

Facets of Parental Support Effecting Academic Success of Children

Ghulam Mustafa

Assistant Professor, Business Administration Department
Iqra National University, Peshawar

Muhammad Imran Malik

(Corresponding author)

Assistant Professor, Business Administration Department
Iqra National University, Peshawar
Email: im4imranmalik@yahoo.com
Tel: 0092 333 9156828

Mubarak Abbas Shah

Assistant Professor, Business Administration Department
Iqra National University, Peshawar

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Abstract

The current study revolves around examining the relationship of various dimensions of parental support and academic achievements of their children. Study provides a guideline to the parents least involved in their children educational brought up. A cross-sectional data of 150 children was gathered; screened and analyzed via Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Several statistical tests were applied to the data including descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression by using step wise regression method. Step wise regression analysis was used to determine whether the increased aspects of parental support help in increasing the educational success of their children or otherwise. The multiple regression analysis, on the other hand, was employed to identify the most important factor in the educational success of the children. The researcher found assistance in academic success (ASIS) to be the most crucial factor affecting perceived academic success (PAS) of children.

The results determine that the higher parents' involvement in their children's educational brought up, the better is their children performance at school. The results are discussed following the conclusion of the study. Suggestions are also made for the betterment of children in the light of results of the current study.

Key words: Academic success, parental support, education, Pakistan.

1. Introduction

In the current era parental involvement in the educational activities is gaining momentum. For children learning activities start quite earlier before even stepping into a class room. This is all the more because education of children has come to be regarded a full fledged investment that is likely to give desired results. An academic achievement/success of a child at school, college or university is determined by participating in class, in laboratory, library or fieldwork. Research has shown that not only does parental involvement increase academic achievement/success but it also increases the likelihood that youth will pursue higher education (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

The researchers across the world (DeHass & Willems, 2003; Jean & Connelly, 2007; Vellymalay, 2010; Vellymalay & Reay, 2004; Kaplan, Liu, & Kaplan, 2001; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Kamaruddin, Zainal & Aminuddin, 2009) have examined several aspects of children's academic success. However, no evidence is found for the dimensions of parental support discussed in this study. Dhingra and Manhas (2009) also highlighted the issue by stating that academic performance of children was affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors include the intelligence level while extrinsic factors that affect children success are home and school environment. The present study is designed with the underlying assumption that the parents play an important role in shaping the academic learning of the children. This study tends to assess the relationship of five dimensions with the academic performance of the children. The study has been specifically carried out to enhance the academic achievements of low performers at schools.

The current study examines the relationship of five dimensions of parental support with perceived academic success of children (PAS). These five dimension include: parental assistance in homework (AIH), parental assistance in deciding career (AIDC), parental assistance in socialization (AIS), parental assistance in academic success (AIAS) and parental assistance in building confidence (AIBC). The study examines whether parental support contributes to all this or otherwise, taking into account the aforesaid dimensions of parental support.

Major focus of the study is to examine the relationship of parental assistance/support and its effect on perceived academic success of their children (students). Another aim is to examine which dimension of the parental support has greatest impact on school goers' performance. Additionally it also determines if single factor is the significant indicator of students' academic success or multiple factors are responsible for the same. As a parental support the current study focuses on the support from father as well as mother.

The study is significant for the students receiving education at all the levels, parents, researchers and academicians. Moreover the findings of the current study are helpful for the management of the schools, colleges and universities to make the policies for better performance. It analyses the factors, affecting the academic success of the students;

presents the most important factor, influencing the same and gives suggestions for the parents, academicians and researchers. The study will help to enhance the academic achievements among the students having weak performance at schools.

2. Literature review

Several studies highlighted the importance of family involvement and parental support to positive outcomes for youth (Gonzalez-DeHass, & Willems, 2003; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003) stated that parental involvement in public schools had been valued by many educators, and documented as academically beneficial by educational researchers. They mentioned several factors effecting academic success of children from the view point of parents as well as educators. They reported that lack of parental desire to get involved in their educational career, lack of confidence on the part of parents towards involvement in children education, home-school scheduling conflicts and vagueness regarding the changing role of parent involvement during students' adolescent years are the main causes of bad students' performance at school. The educator factors negatively effecting students' performance include lack of desire of educators to encourage parents to get involved in children education, teachers' preconceptions regarding parental capability, conflicting beliefs about the ways parents should be involved and lack of teacher preparation and administrative support. So there is a need to once again look at the factors affecting students' academic success for the confirmation of relationship.

Quigley (2000) highlighted three major areas in which parents and teachers can work together to support children's academic progress that are communication, parenting, and learning at home. Likewise, a research study conducted by National Foundation for Educational Research - NFER (2001) revealed that students/children and parents considered homework and home learning to be an important part of school life. The evidence showed a positive relationship between time spent on homework and achievement at secondary school level. For enhanced learning at home active participation of parents in children educational activities is strongly recommended. Once again the authors have examined the parental and educators aspect simultaneously giving birth to an idea of examining the relationship of parental support with academic of students separately.

Moreover, few other researchers found that parents who were warm, responsive to children's questions and emotions had children who were more likely to succeed in the early years of school (Steinberg, 2001; Baumrind, 1980). Family involvement is a powerful predictor of high student achievement. Students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students (Caplan, 2000). Students having families involved in their education help them achieve higher grades, complete homework in time, have better attendance at school, and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors. Family involvement also helped students graduate at higher rates and to enroll in postsecondary education programs (Riggins-Newby, 2004; Norton, 2003), which means a positive contribution towards students' academic success.

Family members should play a central role in assisting student progress by providing children with home-based learning activities, supervising homework, and helping with classroom assignments (Ferguson, 2004). Research studies show that all types of family involvement are effective in raising students' levels of achievement. Some studies found that parents' involvement in different roles over time has the greatest impact on students' academic success (Caplan, 2000). Family participation in well-designed at-home activities has also been found to have an especially strong positive effect on student achievement (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004).

The researchers have reported numerous ways for families to get involved in children's education. The emphasis is laid on the family participation in terms of parent-teacher-student organizations, participation in school advisory councils, and participation in school committees (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000). They are of the view that schools, families, and students should establish connections with local agencies, businesses, cultural groups, and community organizations that share responsibility for students' future success.

In their study, Dhingra and Manhas (2009) assessed the relationship between the parental interaction and attitude of the teachers with the academic performance of school going children. They studied a sample comprising of 200 academic underachievers studying in classes 4th & 6th, performing unsatisfactorily without any apparent reasons. They revealed that parent-child interaction and teacher's attitude significantly influenced the academic performance of the children. They found the three academic areas such as Reading, Spelling and Mathematics were also significantly correlated with the parent-child interaction index.

To further investigate the relationship Kamaruddin, Zainal and Aminuddin (2009) determined how students assess the various components of their learning environment. They also identified how the learning environment affects students' learning outcomes by taking a sample of 370 randomly selected students. The researchers found that four factors including facilities provided, home environment, parents' motivation, school and teacher factors are responsible for their success. Additionally they reported that out of the four, home environment and parent's motivation have greater influence than other factors.

The researchers have discussed multiple aspects of educational performance of children but very little evidence is available on examining the relationship of parental support and children educational success in a developing country, Pakistan.

3. Methodology

3.1. Population/sample

The students of "ninth" and "tenth" class remained the population of the study. The responses of the students studying in public and private sector schools were included for the analysis. The students were selected from one of cities of Pakistan. The data was gathered through non probability convenient sampling technique, which resulted in 150 complete responses. After gathering data, screening was made for removing outliers. Additionally skewness and kurtosis tests were employed for confirming normality of the data.

3.2. Instruments used

Variables used for the study are parental support which acts as an independent variable and the dependent variable is children perceived academic success. The researchers are intended to examine the relationship of five dimensions of parental support with perceived academic success of children. The five dimension of parental support include parental assistance in homework (AIH), parental assistance in deciding career (AIDC), parental assistance in socialization (AIS), parental assistance in academic success(AIAS) and parental assistance in building confidence (AIBC). The items were rated at five point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Maximum items for the current data gathering were adopted from the earlier available studies (Vellymalay, 2010; Chan, Shen, & Wilkinson, 2004; Norton, 2003; Henderson, & Mapp, 2002; Harry, 2002; Kraft, Findlay, Major, Gilberts, & Hofmeister, 2001; Holden, & Buck, 2002; Symantec, 2001; Faires, Nichols, & Rickelman, 2000; Chrispeels, & Rivero, 2000; Clark, 2002; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982; Miller, Manhal, & Mee, 1991; Baker, Piotrkowski, & Brooks-Gunn, 1998; Leach, & Siddall, 1990) and few relevant items were added for the current study.

3.3. Procedure

The students of class "ninth" and "tenth" (Secondary School Certificate) were asked to fill the questionnaire based on five points likert scale. The questionnaire was distributed among students in different school across Peshawar (city), Pakistan by researchers, visiting the schools and requesting permission of the principals of the schools. The students were told that their responses will only be used for research purposes and will be kept confidential. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 15.0v) is employed to run statistical tests.

4. Results

The results of the study are based on the statistical tests employed for the analysis of the study. Firstly the demographic information is provided than the step wise regression is applied and at the end the multiple regression analysis is employed.

Descriptive statistics is presented in table 1.

[Insert table 1 here]

More than half of the respondents are male children/students (55.3%), studying in class tenth (54.7%). Equal sample size (20 responses) are gathered form each school. The mean age of the children/students is 15.5 years.

Step wise regression is presented in table 2.

[Insert table 2 here]

The results of table 2 clearly shows that as the dimensions are being added to the model the significance value keep on rising. The five dimensions added to the model include parents assistance in homework (AIH), parental assistance in deciding career (AIDC), parental assistance in socialization (AIS) and

Multiple regression analysis is presented in table 3, 3.1, and 3.2.

[Insert table 3, 3.1 and 3.2 here]

The multiple regression analysis confirms the relationship between the perceived academic success (dependent variable) and the independent variables. The results show that parental assistance in homework (0.236, $P = 0.000$), parental support in socialization (0.117, $p = 0.000$), parental assistance in academic success (0.403, $p = 0.000$) and parental support in building confidence (0.54 $p = 0.000$) have significant positive relationship with perceived academic success of children/students. Whereas, parental assistance in deciding career (0.008, $P = 0.715$), show non significant relationship with the dependent variable. The high value of R^2 (0.810) shows variance of dependent variable being explained by independent variables. The value of F - statistic (122.986) shows the overall significance of the relationship. The high and statistically significant value of F - statistic confirms the fitness of the model. The value of R (0.900) shows the strong relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. The R^2 shows that the independent variables account for 81.0% variation in the academic success of children.

5. Conclusion and discussion

The results of the study are based on the responses of 150 male and female children/students. In which more than half of the respondents are male children/students (55.3%) and study in class tenth (54.7%) having mean age of 15.5 years. The results depict that the most important dimension of parental support that influences the relationship of parental support and perceived academic success is assistance in education (AIAS). This may be in a form of financial assistance, studying with them at home, encouraging them to study/reading, provide them the friendly environment to feel free and discuss the matters to be discussed, etc.

The results conforms to the findings presented by Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003) who concluded that parental involvement in public schools is academically beneficial. Moreover NFER (2001) highlighted that parents consider homework and home learning to be an important part of school life. Mostly the research studies have been conducted in the developed countries of the world including America, Japan, etc. but this study is conducted in the developing country, Pakistan and the results of this study supports the literature that no matter which country is it the relationship of parental attitude towards their children exist in the same way. Children, no matter which country they belong to, needs their parental attention in their learning activities and academic achievements. Children having least parental attention may suffer more in terms of their learning and academic achievements because the experiences shared by the parents with their children help them to be successful. The experiences shared by the parents with their children may include the real life experiences or knowledge sharing.

Results of this study also supports the view of Steinberg, who stated that parents who were warm (having welcoming attitude towards their children), responsive to children's questions and emotions, provide structure, set limits and make demands for competence had children who are more likely to succeed in the early years of school and got along successfully with peers (Steinberg, 2001). Means that the parents who are more involved in children academic and non-academic activities have children showing greater academic success.

The second important finding of the study is that the more dimensions/factors of parental support added to the model based on examining the relationship of parental support and academic success of their children result in more significant results and have a strong impact on children success. It means that the more parents are involved with their children in several activities; specially the educational activities the more children will be academically successful and be able to achieve high grades. As Prater, Bermudez and Owens (1997) found that parents much involved with their children's academic activities talked more frequently about school programs with their children, attended school meetings with more regularity, and interacted with teachers more frequently than their rural counterparts. The results are also consistent with that of Jean and Connelly (2007) who found women allocating

time for their children positively affected overall child care. More and more involvement of parents in their children life helps in developing strong friendly relationships which in turn help parents to know about the problems faced by their children in a friendly manner and helps the children to get rid of troubles easily, enhancing their learning capacity.

It is clear by the above discussion that when parents get involved in the children academic lives, children tend to perform better at schools. Moreover the more support the students receive from their parents they are more likely to prove themselves as successful. The present study is conducted by obtaining a sample of Pakistani students. Pakistan is a developing country and has a collectivistic society so generally the parents are involved in their children school and home activities. Additionally this study examined the parental support as collection of fathers' and mothers' contributions towards academic success of their children. There is a need to examine either father contributes more to the children academic success or mother?

6. Suggestions

In the light of current findings it can be suggested that more parental support available to their children saves the cost to be incurred on external tuitions. There is a need to examine that either mother supports has a greater impact on this relationship or the father's support in a Pakistani society or either working parents have more impact on the relationship or non working parent(s).

Parent's involvement is a strong predictor of students' high performance. Students whose parents are involved in their education typically receive higher grades and test scores, go to schools with complete homework, have low absenteeism, and exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors. The findings are eye opener for the parents who do not take interest in their children learning/academic activities.

Moreover, for the researchers it is suggested that the more dimensions added to the model increases the significance of the model. So it is clear that the more aspects of parental support, if are provided to the children, the more they will be in a position to achieve academic success.

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Table 1
Demographic Information

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	83	55.3
	Female	67	44.7
Class	Ninth	68	45.3
	Tenth	82	54.7
School	Beacon House	30	20.0
	City school	30	20.0
	Fazaia	30	20.0
	Army public school	30	20.0
	Edwards school	30	20.0

- Source: Field study.

Table 2
Step-wise Regression Analysis

Excluded Variables

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	
1	AIH	.315 ^a	5.669	.000	.424	.628
	AIDC	.135 ^a	2.607	.010	.210	.844
	AIS	.291 ^a	6.308	.000	.462	.874
	AIBC	.395 ^a	6.182	.000	.454	.460
2	AIH	.268 ^b	5.301	.000	.402	.613
	AIDC	.073 ^b	1.522	.130	.125	.803
	AIBC	.296 ^b	4.716	.000	.364	.412
3	AIDC	.040 ^c	.901	.369	.075	.786
	AIBC	.309 ^c	5.471	.000	.414	.411
4	AIDC	.015 ^d	.366	.715	.030	.776

- a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), AIAS
 b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), AIAS, AIS
 c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), AIAS, AIS, AIH
 d. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), AIAS, AIS, AIH, AIBC
 e. Dependent Variable: PAS

Table 3
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.900 ^a	.810	.804	.29418

- a. Predictors: (Constant), AIBC, AIDC, AIS, AIH, AIAS

Table 3.1.**ANOVA^b**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.218	5	10.644	122.986	.000 ^a
	Residual	12.462	144	.087		
	Total	65.681	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ABC, AIDC, AIS, AIH, AIAS

b. Dependent Variable: PAS

Table 3.2.**Coefficients^a**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.104	.133		.780	.437
	AIH	.236	.040	.275	5.864	.000
	AIDC	.008	.021	.015	.366	.715
	AIS	.117	.027	.180	4.275	.000
	AIAS	.403	.071	.345	5.721	.000
	AIBC	.154	.029	.306	5.377	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PAS