores and the scores of those children whose parents shows little involvement get worse. This finding is in consonance with the work of previous researches. The NCPIE (The National Coalition for Parental Involvement in

Education) (2006) explained that: “students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs, be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits, attend social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school, and graduate and go on the post-secondary education”. It appears that parental involvement in homework is beneficial to students and positive parental involvement in homework is associated with higher levels of student achievement (Queensland, 2004). Parental involvement in children’s homework appears to influence student outcomes because it offers modeling, reinforcement and instruction that support the development of attitudes, knowledge and behaviors associated with successful school performance (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

The overall findings show that there is significant positive relationship between two variables, parental involvement and English reading comprehension scores. All the research that was found however indicated that parental involvement was effective in assisting children to reach academic success. This study also indicated that parental involvement is impotent for the children academic success.

Research evidence clearly states that parental involvement seems to have positive effects on student’s achievements and results also shows that children progress can be hindered by lack of parental involvement. Parents are often ready to support their children’s learning but do not always know how to help or why their involvement is important. Researchers recommended that:

1. Parents may be encouraged to contact the teacher if they have questions about students’ homework.
2. It is important that parents create a comfortable, quiet environment and maintain consistent rules for homework completion.
3. Parents may read to or listen to their children read as often as possible.
4. Parents need to be encouraged to spend time daily and be involved in English literature daily with their children.
5. Parent’s involvement in reading development may be further studied to find the key elements for parents to focus on to help their children succeed at reading.

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