

Level of Parent Involvement in the Elementary and Secondary Levels

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ABSTRACT Parent involvement is very essential because it contributes to the success of children in academics and extracurricular aspects. It also hastens the implementation of school projects of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The study was conducted to know the level of parent involvement in both the elementary and secondary levels. Descriptive research was used in the study. Results showed that the level of parent involvement in the elementary level was very high in the academics and extracurricular aspects, and high in performing their role as members of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The level of parent involvement in the secondary level was high in the three aspects, namely academics, extracurricular, and as members of the PTA. Moreover, the findings showed that the difference between the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels was not statistically significant. This means that parents in both levels display similar level of involvement in their children's school activities and in performing their role as members of the PTA. Thus, it is evident that parents in both the elementary and secondary levels have the willingness to support their children and reach out to any activities the school imposes.

Keywords: parent involvement, academic involvement, extracurricular involvement, PTA involvement, descriptive design, Philippines, Asia

Introduction

Parents are the most influential persons in the life of the child. They are the first to mold the minds of their children and inspire them to do things. According to Patrikakou (2014), children's development is basically influenced by the way parents get themselves involved. Schools must work hard to establish partnership with parents (Connor & Wheeler, 2009) since working with them is crucial in each of their learners' development. It is every child's primary right and every parents' obligation to be involved in every step of the child's development, may it be academic in nature or other areas of their development (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] Starting Strong, 2012).

Parental involvement in education of children is distinguished as a significant issue in many countries (Farah, 2015). Parents hold the responsibility of fostering their children to become responsible citizens of the world. However, as a child grows up, there is a gradual change in the participation of the parents especially in school related activities. It is observed that at the early stages of development of children, parents' participation is evident from working in a simple subject assignment to greater role such as participating in a school presentation or cooperating in the organization's activities where they are members of such as the Parents Teachers Association. Ryan (2013) found out that parents have greater involvement in the elementary level. Hill (2009) found out that parents were more participative when the children are still young or in their primary years and slowly dwindle when the children reached the secondary level. It is observable that parents' participation remarkably decline at some point. At this level, greater independence was given to the student resulting in a lesser parent involvement almost in all aspects of student life at school. Erik Erikson Theory of Psychosocial Development might have answers to the decline of parent involvement. According to the theory

as cited by McLeod (2013), Industry vs. Inferiority, a stage of psychosocial development by Erik Erikson states that if children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious and confident in their ability to achieve goals. If this initiative is not encouraged, if it is restricted by parents or teacher, then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore may not reach his or her potential. The involvement of the parent becomes a crucial factor to the success of the child, the very reason that greater involvement is expected during this stage. On the other hand, as the child ages, their psychosocial development changes especially when they reach adolescence. During this stage which is referred as Identity versus Role Confusion, (Erikson as cited by McLeod, 2013), the children begin to become more independent. The individual wants to belong to a society and fit in. Pressuring them into an identity can result in rebellion in the form of establishing a negative identity and, in addition to this, feeling of unhappiness. To achieve this, parents slowly decrease but do not totally withdraw their involvement so that their children would feel that they are endowed with the right to choose for themselves the activities, organizations, and even the kind of peer they want to belong. Thus, parents involvement become lesser to provide avenue for their children to discover possibilities and begin to form their own identity based on the outcome of their explorations.

Variety of researches had already been conducted in the past decades to identify the level of parent involvement and even the extent of its impact in students' achievement (Kohl et al., 2000). In the study of DeHass et al. (2005), it was shown that parent involvement in the elementary and secondary level significantly affects students' engagement in school. Educators and families have assumed that secondary students do not want their families involved in their schools and that families don't see a need to be involved at the secondary level (Ferguson & Rodriguez, 2005). Deslandes

(2003) found through his study that at the junior level, parent involvement becomes not as strong as when the children were younger, and they started to endow to their children their independence. Xu (2002) stated that both parents and school personnel misinterpret the adolescents' desire for autonomy as a developmental barrier to family involvement. The studies cited show how parent involvement changes as their children age. However, parents were seen to have a desire to be involved in the lives of their adolescent children (Shaver and Walls, 1998). It is only that parents are not always successful; thus, they become more cautious of their action (Ferguson and Rodriguez, 2005). Parent involvement did not necessarily decreased; instead, as students move from middle school and toward graduation, parents are not less involved in their children's school life but had changed their role from less attention to day-to-day student behavior to greater concern about educational expectation for their children (Catsambis & Garland, 1997).

One of the common complaints we often hear from teachers especially in the secondary level is the less involvement of parents in academics and school-related activities of their children. Parent involvement is very important. Researches show that parent involvement increases the achievement of children in school. It may also develop their self-esteem. It is widely recognized as a predictor of positive academic outcomes (Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, Reamer, & Stair, 2004; Wentworth, 2006), a valuable tool for increasing the likelihood of improving childhood academic success (Christenson & Carlson, 2005; Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Petit, 2004 as cited by Ringenberg, 2009) It is also beneficial to the school since greater parent involvement might help the school succeed in its implementation of programs and projects. It is therefore crucial to know the level of parent involvement in the elementary level and how it varies from the level of involvement in the secondary level. Results of this

study might provide us information which could be utilized in formulating plans that would maximize the benefits that parent involvement can offer to the students and the school. Thus this study was conducted to identify the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels.

The study sought to identify the level of parent involvement in both the elementary and secondary levels.

Specifically, the study intended to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the level of parent involvement in the elementary level in terms of academics and extracurricular aspects, and in performing their role as members of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)?
2. What is the level of parent involvement in the secondary level in terms of academics and extracurricular aspects, and in performing their role as members of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)?
3. Is there a significant difference between the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels in terms of the identified aspect?

Hypothesis of the Study

There is no significant difference between the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels in terms of academics and extracurricular aspects, and in performing their role as members of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

Parent involvement refers to the responsibility that is being performed by the parents (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001) to have their children achieved their utmost potential

through their assistance in school-related works and activities of their children. It may culminate from simple participation such as asking the child what happened for a day in school to asking children about the clubs they want to join and activities they want to participate, and getting involved in the activities of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) or volunteering in doing school-related activities school. However, the level of involvement may vary depending on the areas such as academics, extracurricular, and as members of the PTA. The study explored the different level of involvement of parents in the different aspects of school-related involvements. The concept of this study revolved around the three areas which usually requires involvement of parents. Academic involvement refers to the involvement of parents in the academic-related activities of the child such as following-up their performance in school, working with assignments, activities, and projects which directly affects the academic development of the child. The extracurricular aspect deals with the involvement of parents in the choice of their children in different interest clubs, campus-based organizations, and cultural activities. Role as members of the PTA deals with their level of involvement in performing their role as member such as participating in PTA-initiated activities and projects, and doing the voluntary duties and tasks assigned to them by the organization and the school.

Erik Erikson Psychosocial Development Theory was also used to aid in identifying the differences in the level of parent involvement in relation to their developmental stages specifically in the elementary years which is referred to as industry vs. inferiority which usually occurs during the ages 5 to 12 and identity vs. role confusion which occurs during the adolescent period (age 12 to 18) of children and is considered to occur during their secondary education. The theory may help explain the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels.

These theory and different aspects became the determinant in identifying the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels.

Methodology

The descriptive-survey method was considered the most appropriate for this study, for it intended to describe and discuss the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels . A descriptive study aims to describe the present situation and to interpret the functional relationships between variables (Calmorin and Calmorin, 2007).

A researcher-made instrument was utilized which underwent validity and reliability tests before it was administered. The instrument provided by Good and Scates (1972) as cited by Salom (2013) was used to determine the validity of the instrument. On the other hand, Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The instrument earned a mean of 4.81 and a rating of 0.73 which made the instrument reliable. The study was conducted to the parents of 210 elementary and secondary students who were directly involved in the education of their children. The sample size was determined using the Slovin's formula. During the PTA Homeroom meeting, the researcher presented his intention to conduct the said study to some of them. The parents selected as respondents of the study answered the instrument voluntarily. They were instructed to answer the instrument honestly and objectively.

A stratified random sampling was used in selecting the respondents of the study. The researcher employed mean and t-test as statistical tools to interpret the data and answer the objectives of the study.

The tables below show the demographics of the respondents.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents - Elementary Level

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Relationship to the child		
father	37	26.81%
mother	99	71.74%
others	2	1.45%
Total	138	100%
Civil Status		
single	11	7.97%
married	127	92.03%
Total	138	100%
Family size		
1-3 children	119	86.23%
4 or more	19	13.77%
Total	138	100%
Educational Level		
high school undergraduate	2	1.45%
high school graduate	2	1.45%
college undergraduate	21	15.22%
college graduate	99	71.74%
technical/vocational	4	2.90%
post baccalaureate	10	7.25%
Total	138	100%
Occupation/Work		
category A	5	3.62%
category B	34	24.64%
category C	23	16.67%
category D	6	4.35%
category G	2	1.45%
category H	33	23.91%
category I	1	.72%
category K	34	24.64%
Total	138	100%

Family Monthly Income		
low	56	40.58%
middle	79	57.25%
high	3	2.17%
Total	138	100%

As shown in the table, majority of the respondents in the elementary level were mothers which comprised 71.74%. Most of them were married, dominating the respondents in the elementary at 92.03%. The family size which focuses on the number of children presented that 86.23% of the respondents had at least one to three children. When it comes to their education level, more than 90% of them were degree holders. In terms of occupation or work, 75.36% were employed while only 24.64% were unemployed. The data show that despite work demands, parents felt the necessity of their participation in their children’s school-related activities. Most of the respondent belonged to middle income earners as supported by the 57.25% of the responses.

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents in Secondary Level

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Relationship to the child		
father	13	18.06%
mother	58	80.56%
others	1	1.39%
Total	72	100%
Civil Status		
single	4	5.56%
married	68	94.44%
Total	72	100%
Family Size		
1-3 children	59	81.94%
4 or more	13	18.06%
Total	72	100%
Educational Level		

elementary undergraduate	1	1.39%
high school undergraduate	2	2.78%
high school graduate	1	1.39%
college undergraduate	4	5.56%
college graduate	58	80.56%
technical/ vocational	1	1.39%
post baccalaureate	5	6.94%
Total	72	100%
Occupation/ Work		
category A	2	2.78%
category B	21	29.17%
category C	12	16.67%
category G	9	12.5%
category H	12	16.67%
category K	16	22.22%
Total	72	100%
Family Monthly Income		
low	25	34.72%
middle	46	63.89%
high	1	1.39%
Total	72	100%

In the secondary level, it can be observed that 80.56% of the respondents were mothers and were married (94.44%). More than 80% of them had one to three children. Most of them earned a degree in college, and some pursued higher education comprising more than 80% of the high school level parent-respondents. Almost 78% of the respondents were employed while the remaining 22% were unemployed or plain housewife. More than half of them were middle earners (63.89%). One remarkable finding that can be deduced from the table is that though most of the respondents were employed, it was observed that they have high involvement in the school-related activities of their children and in performing their responsibility as PTA member.

Results and Discussions

This section deals with the presentation of results and their discussions after appropriate statistical tools were applied.

Table 3. Parent Involvement in the Elementary Level When Taken as a Whole

Category	Mean	S.D.
Academic	3.28	0.602
Extracurricular	3.27	0.532
Member of the Organization	3.12	0.601

The involvement of the parents in the elementary level in the academics ($M=3.28$, $S.D. 0.602$) and extracurricular affairs ($M=3.27$, $S.D.=0.532$) of their children was very high. The parents showed a very high involvement in the academic and extracurricular concerns of their children. McLeod (2013) supports these findings with Erikson's theory of psychosocial development which necessitates the involvement of parents in their child development since it is in this stage that they begin to develop their ability to achieve goals. The result was likewise expected for the reason that children, especially those in the lower level, need the supervision and guidance from their parents in doing their school-related works and in making decisions that concern their academic and extracurricular involvement. Though parent involvement in performing their role as members of the PTA is quite the lowest among the three, it is still interpreted as high ($M=3.12$, $S.D. 0.601$). This may mean that parents possessed the eagerness to get themselves involved in the activities of the organization and the school that require their involvement.

Findings are supported by a research survey made by Herrold and O'Donnell (2008) which presented a high attendance of parents in PTO/PTA meeting, and more than half showed willingness to do volunteer works. This means

that parents extend their involvement not only in academics and extracurricular activities but also in activities that express their role as valued stakeholder of the academic community.

Table 4. Parent Involvement in the Secondary Level When Taken as a Whole

Category	Mean	S.D.
Academic	3.23	0.575
Extracurricular	3.07	0.712
Member of the Organization	2.97	0.751

Parents of students in the secondary level showed almost the same zest and vigor in their involvement in school-related tasks in the three different aspects, registering a high involvement in academics (M=3.23, S.D. 0.575), extracurricular (M=3.07, S.D.=0.712) and as members of the PTA (M=2.97, S.D.=0.751). The slight regression in the results compared to the elementary level might be interpreted that there are small changes in the involvement of the parents in the secondary level. It may be because parents begin to grant their children independence as they grow to become adolescents where they should be given certain independence so as not to develop inferiority (McLeod, 2013), and they can only develop confidence if there is lesser involvement from the parents.

The table below shows the comparison on the level of parent involvement in the academics, extracurricular, and in performing their role as members of the PTA.

Table 5. Comparing the Parent Involvement in the Elementary and Secondary Levels

Aspect	Variable	df	mean	sd	t-ratio
Academics	Elementary	208	3.28	0.602	0.525
	Secondary		3.23	0.575	
Extra-curricular	Elementary	208	3.27	0.532	0.022
	Secondary		3.07	0.712	
PTA Member	Elementary	208	3.12	0.601	0.109
	Secondary		2.97	0.751	

p>.05 not significant at .05 alpha

It was found out that there is no significant difference in the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels when it comes to involvement in the academics of their children ($t(210) = 0.525$, $p = 0.636$). Parents in both levels had almost the same zest and vigor in their involvement in the academic-related tasks of their children. This means that parents for both levels try to get themselves involved in checking their children's performance in school, helping their children with home works and projects, and even in teaching their child school lessons.

When it comes to parent involvement in the extracurricular activities of their children, a significant difference was detected ($t(210) = 0.022$, $p = 2.313$) which means that the level of parent involvement in the elementary is different from the parent involvement that secondary students get. This may be because of the independence that the parents were giving their adolescent children. The

involvement may still be there, only that they provide their children greater freedom in choosing for themselves interest clubs and other extracurricular activities they want to join in. Ferguson and Rodriguez (2005) believed that the assumption of the parents about the reaction of short and sometimes uninformative responses they get from their teenagers means that they do not want their involvement may have supported the result. However, Duffet and Johnson (2004) found out that teenagers actually want their parents and other adults to get involved in their lives.

When the parent involvement in performing their role as members of the PTA is considered, results revealed that parents in the elementary and secondary levels did not significantly differ in their involvement ($t(210) = 0.109$, $p=1.610$). This finding implies that regardless of level, the parents show the same amount of eagerness to participate and perform whatever duties are required of them by the organization for the improvement of their children and of the school community.

Conclusions

The level of parent involvement in both levels ranges from high involvement to very high involvement. This may only mean that the grade or year level of the children did not pose as a contributing factor for parents to lessen their participation in the academic and extracurricular activities of their children and in performing their role as members of the PTA. It can be concluded then the school has a strong parent involvement. They can expect parent visibility during their homeroom meetings, individual conferences with parents, and in the assurance that parents are monitoring the academic performance of their children and that they likewise get themselves

involved in making decisions for their children's choice of academic, interest, and campus-based organizations. It may be concluded further that the PTA was effective in its way of encouraging involvement of parents in the school-related activities such as the *Brigada Eskwela* where they gather together to assist the school personnel in making the school ready for the opening of the class, and in conducting the annual family day celebration where almost all families come together for a day, a bonding filled with worthwhile gathering and activities.

However, though the level of involvement is high and there was no significant difference in most aspects, it would be imperative to note that at some areas, parents registered a significant difference in their participation. Despite the significant difference in their involvement in the extracurricular activities of their children, parents in the elementary level satisfied the expectation of having a very high involvement in the academic and, extracurricular aspects of their children's activities and in performing their role as members of the PTA. With these findings, it can be concluded that there is a remarkable and significant involvement of parents in the school-related matters. These good results can be used to further strengthen and sustain the involvement of parents in school-related tasks. This could be one way of creating an effective mechanism that will help improve the academic performance of children in school and in the development of plans and projects that will enhance the delivery of education among schools through the help of parents.

Though it may seem at times that parents are not visible in school, this does not mean that they have lower involvement. As the findings suggest, it is evident indeed that parents, both in high school and elementary levels showed high zest and vigor to get involved in the affairs of the school where their participation is needed. The absence is not

because they are less involved but maybe because the school and the organization might have lacked the initiative to create attainable and sustainable programs that would maximize the potential participation and involvement of the parents.

This only implies that parents perform their role as partners of schools in the development of the children. Their motivation to get involved is innate within them. With that overflowing involvement from the parents, it can be assured that the cognitive, emotional, psychological, and social development of the child is secured. With this, the school can expect a worthwhile and harmonious relationship with the parents that would help create more productive kinds of pupils and students.

The study proved that parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels did not die down and may only have modified itself dependent on the level of the child. To cite, parents in the elementary level should be more involved for the fact that younger children need a close follow-up and monitoring as they go along in their education journey. However, as there grade level increases, and independence becomes innate in them, the presence of the parent lessens, but it can still be felt through following-up of their children's performance or assisting them in their home works and projects. They are still visible in meetings and in school activities. In the secondary level, when students are more independent, parents' presence becomes scarce as children need to develop in themselves the attitude of a responsible adolescent; yet, still parents did not do away with their responsibility of getting themselves involved in the academic and school-related activities of their children. With these findings, school-parent partnership is very evident which could be the best way to work hand-in-hand in producing better individuals who are equally competitive and productive. Schools can look forward to a stronger relationship with parents to work out strategies to

improve the quality of education, and they can be assured that these plans will be implemented since they can expect high involvement from the parents, both in the elementary and secondary levels, in the academic and extra-curricular activities of the students, and in the performance their role as members of the PTA.

The results only show that the belief that parent's involvement positively affects the academic success of their children may have driven the parents to get themselves involved in the academic and extracurricular aspects of their children's education. Conway and Houtenville (2008) revealed that "parental effort is consistently associated with higher levels of achievement, and the magnitude of the effect of parental effort is substantial." Mapp and Henderson (2002) reported that when parents come to school regularly, it reinforces the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family's life. In addition, their high level of involvement in performing their role as member of the PTA is fueled by their sense of responsibility as parent and, at the same time, this is their way of showing their support not only to the organization but to the school community as well since they are not only a PTA member but they are the school's stakeholders. Though the study only presented the level of involvement of the parents in the elementary and secondary levels and had not probed the reasons behind such involvement and its impact on students' achievement and effects to the school community, Pinantoan (2013) stressed that parent involvement should not be underestimated in its effect on students success. Thus, these data may be a good source of information to explore further how strong parent involvement affects the academic success of students and the success of the school.

Recommendations

In reference with the findings of this study, the following recommendations might strengthen the level of parent involvement in both the elementary and secondary levels:

As the findings suggested that there was indeed a high parent involvement in the academic and extracurricular activities of the children, it is therefore recommended that the school should have a stable and sustainable parent involvement activities and programs to be worked out well by the students, the teachers, and the parents. This is to assure that quality education will be delivered to our most important client, the students.

The PTA should create a capability building program for all the parents of the school. Through this capability building program, parents will become more aware of their responsibility in the organization and in the school not only as parents but as a valued stakeholder of the community.

Since this study is conducted in a smaller population, it is recommended that the same study be conducted to a larger population.

The study had only measured the level of parent involvement in the elementary and secondary levels; thus, it is recommended to conduct a follow-up study probing the reasons for parent involvement and its effect on students and school's success.

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