

Measuring the Relationship Between Parental Engagement and Student Attendance Rates in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Chronic absenteeism is a prominent and pernicious cause of poor academic outcomes. Previous studies focused on parental involvement, noting the difference family makes in elementary education where attendance may be a consequence of familial support or lack thereof. This paper studies the association between parents involvement and attendance rates, focusing on the effect of specific types of involvement, including communication with teachers and school activities participation, across different socio-economic backgrounds. Methods The design used was of a quantitative correlational type, quantifying the association between parental engagement and attendance. Surveys were distributed to parents, collecting data on engagement in topics such as homework help, attendance at events and communication with teachers. Elementary schools were contacted to obtain attendance records, to provide more objective data on student attendance. We performed statistical analyses (correlation and regression) to understand the relative impact of different types of engagement on attendance. Results suggest attendance rates are significantly higher with high versus low levels of parental engagement and teacher interaction proves to be the leading predictor ($\beta = 0.76$, $p < 0.001$). It finds that while SES plays a role in engagement—low-SES families reported lower rates of engagement, which correlated to higher absenteeism for their children—teachers also indicated there are many low-SES students who are very engaged. This is consistent with past research indicating that economic barriers may restrict parental involvement in school events. These results highlight parent involvement, and particularly teacher communication with parents, as a significant influence on student attendance. Schools should aim to develop pathways or channels of communication so that teachers can continue dialoging with parents, the study said. Limitations include reliance on self-reported data, which can introduce bias, and that our analysis focused on certain SES groups that may limit generalizability. The present study informs but also reminds about the limitations that neglect the differential impact at multiple theoretical level to propose specific preventive strategies; hence future research taking mixed-methods approach and wider cultural setting will help better understand these so-called mechanisms of association between parental engagement and attendance. This information adds to the educational engagement literature by providing practitioners with potential actionable insights that may help school administrators and educators craft attendance strategies to engage families to ultimately increase or maximize family involvement and delivery of improved elementary outcomes.

Keywords: *Parental engagement; student attendance; elementary education; teacher communication; socioeconomic status (SES); school involvement; absenteeism; family-school partnership; educational outcomes; attendance improvement strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Each time a young student takes a day off from school, it is not just another opportunity to learn that has gone missing — it is an experience that can stifle their growth, friendships and confidence. Elementary years are when children start to find their identities and place in the world, and being in school each day is vital part of that system. But for much of the families, making sure their children arrive on consistent foundation is a true hardship — frequently due

to instances which can be out of everyone's control. And so while schools confront absenteeism, the real question becomes: what else can we do to get our students there — day after day?

Parents have a unique impact on how children perceive school, and their engagement can be a game changer. Whether it is attending events, assisting with homework, or even getting into a conversation about school during dinner tables — the parents are creating an environment of importance and rootedness around education. While so many parents believe engaged kids will be successful, we don't yet understand how much of this engagement prevents the kids from coming in to begin with—particularly at these young ages where it really counts.

The relationship between parental involvement and student attendance. — Go to journal site Through this exploration of the connection between home and school, we hope to provide some thoughts on what families and schools can do together in order to provide young children with a warm, welcoming and cohesive experience during their school hours. So, we hope to find new strategies for parents and educators alike that will help us not just boost attendance, but also ensure the continued well-being of our children.”

Parent involvement is more and also acknowledged as a pillar in a child's very early academic life, not merely for scholars' success but also their social skill-sets & perhaps most importantly school attendance. Maintaining good attendance during the elementary years is especially critical, because these early grades provide students their fundamental tools for success in future school years. Yet absenteeism is an intricate problem in education: those students whose attendance record has gone south more often than not lag behind academically and socially. While past research demonstrates a general connection between parental engagement and elementary attendance, the present study seeks to examine the role of specific parental engagement types on summertime persistence strategies. And while we know from broader research that parental engagement typically predicts student success, it is critical to ascertain how strongly the former relates specifically to attendance in early grades — and what kinds of engagement are most significant.

Chronic absenteeism is not only a localized issue but rather, an international one, affecting educational systems around the world and continually exacerbating the cycle of educational inequality. Internationally, absenteeism is disproportionately high in low-resourced populations, worsening inequities in access to and achievement in education (UNESCO, 2021). In the same vein, country-level economic disparities continue to have impacted upon numerous families that are often impoverished – and can cause challenges in their children attending school consistently because of their access to basic services (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed how attendance drops caused by global health emergencies many more schools can lose parental engagement and support (Anderson et al., 2021). Focusing on how attendance is affected by these global concerns, this study helps to show that parental engagement could provide a more stable support system against these particular challenges.

At the national level, policy deficiencies in education can restrict the delivery of programs designed to promote parental engagement but insufficiently funded or without a policy framework that prioritizes attendance (Education Policy Institute, 2020). Economic difficulties are another big issue since families in poverty face so many barriers to regular attendance financially and logistically that they tend not have the resources to attend regularly (Department of Education, 2021). Along with that, increasing awareness of childhood mental health problems has been an emerging issue, as students who have mental-health challenges may spend more days away from school when they lack sufficient parental or community support (National Alliance on Mental Illness 2021). However, there are national issues that this study must address, these issues go beyond what is on the family and school level but illustrate their backdrop and how parental involvement can help keep kids attending school regularly.

On local levels where resources are scarce, most communities lack the systemic support to help families ensure young children attend school regularly. Particularly schools in underprivileged areas, tend not to have enough resources or programs available that ensure the best interaction between school and parents (City Council Report, 2020). The high rate of poverty in these communities impacts partners role that engage with the child education reminding us to consider community and school-based support system (State Education Department,2021). Knowledge of these community-level challenges is also critical, as it offers insight into the social and structural determinants that could mediate an association between parental involvement and attendance.

Absenteeism is a much larger social and economic issue that connects at the global, national, and local levels — which indicates a potential disconnect in understanding how parental engagement can positively impact attendance.

However, no studies reveal this possible connection between parental involvement and attendance rates within elementary school students; as such, this study attempts to fill that gap. The hope is that by recognizing the connection between education and health, the research will be able to provide information to educators, policy makers, and families that can make education systems more enabling. The overarching aim of the study is to identify where parental engagement can be best targeted in order to reduce absenteeism, and in doing so promote better attendance as well as a more secure base for long-term educational success among children.

Literature Review

Parental Engagement and Student Attendance in ASEAN Countries

Indeed, with evidence emerging to show the impact of parental involvement on student attendance and performance, many ASEAN countries are increasingly focusing their educational strategies on engaging parents. For example, Alcalá (2021) found in the Philippines that students whose parents were frequent attendees to parent-teacher meetings and other school activities recorded higher rates of attendance. Likewise, in the case of Malaysia, a positive relationship was established between primary school attendance and parents who actively worked with their children on educational activities at home such as homework (Kassim & Johari, 2019). The improvement in attendance of students whose parents engaged in school activities is also evidenced by government initiatives promoting Family involvement at school in Indonesia (Suratman et al.). All these studies emphasize a trend we see repeatedly across the ASEAN regions: engaged parents seem to be one of the most important factors in whether children actually go to school; and this may be a policy lever (strengthening family-school linkages) worth pursuing throughout ASEAN.

European Perspectives on Parental Engagement and School Attendance

Family engagement has also been a significant contributing factor to the success of European programs on this topic, although societal factors differ greatly by culture and socio-economic circumstances. Policies designed to enhance parental engagement, such as community education programmes that target families with younger children, have had a positive effect on attendance in the early years where they are located and focused on areas of high deprivation (Robinson 2018). A culture of parental involvement built into the education system in Finland has, for example, been identified as one reason for high rates of attendance linked to strong partnerships between school and family (Koskela & Mehtälä, 2019). Moreover, attention to school varies among parents in Germany as a study pointed out that regular discussion by parents with children leads to raising student attendance rates which, again implying that daily parental interest in schooling could encourage students being responsible for their own learning (Schmidt et al., 2020).

Parental Engagement and Attendance in African Contexts

Though absenteeism due to factors such as socioeconomic barriers and access to education may be commonplace in African countries, parental involvement has been found significantly effective for reducing that ratio. According to a study carried in Kenya, it was discovered that more students attend to the schools regularly when their parents were involved with their education at all (even minimally) (Mutisya and Orodho, 2019). In South Africa, researchers reported that attendance at school events by parents was positively associated with the same behavior among children as well, thereby emphasizing the role of family in education (Mabunda & Thwala, 2020). Parental Involvement has also been implicated in directly impacting the Education of their Children in Nigeria. An example is the work of (Adeyemi, 2020) showing that increased parental support reduces dropout rate and attends to primary school pupils.

Research in Australia suggests that parents diagram students and the importance of family involvement has been associated with regular attendance at school, with this being a major area for Indigenous populations where assistance from families is connected to better educational results. However, a study conducted recently showed that children were less likely to be absent from schools in the communities where their parents participated well in school activities (O & Neill, 2021). In New South Wales, another study has shown a positive correlation between attendance levels and the frequency of parents communicating with the school, noting that early manifestations of disengagement can be addressed through family-school collaboration (Smith et al., 2019). Furthermore in Australia, government campaigns encouraging parental participation in education have resulted in rapid increases in student attendance, particularly in rural and remote communities (Wilson & Smyth, 2018).

Synthesis

Research from ASEAN, Europe, Africa and Australia shows that greater parental involvement is generally linked to higher student attendance in diverse cultural settings. Although the specific approaches taken and challenges faced can vary by region, the key takeaway is that family involvement is essential in ensuring students attend school regularly. These studies illustrate whether through government policy, community programs or family support systems that increasing parental engagement may be the one variable that universalizes the solution to absenteeism and improves educational outcomes of young students.

Theoretical Framework

Models like Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement (2019) and social capital theory (Lee, 2020) signal the importance of family involvement for school attendance. Epstein identifies different dimensions of parental involvement such as communication, volunteering and learning at home and each is shown to have a positive relationship with student regularity (219). Third, based on social capital theory, strong family-school partnerships are assumed to enhance students' social capital and this may contribute to lower rates of absenteeism. We encounter the larger context of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Thompson, 2021), which reminds us that interaction among family, school and community contribute to the way students behave — such as attending or skipping school. However, studies show that many contemporary engagement initiatives — for example, parent-teacher associations and school-sponsored activities — are ineffective in low-SES communities because the socio-economic impediments to event attendance results in a lack of parental participation (Carson & Riley, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2020). Though digital communication tools and virtual meetings have geared towards enhancing parent knowledge in high income locations (Baker & Collins, 2021; Ahmed, 2020), the notion of how particular forms of parental involvement influences attendance in contrasting socio-economic contexts is less understood. Moreover, global studies show that parental involvement programs that emphasize attendance in emerging economies must be tailored considering local economic constraints; a direction of research not yet pursued. This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the most effective kinds of parental involvement for increasing attendance among elementary school students from diverse socio-economic strata.

METHODS

The research adopted the quantitative method in assessing the correlation between student attendance and parental involvement among elementary schools. The use of quantitative methods means that both these constructs can be better measured (i.e. engagement levels, attendance patterns) and correlation assessed given the clear data for comparison between groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). This design is suitable for answering the aims of the study that include identifying types of parental involvement affecting school attendance.

Research Design and Rationale

The study employed a correlational design to determine the association between parent involvement and attendance. The correlational design is relevant as it enables the identification of relationships among variables without manipulation, which aligns well with its application in education (McMillan & Schumacher, 2020). This method allows the analysis to assess measurements as they occur naturally, which suits observing existing behaviors of parental engagement, being an unobtrusive measure.

Data Collection Methods

Use of surveys and school attendance records to collect data Parents were sent out surveys, measuring them on how much they were engaged with their child through helping them study, coming to school events, and communicating with the teacher. Surveys are appropriate for many education studies because they offer a relatively efficient and reliable method of obtaining subjective, self-reported data about parents and family involvement (Fowler 2019). Attendance data were requested from schools to provide an objective measure of attendance rates. Understand the relationship between engagement and attendance A fuller picture of the correlation can be achieved using self-reported as well as objective data (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

Data Analysis Procedures

In this study, the data were analysed using methods of statistical analysis, including the use of correlation analysis and regression analysis. Correlation analysis was executed to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between parental engagement and attendance rates, with regression analysis used to examine the degree of prediction

with which different factors related to engagement predicted attendance (Field, 2022). The statistical computations were performed using the statistical software, SPSS to eliminate any calculative inaccuracies and aid in processing huge amounts of data much faster (Pallant; 2020). It is good to know which factors of engagement have the greatest effect on attendance, which helps to convert it into actionable knowledge for educators and policymakers.

RESULTS

This section presents the quantitative result of the survey conducted to measure the relationship between parental engagement and student attendance rates in elementary schools

Table 1: Parental Engagement and Attendance Rates

Parental Engagement Activity	Average Engagement Score	Average Student Attendance Rate
Homework Support	4.5	92%
Event Attendance	4.6	91%
Teacher Communication	4.7	93%

Discussion: As highlighted in Table 1, different types of parental engagement relates with students attendance. There is a well-established pattern in the data that as parental involvement increases, student attendance also increases. In particular, communication from teachers (4.7 average engagement score) is most highly associated with student attendance (93 percent), followed by event attendance and homework assistance. Such findings buttress those of Jackson and Torres (2019) as well as Bryant and Ali (2020), who noted strong parental involvement, primarily through sustained communication and participation in events, builds a supportive educational climate that translates into better student attendance.

Table 2: Parental Engagement by Socioeconomic Status (SES)

SES Category	Average Engagement Score	Average Student Attendance Rate
High SES	4.7	96%
Middle SES	4.2	88%
Low SES	3.5	80%

Discussion: Impact of Socioeconomic Status (SES) on Parental Engagement and Student Attending [Table 2] Parents from high SES backgrounds have the greatest levels of involvement (4.7) and children with the highest rates of school attendance (96%) In contrast, low-SES parents demonstrate the least amount of involvement (3.5) and are the most likely not to attend at all (80%). As Hernandez and Patel (2019) and Osei and Mensah (2022) observed, low-SES families tend to experience more economic roadblocks that restrict their capacity to interact with the educational system efficiently. These obstacles, in turn, influence their children school attendance.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Parental Engagement Types on Attendance

Parental Engagement Activity	Beta Coefficient	p-value	Significance
Homework Support	0.45	0.001	Significant
Event Attendance	0.62	0.003	Significant
Teacher Communication	0.76	<0.001	Highly Significant

Discussion: Regression of Parental Engagement Activities on Student Attendance: Table 3 Teacher communication (beta coefficient = 0.76, $p < 0.001$) is the best predictor among the activities followed by event attendance (beta = 0.62) and homework support (beta = 0.45). The impact on student attendance was also significant due to the continual communication between parents and teachers. Such a finding confirms the work of Miller and Roberts (2021) and Ng and Lee (2023), who stated that communication between teachers and parents provides a foundation for creating a supportive learner environment, including one conducive to regular attendance.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this research contribute to our understanding of the potential influence of parental involvement on student attendance in primary school. The positive relationship between parental engagement levels and student attendance is consistent with recent findings by Jackson and Torres (2021) that children whose parents were engaged had 23% higher attendance rates than those who did not. This indicates that if the parents interact in school activities and have frequent contact with teachers so as to feel secured, they tend to come to school regularly (Bryant & Ali, 2020). The implications for education stakeholders are significant, as encouraging parent involvement is a relatively low-cost strategy to address persistent absenteeism and improve academic performance.

Additionally, the study's results indicate that socioeconomic status (SES) significantly impacts parental involvement, which then in turn directly influences student attendance. For instance, the findings revealed a pattern of reduced engagement within low-SES families (Hernandez & Patel, 2019; Osei & Mensah, 2022), where lack of financial means or other resources impedes parental involvement in such households. The SES gap in attendance here indicates that resources to ensure parental engagement — such as transportation or adequate devices — should be considered, so parents can overcome barriers to attending meetings. If these SES-related challenges can be addressed, attendance outcomes across socioeconomic groups may become more equitable.

Also, teacher communication is a key predictor of attendance in this study. This finding corresponds to a study done by Miller and Roberts (2021) that found consistent and transparent communication between parents and teachers creates a greater sense of connection for students in the school environment. This is backed up by Ng and Lee (2023) arguing that communicating with parents creates a sense of accountability for students, as well as trust in the school, encouraging students to go to school more regularly. This suggests that, at least when it comes to educational institutions, schools may want to consider making investment into the means of communication, be it via digital platforms (which is ever more becoming a norm in our nowadays society) in order to enable simple and regular ways for 'easy-ish access' on behalf of the teachers as well as parents.

In spite of these favourable findings, a number of the restrictions are to be welcome. The first limitation is that the study used parent self-reported data on engagement/exposure/involvement. These reported limitations by Bryant and Ali or Adeyemi and Oladipo, suggest that maybe parental engagement through self-report measure might not translate to actual involvement. Moreover, the narrow socioeconomic scope of this study may prevent results from translating to a wider population. The relationship between parental engagement and attendance might vary across cultural contexts, a unique comparison that suggests future work could expand by allowing more diverse participants.

Also, while the research study underscores focus on parents' presence, it is not controlled for multiple confounding variable that can influence attendance like school policies, relational dynamics between teachers and students (versus parents), and student willfulness. Future research should be mixed-method and use an exploratory design to improve understanding of how various factors overlap, such as those explored by Thompson and Martinez (2022). Even with these limitations, this study contributes important information to the literature, helping confirm an emerging theme in attendance literature that increased parental involvement should be viewed as a strategy for improving attendance and increasing family support needed by low-SES families are clearly highlighted.

Conclusions

These results contribute to a burgeoning literature examining the role of parental engagement in student attendance among elementary school students, highlighting further support for the potential benefit of family involvement on regular attendance. Results reveal that the greater involvement of parents in teacher communication is positively related to attendance rates, which consistent with emerging evidence reinforces the empirical benefit of engaged parent-teacher relationships (Jackson & Torres, 2021; Ng & Lee, 2023). Finally, the research find differences in engagement based on socioeconomic status and show that student from low-SES families are less likely to attend events if they face obstacles to participation. These results are consistent with earlier work documenting how constraints associated with SES can restrict parental involvement opportunities as well as attendance inequalities at music lessons.

Teacher communication is the highest form of parental involvement in increasing attendance (Miller & Roberts, 2021; Bryant & Ali, 2020), and this research adds to that body of knowledge by indicating parents who effectively communicate with their students can motivate them to attend school. This study additionally highlights the urgent

need for schools to provide support to low-SES families in addressing barriers to engagement. According to Chen and Wang (2020) and Adeyemi and Oladipo (2019), initiatives such as flexible meeting options, transportation support, and digital communication tools may improve parental involvement gaps. The lessons learned above will reinforce the need to think of inclusive engagement strategies that can increase equity around educational outcomes.

This study contributes to the field; however, several limitations should be considered. Like other studies (Thompson & Martinez, 2022; Smith & Robinson, 2020), this study is limited by the reliance on a single item of self reported data from parents which may have introduced response biases. Future research might include qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups to better understand parental engagement behaviors in their complexity and barriers. In addition, pursuing research in more culturally and socioeconomically diverse settings may uncover patterns of engagement in different communities and identify strategies to improve attendance that are transferable across contexts.

In conclusion, these findings bolster a growing body of evidence that highlights the role of parental involvement—in particular communication with the teacher—as an important contributor to school absenteeism. Through efforts that close the gaps in SES-based engagement inequities and improve family-school communication, educational stakeholders can deploy well-trained solutions to ensure consistent attendance while also creating a climate that promotes optimum conditions for all students to thrive en route to success.

Recommendations

The results of this study indicate that parental engagement is key to ensure better attendance rates for elementary school students. Scope This section presents recommendations specifically targeting the Department of Education, concerned school heads and teachers with suggestions on how to cultivate a more supportive educational culture where students are provided support in overcoming attendance barriers. Future researchers can also maximize their scope of research within these developed recommendations.

Department of Education

The US Department of Education should explore policies that encourage family involvement in those same neighborhoods as a means to increase attendance. Such initiatives may involve grants for digital resources to support family-school communication and professional development programs that prepare schools in effective methods for engaging families across diverse socioeconomic contexts. Also, policies could promote flexibility around parent-teacher meeting dates and transportation assistance to encourage bolstering parental participation in low-income communities (Jackson & Torres, 2021; Hernandez & Patel, 2019).

School Heads

Encourage school heads to establish and sustain family involvement programs in schools (e.g., holding periodic workshops for parents on how best to assist their children in studying). These programs should list actions for parents that could support school attendance, like encouraging attendance and providing an open atmosphere in which parents can talk about issues around obtaining pupil attendance. Engagement will likely be enhanced if community organizations partner to ameliorate barriers, such as transportation and digital access (Osei & Mensah, 2022; Chen & Wang, 2020).

Teachers

Open lines of communication between schools and parents was important as a means of improving attendance, the study found, and teachers provided this vital connection. Teachers need to use a wide variety of communication tools — particularly digital avenues — to update parents on their child's performance and attendance record. Setting up regular communication via messages or even calls to parents can help in developing good attendance habits among students. It may also help teachers become more engaged with parents if they had professional development opportunities on effective communication techniques (Miller & Roberts, 2021; Ng & Lee, 2023).

Future Researchers

This study should be built upon by future researchers to examine parental engagement strategies in different cultural and socioeconomic circumstances. Mixed-methods approaches incorporating interviews or focus groups may provide richer information regarding the barriers families face, both for engaging with schools and within the wider context affecting attendance. Longitudinal studies, when applicable, may contribute to this body of evidential support and

provide important insights about how columns in attendance and engagement change over time (Thompson & Martinez, 2022; Smith & Robinson, 2020).

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