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The Role of Parental Involvement in Student Academic Outcomes in Myanmar

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Abstract

Parental involvement in education sectors has been recognized as a strong predictor of student academic performance and success. The current study examines the role of parental involvement in student educational outcomes in Myanmar. The research targets the parents of international school children and employs a qualitative method. Primary data were collected using semi-structured interviews from nine parents and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show four main dimensions of parental involvement: support at home, communication with stakeholders, participation in school activities, and motivation. Parents actively participate in and are involved in their children's education process, communicating with various stakeholders through parent-teacher meetings to understand their children's academic performance and attendance. They participate in school activities to motivate their children both emotionally and physically. Parents face challenges due to time limits and communication barriers when they are involved in their children's academic journey. The results highlight the vital role of parental involvement in children's educational outcomes.

Keywords: Parental involvement; Academic Outcomes; International School; Myanmar.

1. Introduction

Active parental involvement in their children's education leads to improved academic performance, a more positive learning attitude, and enhanced social communication (1). Previous studies have described a positive correlation between parents' active involvement in the education process and their children's academic achievement at different levels of education. Parent involvement can improve children's academic outcomes through active and consistent support, encouragement, and involvement that enhance children's learning activities (2). Moreover, parent involvement can enhance the students' positive attitude towards education and learning, and motivate the lifelong learning process. Previous research approved the direct significant effect of parental involvement on student academic outcomes (3). Today, the education market is evolving rapidly, and parents have several choices of academic programs and institutions for their children's education. In Myanmar, the education industry is rapidly developing, and international education providers are entering the market. The internationalization of higher education reshapes parental perceptions of education and student experiences. The parents try to participate in their children's educational process and communicate with various stakeholders to engage in their students' academic journey. Parental involvement is crucial for the academic performance of high school students in Myanmar (4). Effective and active parent participation can improve students' academic outcomes and also build a good relationship between parents and children. However, there is little research on the parents of children in international schools in Mandalay, Myanmar, that analyzes how parent involvement impacts the academic outcomes of international school children.

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2. Literature Review

A crucial factor that profoundly affects a child's academic achievement is parental involvement. The impact of parental participation on student academic achievement is significant, and research consistently shows that parental involvement in children's education is correlated with enhanced academic performance and positive attitudes towards learning. Parental participation has a significant influence on students' educational outcomes, including improved grades, test scores, motivation, and attendance. Parental involvement is one of the most vital components of social support for students' engagement and academic success (5). Parental involvement, including behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions, positively influences the academic success of their children (6). Parental involvement has a positive impact on student academic achievement, resulting in improved academic grades, increased motivation, better attendance, and a more positive attitude towards education (7).

Moreover, parental engagement promotes the students' long-term academic achievement and professional performance. Student communication, participation, and engagement with academic pathways are significantly linked to parental involvement in children's academic pathways (8). Students' motivation, self-esteem, and performance improve noticeably through parental engagement in their academic pathways. Parental involvement can improve school attendance and reduce dropout rates (9). Parental involvement has a direct and significant impact on students' academic performance (10). When parents engage in their children's education, they convey a significant message that schooling is valued and that achievement is a collective effort.

Researchers have found that children perform better academically and are more likely to achieve success when their parents are actively engaged in their education. Previous researchers have assumed that parental involvement is a crucial factor in student academic success. However, parental engagement encounters obstacles, including time constraints, linguistic barriers, and a lack of information regarding effective methods to promote children's education. Educational institutions and instructors must communicate with parents in fundamental ways, provide information and guidance, and foster a favorable and accessible culture that encourages parental involvement. Myanmar's education policy is rapidly evolving, and the national government permits several education providers, including international schools, with different curriculum approaches. In Myanmar, the education policy supports parental involvement in students' academic journey by providing a parents' and teachers' association, as well as meetings with academic stakeholders. However, there are limited research papers on parental involvement and its impact on the academic outcomes of children in international schools. This research paper fills a literature gap and examines the impact of parental involvement on students' academic performance.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the impact of parental involvement on the academic outcomes of international students. Qualitative research design is useful for gaining an in-depth understanding of respondents' perceptions (11). This study targeted international school students. A total of nine parents were selected using the purposive sampling method. The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted using the face-to-face interview method. Before the interview, the researcher sent the informed consent letter and got agreement to participate and record the interview. The interview questions consist of forms of parental involvement (support, communication with educational stakeholders, participation in academic activities, and motivation for their children), their perception of the impact of their involvement on children's academic outcomes, and brief challenges. The interview lasted between 45 minutes and 60 minutes for each person. The collected data are confidential, and the researcher has access to them. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

4. Findings

A total of nine parents actively participated in the qualitative interview, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. In this study, there are four dimensions of parental involvement (support at home, communication with stakeholders, participation in school activities, and motivation). The interviewees reported that they provide an effective learning environment, offer books and materials, and explain school lessons with real-world examples to support homework and learning at home.

"I review children's homework and discuss what they learned at school daily or weekly. Support the necessary workbooks and practice materials."

"I support the effective learning space and help to solve some academic issues, such as explaining problems with real examples."

Moreover, the parents mentioned that they support children's emotional and physical well-being at home when they face stressful situations and struggles at school. The physical and psychological well-being of schoolchildren is critical for their personal and academic development, as well as achieving their targeted goals at school.

"I always tell my children that no matter the grades, I am proud of their hard work."

"I always care for my children's healthcare conditions by providing nutrients and necessary foods for their physical well-being and strength."

Parents also communicate with various stakeholders, including teachers, education providers, and other parents, to discuss their children's academic development, achievement, and further studies. Involvement in communication can enhance students' learning activities and help them understand children's progress.

"I communicate with my children's teachers at least twice a month to discuss learning activities, progress, and achievement."

"I communicate with teachers and other academic stakeholders to discuss academic performance and attendance, and notice the children's participation at schools."

Furthermore, parents participate in school activities as a means to promote their children's motivation and encouragement at school. Parents' active participation in school activities represents their interest in their children's educational process, improvement, and support, and shows that they care about them. Parents believe that participating in school events and attending parent-teacher meetings is an important way to communicate with teachers and stay informed about their children's progress. Active participation also develops networking with stakeholders.

"I participate in parent-teacher meetings and school events to get information about my children's progress and meet teachers."

"We believe that participating in school events, such as parent-teacher meetings, sports days, and ceremonies, can improve our children's emotions, and we can also communicate with teachers and other children's parents to discuss children's academic progress and achievement."

As a result of parents' active involvement, children's academic outcomes are noticeably increased. Parents believe that active participation improves academic grades, communication, and social interaction. Motivation from parents encourages children to care about their learning, and put more effort, while emotional support builds confidence and enthusiasm for school. Parent involvement highlights the multidimensional impact on students, resulting in cognitive, behavioral, and emotional improvements in children's education.

"When we are actively involved in children's education, children improve their academic grades and communicate well with teachers and classmates."

"When I stay focused and motivate my children, they care about their learning, and are willing to try harder to improve their outcomes."

"When I am involved in my school activities, it can encourage and motivate my children to be confident and eager to study. I believe emotional support is critical to improve children's learning."

Although parents described their active involvement in their children's education and school activities, they face challenges, including a lack of time, work pressure, and communication barriers with schools and other stakeholders. Parents report that work-related pressures and limited time are significant barriers to their involvement in school activities, and they monitor their children's academic performance. Rigid meeting schedules and a lack of flexible communication channels also disturb their participation. Schools should provide flexible communication channels and meeting schedules to accommodate working parents.

"As working parents, we have work pressure, and a lack of time to be involved in every parent-teacher meeting and school activities."

"Sometimes, we missed checking our children's academic progress and attendance due to a limited schedule."

"Sometimes, schools do not provide active communication channels for parents, such as online meetings or a flexible meeting schedule. If we have day work, we miss attending the parent-teacher meeting and participating in school activities."

5. Discussion

This study explored the role of parental involvement in children's education outcomes in Mandalay, Myanmar. The findings are consistent with previous literature that highlights parental involvement as a significant predictor of student academic success (5,7). Parents reported actively supporting their children's learning by reviewing homework, providing a conducive learning environment, and explaining academic concepts with real-life examples. Parental engagement enhances students' learning outcomes and engagement (7). Parents also described that they support children's physical and emotional development. Furthermore, parental emotional support can enhance students' communication, motivation, and learning performance (5). Parents maintain regular communication with teachers and stakeholders to discuss their children's academic performance and attendance. Effective communication can enhance home-school connections and foster collaborative decision-making that promotes students' learning outcomes (8). Parents' participation in school activities becomes motivation and encouragement for children (4). However, parents faced challenges, including time constraints and communication barriers, in actively and effectively involving themselves in their children's educational journey. Schools need to provide communication channels for all parents to participate in school activities. The current study contributes to understanding the critical role of parental involvement in children's education as it improves their academic outcomes.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study confirmed the role of parental involvement as the critical factor of students' academic outcomes, motivation, and emotional development. The findings concluded that when parents are engaged, students demonstrate improved grades, enhanced communication skills, and are more engaged in learning. Although parents face challenges in actively participating in parent-teacher meetings and school activities due to time constraints and communication issues, they support their children at home and are involved in the educational process. Parent involvement has a noticeable improvement in students' academic performance and mental well-being.

This study recommends that parents continue to create a learning space at home by providing study materials, monitoring homework, and encouraging students' learning habits. Moreover, parents should continue to communicate with educational stakeholders to monitor their children's learning performance, attendance, and progress. Schools should arrange a flexible meeting schedule for working parents, and provide online communication channels for effective and active communication between teachers and parents to discuss children's education progress. Moreover, educational policymakers should develop policies that promote parent participation in children's education. Further study should focus on other government and private education sectors to gain a deeper understanding of parent involvement. Future studies should employ different research methods and collect data from a larger population to develop a more specific understanding of parent participation in children's education.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of Ethical Approval

This research paper is approved by Dr. Amiya Bhaumik (Rector, Lincoln University College, Malaysia).

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