

The Role of Parental Involvement on the Fourth Grade Students' Achievement in English Language in Public Schools in Jordan

Dr. Nibal Malkawi¹ Dr. Mona Smadi²

¹Al Balqa Applied University

² Al Balqa Applied University, Princess Alia University College

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of parental involvement in the classroom on the fourth grade students' achievement in English Language in public schools in Jordan.

To achieve the purpose of the study, a pre/post-test was constructed to measure students' achievement in English language. The test consisted of fifteen items on English language

The sample of the study consisted of (56) fourth grade students in Al Baraa School for boys and Marj Al Hamam School for girls in Amman enrolled in the second semester in the academic year 2015/2016. The sample was distributed into two sections, which were selected purposefully (experimental group and control group). The experimental group's parents were involved while the control groups' parents were not involved in their children's educational process. The sample of the study was (30) students in the experimental group and (26) students in the control group.

Descriptive statistical analyses were used (Means and Standard Deviation) for the pre and post- tests of students' English language test to experimental and control groups. Means, standard deviations and t-test were used to measure the students' achievement in English language.

The findings of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the post- test between the control and the experimental groups in favor of the experimental group. The researcher proposed some recommendations to enhance the importance of parental involvement on students' achievement in English language such as conducting further studies on other populations and for a longer time.

Key words: Parental involvement, Achievement in English language

1.1 Introduction

Parent involvement is one factor that has been consistently related to a student's increased academic performance (Hill & Craft, 2003). While the relation between parent involvement and a child's academic performance is well established, Studies have yet to examine *how* parent involvement increases a child's academic performance. Parent involvement was defined as the teacher's perception of the positive attitude parents have towards their child's education, teacher, and school. Gonzalez-DeHass AR, Willems PP, Holbein M. (2005) discussed two possible mechanisms, a child's perception of cognitive competence as measured by the child's report, and the student-teacher relationship as measured by the teacher's report, were examined for their ability to mediate the relation between parent involvement and academic performance. It was predicted that parent involvement would no longer be a significant predictor of a child's academic performance when the child's cognitive competence and the student-teacher relationship were accounted for in the analyses.

Parental involvement is an important influence on children's academic performance. In response to numerous studies that have demonstrated this connection, several broad initiatives have been developed through academia and government policy to increase parental involvement as part of an overall strategy to improve academic performance. Many individual schools and school districts have also responded to the national movement to develop and strengthen strategies to involve parents in their children's education.

Driessen, Smit, and Slegers (2005) determined that the two types of parental involvement are school-initiated and parent-initiated. Involvement may include contact such as parent-teacher conferences, home visits, field trip chaperone or participating in an in-class activity. It may also include volunteering in the classroom, following through with suggested activities by teachers, and responding for requests of information. Bridge's (2001) research suggested that the student's parents and their home culture are at the core of the child's life and learning, and therefore the parents are the most powerful and influential people on the effect of the preschool curriculum. Hill and Taylor (2004) noted that parents are considered to be children's "first educators" and for that reason need to be educated and provide appropriate and educational activities at home that are introduced in the classroom. Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, and Ortiz (2008) stated that, "Involved parents likely help build positive relationships between children and their teachers, foster positive feelings about school in their children, and generally support children's social and academic development, all of which may facilitate learning" (p. 77). Once the collaboration between school and home can be formed, the opportunity for success is increased.

Research has shown that the term "parental involvement" may have multiple meanings and can be perceived differently by both the teacher and the parent. Knopf and Swick (2007) suggested that as early educators, it is important when developing those relationships and encouraging involvement of families in the classroom, that there be a more distinct set of guidelines in setting up positive communication. Swick (2004) suggested the following:

1. Provide parents with multiple opportunities to be a part of shaping the family-strengthening services them and their children receive.
2. Dialogue with the parents about the services and activities in which they participate
3. Create parent mentors who have been successful in using early childhood services to empower themselves and their families. These mentors can educate, nurture, and support other parents in becoming empowered.
4. Model for parents the helping relationship behaviors you hope for them to achieve.
5. Organize parent feedback teams to assess the early childhood family-strengthening efforts. (p. 219)

Knopf and Swick (2008) further noted that "parent involvement strengthens the education that children receive, and that families' proclivity to be involved is influenced by the strength of the relationships that we, their children's teachers and caregivers, develop with parents" (p. 296).

Parent involvement in a child's early education is consistently found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance (Hill & Craft, 2003). Specifically, children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than children whose parents are involved to a lesser degree. The influence of parent involvement on academic success has not only been noted among researchers, but also among policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement into broader educational policy initiatives. Coupled with these findings of the importance of early academic success, a child's academic success has been found to be relatively stable after early elementary school. Therefore, it is important to examine factors that contribute to early academic success and that are amenable to change.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study stems from the following:

This study enhances parental involvement in public schools in Jordan since there is a focus nowadays on the educational process in general and on parents' role on their children's performance in particular. So, the researcher decided to investigate the parents' role and its effect on students' achievement in public schools in Jordan specifically in English.

Statement of the problem

Parental involvement as related to Jordanian educational outcomes has emerged as one of the most discussed topics in educational circles today. Parental involvement alone has especially become a popular topic, because the parents' involvement in Jordan is weak. Although social scientists have conducted a number of studies indicating that parental involvement has a beneficial impact, these studies have generally not focused on Jordanian students specifically, and, generally, they have had either small sample sizes or have been specialized samples. For these reasons the researcher tried to focus on this issue and study the effect of parental involvement on students' achievement.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of parental involvement in the classroom on the fourth grade students' achievement in English Language in public schools in Jordan during the second semester 2015/2016.

Questions of the study

1. Is there any relationship between parental involvement in school and 4th grade students' achievement in English language?
2. Is there any relationship between 4th grade students' achievement in English language due to the gender of the parent who is involved in the schools?

Definition of operational terms

The following terms had the associated meaning in this study:

Parental involvement: is the participation in school meetings and events, communication between school and home, involvement in Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and school activities, supervision and help with homework, reading or other educational activities at home, and planning for the future.

School initiated involvement: in this study it refers to the role of the school to enhance the parents to involve in its activities.

Parent initiated involvement: in this study it refers to the parents' role in involving in the educational process and share in the schools' activities.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the fourth grade students in Al Baraa School for boys and Marj Al Hamam School for girls in Amman enrolled in the second semester in the academic year 2015/2016., and to any other similar samples.

Literature Review

Some researchers conducted studies on the subject of parental involvement all over the world, the researcher reviewed some of these studies as follows:

Knof and Swick (2008) investigated the relationships between mother's level of education, mother's quality of instruction, child's IQ, parental expectations, parental involvement, and academic performance. This longitudinal study followed 187 first time low-income mothers and their children from birth through 3rd grade. A positive and significant correlation was found between all of the variables under investigation. A bi-directional relationship was found between parental involvement and academic performance; high child achievement in 1st grade was positively correlated with increased parental involvement in 3rd grade.

Rogers & Wright (2006) conducted an assessment study of the role of technology in enhancing communication between the school and the family, the study aimed to detect the point of view of both teachers and parents about the use of modern means of communication (landline and mobile, the Internet, and website of the school) in the process of strengthening communication between the school and the family and society, as well as the study aimed to identify the obstacles that limit the process of communication between the school and the family.

The study was applied in some schools in the northern part of the United States, the study sample was (210) individuals, (48) teachers, (162) parents, the study used the Quantitative and qualitative way through the instruments, which were adopted by it (questionnaire and resolution focus groups for each of the teachers and parents). The study stressed the importance of communication between the school and the family for its positive

effect on the clear promotes cooperation and interaction between them, as well as the study confirmed the numerous benefits of the use of Modern technology foremost of which is the expansion of the circle of communication and reduce the gap between the school and the family as the use of means of communication in the modern technological communication process helps parents to all follow-up course of the educational process, and the most important obstacles related to interface between the school and family using modern technology was a lack of awareness among teachers and parents about the benefits of communication using technology.

Jeynes (2005) also used NELS data from 1990 and 1992 to determine whether or not parental involvement had an impact on the academic performance of African American high school seniors. He also investigated the role of SES and gender. The results showed that parental involvement has a statistically significant impact on academic performance for African American 12th graders; however, the Parents of girls in all ethnic groups were found to be more involved than those of boys.

Demsey & Walker (2002) conducted a case study of the reality of communication between "Metropolitan Nashville British" School by identifying the views of teachers and parents to determine the benefits of enhancing communication between the school and the family, and to identify the Obstacles that weaken this communication, then prepare to imagine a proposal to overcome those obstacles, as well as the process of preparing a strategy to activate communication between the school and the family plan and the results of the study on the benefits of networking are as follows:

- Improve students' academic achievement
- Modifying the behavior of students
- Achieve a sense of satisfaction among parents and consolidate their relationship with the school
- Parents support the school in achieving its educational objectives.

The researchers classified the obstacles that impair communication between Mitroboltan Nashville School students and families into two types:

Family-related constraints, namely:

- The low educational level of parents
- Declining economic situation
- Negative attitudes among parents about the school as a result of previous experience.

School-related constraints, namely:

- Restrictions imposed by the administrative system of the school in its openness to the surrounding community as a result of the Central management.
- Low knowledge and experience of the school administration and teachers strategies to activate communication between the school and family.

The study stressed the importance of communication between the school and the family as an input to activate the relationship and cooperation between them, and it described the proposed strategy plan as following:

- Development of administrative policy for the school to become more flexible and a trend towards decentralization.
- Improving school climate (facilities and equipment, such as celebrations and meetings) Halls Encourage parents to participate in the educational process (eg, provide enrichment classes)
- Organizing services project to meet the needs of the students' families such as educational and health projects.

Senechal and LeFevre (2002) examined the impact that early storybook exposure and parent's reports of teaching at home influence literacy skills and reading ability. The sample was drawn from three middle class schools in Canada with a progressive approach to education. They found that storybook exposure was a good predictor of children's receptive language development while parent teaching at home predicted emergent literacy skills. They also determined that certain literacy skills serve as mediating variables between parent's involvements in education at home and reading fluency.

Design and Methodology

3.1 Population of the study

The population of the study consisted of:

All fourth grade students involved in public schools at Wadi El Seer Directorate of Education in the second semester 2015/2016 whom they form (2830), and their teachers whom they form (91)

3.2 Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of (56) fourth grade students in Al Baraa School for boys and Marj Al Hamam School for girls in Amman and was distributed into two sections, which were selected purposefully (experimental group and control group). The experimental group's parents were involved while the control groups' parents were not involved in their children's educational process. The sample of the study was (30) students in the experimental group and (26) students in the control group.

3.3 Instrument of the study

The researcher designed an achievement test based on the instructional material of the fourth grade English textbook to collect the data. Validity and reliability were ensured.

3.4 Reliability of the instrument

To ensure the test reliability, the researcher followed test/retest technique. The researcher applied it to a pilot sample of (15) students excluded of the study sample in the same schools from which the subjects were chosen with a two-week period between the pre-test and the post-test. The reliability of the test was calculated using correlation coefficient that was (0.83) which is considered appropriate for conducting such a study.

3.5 Validity of the instrument

The researcher validated the instrument by submitting it to a jury of two EFL professors teaching at Mutah University, two supervisors of English language working at Wadi El Seer Directorate of Education, the Jury were asked to add, omit or make any changes on the items of the instrument. The test consisted of (25) items in its first draft, and it became (20) items as returned from the jury. The researcher followed the recommendations of the jury and made amendments accordingly.

3.6 Instructional material

The instructional material was the fourth grade English textbook which consists of 12 units.

3.7 Procedures of the study

To implement the study, the following procedures were followed:

- Identifying the population and sample of the study
- Constructing the instruments of the study.
- Conducting the pilot study
- Ensuring the validity and reliability of the instrument of the study.
- Applying the instrument of the study.
- Use SPSS to analyze the collected data.
- Presenting the findings and the discussions of the study

3.8 Statistical analyses

Descriptive methods (means and standard deviation) were used for pre and post tests for the achievement test of the experimental and control groups.

Comparison statistical method (Two-Way ANOVA) was used to make a comparison between the control and the experimental groups of parents involved and the place of students' residence.

4. Results of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of parental involvement in the classroom on the fourth grade students' achievement in English Language in public schools in Jordan. The researcher followed the equivalent pre /posttest two group designs. Therefore, the means, standard deviations and Two-Way ANOVA analysis of variance were used to analyze data. The results were displayed based on the questions of the research.

To determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, a t-test for independent samples was conducted. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Achievement of two Groups on the Pretest

	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre	Experimental	30	55.35	7.05	.461	111	.646
	Control	26	54.74	7.09	.461	109.165	.646

Table 1 indicated that the difference between experimental and control groups is not statistically significant at ($\alpha=0.05$). Thus, since the difference was not significant, the two groups were assumed equivalent and the sample was divided into two groups, an experimental and a control group. The means for the experimental group was (55.35) while it was for the control group (54.74), which means that there were nearly the same. The experimental group which their parents were involved in their educational progress consisted of (30) students while the control group consisted of (26) students. So Table (1) above showed that there are no statistically significant differences in pretest due to group variable.

Table 1 also showed that the difference between the achievement of the two groups on the pretest was not statistically significant at ($\alpha=0.05$). Since there was no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups on the pretest, it was for the experimental (.646) which was more than (0.05) and it was for the experimental (.646) too which is also above (.05) so, the groups were assumed equivalent.

To determine if the two groups are equivalent in the level of their educational progress due to parental involvement, a posttest was conducted and Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2: t-test Results of the Experimental and the Control Groups on the Posttest.

	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post	Experimental	30	85.58	7.90	5.318	111	.000
	Control	26	76.15	10.87			

Table 2 showed that there was a statistically significant difference at ($\alpha=0.05$) between the achievement of the experimental group and that of the control group on the posttest in favor of the experimental group. This difference indicated that parental involvement on their children's learning may have had a positive effect on

students' achievement. The mean score for the experimental group on the posttest was (85.58) while that of the control group was (76.15).

Table 2 also showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group on the posttest, was significantly better than that of the control group.

The researcher also conducted a two-way analysis of variance to analyze the posttest achievement scores of the two groups. Table 2 showed the results. So table above shows there are statistically significant differences in posttest due to group variable in favor of the experimental group.

Discussion of the Findings of the Study

4.1 Discussion

Findings from the present study demonstrated that increased parent involvement, defined as the teacher's perception of the positive attitude parents have toward their child's education, teacher, and school, was significantly related to increased academic performance, measured by both a standardized achievement test and teacher ratings of the child's classroom academic performance. Further, parent involvement was significantly related to academic performance above and beyond the impact of the child's intelligence (IQ), a variable not accounted for in previous research.

Findings from the present study demonstrated that increased parent involvement is significantly related to a child's increased perception of cognitive competence.

Findings proved that improved parent participation was significantly related to increased quality of the student-teacher relationship. Findings also confirmed that increased perceived cognitive competence was related to higher achievement test scores and that the quality of the student-teacher relationship was significantly related to the child's achievement, measured by both standardized achievement test scores and the child's classroom academic performance. There was powerful evidence linking parental involvement to school success.

4.2 Recommendations

In light of the results of the study, the following recommendations were proposed:

- Performing the experiment over a longer period of time so that parents have a better chance to be involved in the whole educational process of their children.
- Conducting other studies to investigate the effect of parental involvement on their children academic achievement.
- Training and encouraging teachers on helping parents to be more involved.

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