



Parental Involvement in Students' Academic Performance: A Study Based at Pelrithang Middle Secondary School, Gelephu, Bhutan

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Abstract

Parental involvement in their children's education appears to be on a decline despite being associated with positive outcomes for students. This study identifies the importance of parental involvement in their children's educational attainment and seeks to explore the essential component that require for the academic success of a child. The findings will contribute some ways of parental involvement that will bring immense benefits to individual parents, teachers, school administrations and the education ministry at large. The researcher used concurrent convergent mixed methods to collect data that are subjected to statistical analysis. The study catered to investigate the importance of the wellbeing of children, parents' self-efficacy and effective parent-teacher interaction in grooming their children into a human with acceptance and motivation to learn. Data were collected from teachers, parents and students through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The finding showed that students' academic performance was largely influenced by the self-efficacy of parents, parent-teacher interactions, home environment and wellbeing of a child.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Students, Academic Achievements

Introduction

Modern education in Bhutan was introduced in 1914 by the first king Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck, it was only some 40 years ago that Bhutan embarked on delivering education to all. Till then, monastic education taught in dzongs (fortress) and villages was predominant. In recent years, the country has emphasized on providing education to all the Bhutanese children. 21st century education has been conceptualized in a multi-dimensional way, and includes new technologies, new pedagogies, a nationalized curriculum, open learning spaces and enhanced teacher training. In addition, schools play an important role in assisting adolescents to develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills. As a result, a core component of 21st century schooling in both the private and state sectors is the call for education to develop whole students through social, emotional, moral, and intellectual development (Ahern, 2017).

Therefore, teaching and learning processes are not just an affair for teachers and students in the schools but also demands collaborative efforts of parents and other educational bodies such as the teacher education colleges, Ministry of Education, university, and any other related organizations which share the same responsibilities (Sherab, 2009).

According to Susan & Kinley (2014), majority of the Bhutanese students come from illiterate family background, and parents lack required knowledge and skills to guide and support their children's educational programs beyond the classroom situation. Their finding also indicated low parents' volunteerism and ineffective communication between parents and schools. Furthermore, the finding indicated the lack of parents' skills, knowledge and competence to visit schools and help in educational programs.

Education is key to positive change in human being. The quality of life and society in the country depends on how well the children are groomed and cultured in the schools. These young children are regarded as major possessions for socioeconomic and human resource development of the nation. The way the government, parents, families and school community educate them will have direct impact on the children's wholesome development and their contribution to the society, country and the world at large. Education has played a central role in the transformation of Bhutan from a tradition-bound society to a dynamic, confident participant in regional and global affairs (Tobgay & Wangmo, 2008). However, with the rapid socioeconomic development in Bhutan, the way Bhutanese live, think and educate their children has also altered. Education sector and schools are now facing serious challenges.

Unlike the past decades, the schools today are day-schools, so children spend the same amount of time at home and school. Today, children have access to various sources of entertainment such as video games, mobiles, and television. Therefore, it is important that parents should equally take participation and be mindful of their responsibilities in grooming their children. Youth related problems such as alcohol, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, early school dropouts, aping alien cultures are increasingly appearing in our system. These problems are the area of concern for teachers, parents, society and nation as a whole. Society tend to blame on only teachers for any undesirable acts of children, where parents are also held equally responsible. For instance, Rabgay (2015) claimed there is a lack of support, guidance and counselling both in terms of academic as well as parental that causes overall student population to become reluctant in exploring their individual academic interests. In such a scenario, need exists equally for parents and academic instructors to realize the diverse potentials of young minds and utilise these potentials, nourish and polish them through proper channel as they progress within their school, college, and university. For a child to discover and customize their inherent talent they need their parents, first of all, to realize and acknowledge what is truly best for them and to consent them to pursue their career of interest.

Conceptual Framework

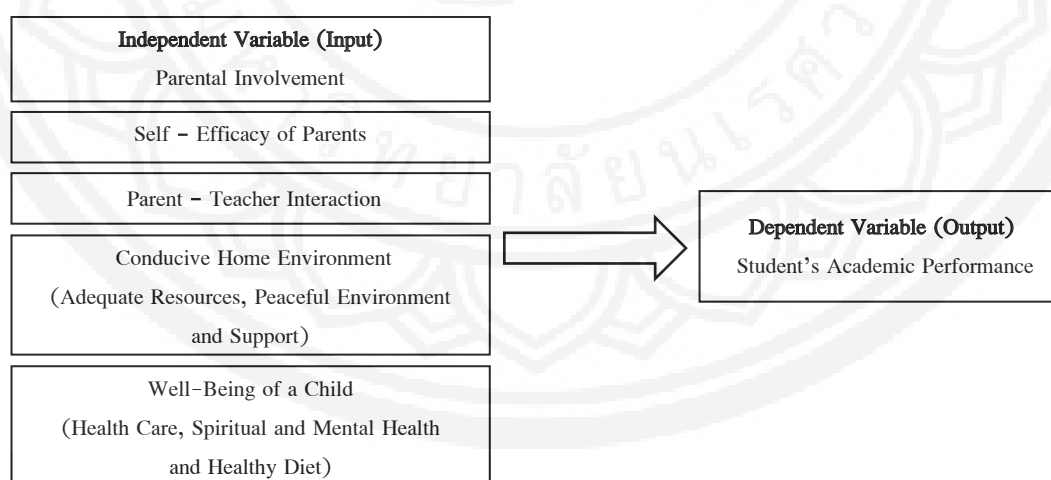


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study



Methodology

Study Area

Study was conducted in Pelrithang Middle Secondary School at Gelephu in southern part of Bhutan. The school was established in 1981, within the 33 acres of land. There were a total of 1124 students with 51 teachers during the time of study was conducted in 2019.

Research Design & Sampling Technique

The data were collected through Concurrent Convergent Design (Figure 2) since the qualitative and the quantitative data were collected simultaneously (Creswell, 2014). The intention of doing so is to co-relate the data being collected from both the sources and compare with the dependent variable (i.e., student's academic performance).

The sample size consists of 220 students, 5 teachers and 10 parents. A purposive sampling technique was employed for both qualitative and quantitative data collection as the nature of the study demanded the participation of high achievers (toppers) and low achievers (ones who failed or with low aggregate in Midterm examination). Samples include students of classes six to ten. The researcher recruited 220 students taking 44 from each level (class 6 to 10), considering their midterm consolidated mark sheet for quantitative findings.

A Judgemental sampling technique was adopted for selection of teachers for the interview. Selected samples of teachers were having experience in dealing with parents and the ones having sound knowledge on parenting programmes held in the school, giving more preference to biology or science teachers. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

To carry out semi-structured interview with selected students, a purposive sampling was adopted, where ten students were selected for the interview based on their biology or science marks. Five High achievers were selected based on marks above 65%. Five Low achievers were selected based on mark below 45%. Ten student participants consisted of 5 high achievers and 5 low achievers which included two (1 high achiever and 1 low achiever) from each level (class 6–10).

To conduct semi-structured interview with the parent, a purposive sampling technique was adopted. Parents of selected students (10 students) were recruited for the interview.

Convergent Parallel Design

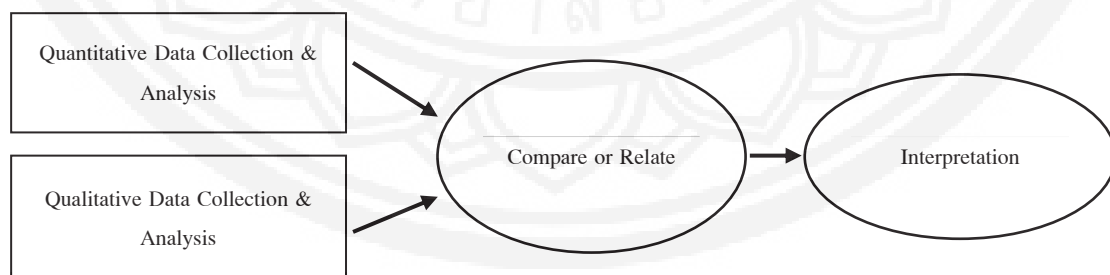


Figure 2 Convergent Mixed Methods Design (Adapted from Creswell, 2014)

Data Collection & Data Analysis

Closed-ended rating scale item questions were developed. The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used as tool to collect data from students to explore the level of parental guidance and its effect on their



academic success. Data compilation, data sorting, data cleaning and analysis was done using the Microsoft excel package 2007.

In this study, use of different data collection tools was intended to overcome the weakness and intrinsic biases of each type of method has. The results from the survey questionnaires and the interviews data were compared to see if similar themes were seen across all the participants. The reliability for the internal consistency of the data was run through the Cronbach's alpha test using the reliability commend in SPSS, which confirmed the acceptable Cronbach alpha value of 0.70. The qualitative tool was administered to further cross check the elucidated responses of participants in the survey questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics such as the means and standard deviations were generated to find out the difference in the level of parental involvement (Self-efficacy of Parents, the well-being of the child, parent-teacher interaction and home environment) in between a high achievers and low achievers).

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to find the statistically significant differences between the high achiever and the low achiever in relation to various aspects of parental involvement. Spearman Correlation Coefficient analysis was also carried out to find the relationship between the aspects of parental involvement with academic performance and also to examine the percentage of each aspect that attributed to student's academic performance.

Result and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

From various sections of each level (class 6 to 10), five to six high achievers and five to six low achievers were identified adding up to 22 high achievers and 22 low achievers from each level. A total of were 110 high achievers and 110 low achievers were obtained as participants from the five levels.

Out of the 220 students, 46.4% ($n = 102$) of the respondents were male and 53.6% ($n = 118$) of the respondents were female. The majority ($n = 135$) of the respondents were 14 to 17 years of age. A majority ($n = 192$) of the respondents had both parents and 10% ($n = 22$) of the respondents were from divorced parents. Total of 40.9% ($n = 90$) respondent's parents were civil servants followed by 38.2% ($n = 84$) of the parents as farmers and least by religious body 0.9% ($n = 2$). Total of 47.7% ($n = 105$) of the respondent's parents were uneducated, 36.4% ($n = 80$) were having a primary level qualification, 11.4% ($n = 25$) with high school qualification and only 2.7% ($n = 6$) of the respondent's parents were having a bachelor's qualification. A Total of 86.3% ($n = 190$) of the respondents lived with their parents, 12.3% ($n = 27$) with guardians and 1.4% ($n = 3$) with others.

Home Environment

This research question surveyed students' opinion on the type of home environment they live in and the type of impact it has on their learning. The survey questionnaire about home environment showed a lower mean ($\bar{X} = 2.9$) from low achievers comparing to mean of high achievers ($\bar{X} = 3.1$). However, the relationship between the home environment of the child and academic performance was represented by a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.434$). The result shows that the high achievers have a better home environment than the low achievers. Therefore, the home environment does determine the academic performance of a child. Consequently, the interview conducted with parents, teachers and students agreed upon maintaining a conducive home environment for better learning.



As per Heddy (2014), on the study conducted on Facilitating interest and out of school engagement in science in secondary school girls through parental involvement, highlighted the benefits of parental involvement that included higher achievement, attendance, graduation rates, attitudes toward school, engagement, and motivation. Similarly, Atta & Jamil (2012) stated that at the secondary school level students need maximum guidance, motivation and supervision to enhance their performance and to compete with their peers. Consequently, the current study has found out that parental influence has a strong effect on the educational attainments of students. If we want our students to perform better than the people around them needs to encourage, appreciate and motivate them. High motivation and engagement in learning have consistently been linked to reduced dropout rate and increased level of student success.

Table 1 Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient Test between the Students' Academic Performance and Independent Variables

		AP	HE	PTI	SE	WB	
Spearman's rho	Academic Performance	Correlation Coefficient	1	.434**	.448**	.495**	.483**
	(AP)	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0
	Home Environment	Correlation Coefficient		1	.525**	.503**	.589**
	(HE)	Sig. (2-tailed)			0	0	0
	Parent Teacher Interaction	Correlation Coefficient			1	.635**	.607**
	(PTI)	Sig. (2-tailed)				0	0
	Self-Efficacy	Correlation Coefficient				1	.591**
	(SE)	Sig. (2-tailed)					0
	Wellbeing (WB)	Correlation Coefficient					1
	N		219	219	219	219	219

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: AP: Academic Performance; HE: Home Environment; PTI: Parent Teacher Interaction; SE: Self-Efficacy; WB: Wellbeing

Parent-Teacher Interaction

The second research question was focused on surveying the opinion of the students on the prevailing level of parent-teacher interaction. The data from survey questionnaire revealed that the overall mean for parent-teacher interaction from low achievers was lower ($\bar{X} = 2.70$) compared to the overall mean for high achievers ($\bar{X} = 3.30$). Further, the relationship between parent-teacher interaction and academic performance was represented by a spearman's rho correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.448$), which falls in the range of a moderate correlation. Further one-way ANOVA was conducted which showed significant difference among the high and low achievers on the parent-teacher interaction, ($F(1,218) = 31.563, p = 0.00$) (Table 2). The result shows that the high achievers have better parent-teacher interaction than the low achievers. Therefore, parent-teacher interaction is considered one of the most important factors that affect a student's academic performance.

Table 2 ANOVA Test and Robust Test for Equality of Means of Parent-Teacher Interaction

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Welch Test		
						Df1	Df2	Sig
Between Groups	3.93	1	3.93	31.6	0.00	1	212.9	0.00
Within Groups	27.20	218	0.12					

The study conducted by Brooks (2005), on 'No Hard Feelings': Finding the Focus in A Teacher-Student Function stated that, a teacher should get to know the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the children under his or her

tutorship. When children know that teachers are communicating with their parents, it sweetens the community of encouragement necessary for those children to improve their potential in learning. Similarly, (Flemmings, 2013; Paul, Priya, & Gayathri, 2018) added that if teachers get to know the parents, they might begin to understand the children a little better and tolerance of certain aspects of their behaviour might bring the change from zero to one.

The current findings suggest that the collaboration, partnership, and sharing of ideas to help young people is a great benefit not only for teachers but for parents as well. This joint partnership enables parents and teachers to have positive conversations with the same goal in mind – helping students to be successful. Partnerships develop when parents and teachers trust and respect one another, develop standards jointly to meet goals, and create an atmosphere where the sharing of ideas takes place. When stakeholders work towards the same goals, embracing the same ideas, the possibility of implanting common goals and objectives improves. If teachers are perceived as caring about the welfare of children, communicate respect for parents, and establish effective ways of communicating with families, parents become more inclined to be involved in their children's schooling. If the reverse is the case, parents would tend to have a disinclination for parental involvement (Chindanya, 2011).

Self-Efficacy of the Parents

The data from Survey questionnaire revealed that the overall mean for self-efficacy of the parents of the low achievers was lower ($\bar{x} = 3.10$) comparing to the overall mean of the high achievers ($\bar{x} = 3.30$). Further, the relationship between self-efficacy of parents and academic performance was represented by a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.495$), which falls in the range of a moderate correlation. Further one-way ANOVA was conducted. There was a significant difference among the high and low achievers on the self-efficacy of the parents, ($F(1,218) = 47.27, p = 0.00$).

Parents with high self-efficacy are generally more optimistic, authoritative, and consistent in interactions with their children than those with lower parental self-efficacy (Chindanya, 2011). Likewise, current study revealed that the self-efficacy of high achiever's parents is higher than the self-efficacy of low achiever's parents. This could be because parents with higher self-efficacy can be able to monitor and assist their children's work. On the other hand, parents with low self-efficacy cannot help their children with homework or any other academic-related tasks.

Table 3 ANOVA Test and Robust Test for Equality of Means of Self-Efficacy of Parents

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Welch Test		
						Df1	Df2	Sig
Between Groups	5.76	1	5.76	47.3	0.00	1	209.6	0.00
Within Groups	26.59	218	0.12					

According to Wulandary & Herlisa (2017), mothers were more involved in the process of assisting a child in education than fathers. As mentioned by male teachers of school, "it has become more of women's affair in bringing up a child, such a taboo, or stereotype has to be broken and involve both male and female in making child's life and let them realise the importance of both the parents". Even though both of parents were working and busy with their job, usually mothers were the ones attending any of the school programs.

Similarly, it was noticed that the role of parents of low achievers was just to remind and ensure the completion of work at home. Whether the students understood the tasks assigned was not the priority. Thus, the parents of low achievers were not fully engaged in assisting the children while doing homework. In addition, limited



knowledge of the material taught in schools also caused the learning assistance to be ineffective. Therefore, to overcome the difficulties of children in completing assignments, parents enable with facilities such as internet technology or going for tuition or getting help from an educated individual from the neighbourhood.

Well-Being of the Child

The fourth research question was focused on the survey about the opinion of the students and parents on how much attention do parents give on their children's wellbeing. The data from Survey questionnaire revealed that the overall mean for the wellbeing of the child from low achievers was lower ($\bar{x} = 2.90$) compared to overall mean for high achievers ($\bar{x} = 3.20$). Further, the relationship between the wellbeing of the child and academic performance was represented by a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.483$, $p = 0.000$), which falls in the range of a moderate correlation (Table 1). This data, when charted on a scatter plot, showed a positive linear relationship. The result showed that the parents of high achievers give more attention to the wellbeing of their children comparing to the parents of the low achievers. Therefore, the wellbeing of the child can be one of the important factors that determine a student's academic performance. Consequently, the interview conducted with parents, teachers and students agreed that it is very important to take care of the wellbeing for the overall development of a child. To validate further, one-way ANOVA was conducted which showed significant difference among the high and low achievers on well-being of the child, ($F(1,217) = 27.611$, $p = 0.00$). (Table 4)

Table 4 ANOVA Test and Robust Test for Equality of Means of Wellbeing of Children

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Welch Test		
						Df1	Df2	Sig
Between Groups	3.16	1	3.16	27.6	0.00	1	206.4	0.00
Within Groups	24.87	217	0.11					

The mental, physical, social and spiritual well-being of the child was considered an important aspect of parental involvement by the participants. It was noticed that parents need to examine the problem faced by their kids from their point of view rather than judging the problem from what it really appears to be. Instilling trust and security and giving them enough freedom in doing things on their choice instead of enforcing our notion upon them was considered important. Regular physical exercises (games), nutritional diet, and at the same time taking up hobbies and socialising with friends would keep them healthy. Though these aspects of the well-being of the child were frequently thought about seldom it was taken into account as a practical solution for enhancing children's learning competency. This was evident as there was very limited research being done on finding the relation between the well-being of a child and their academic performance.

Shellenbarger (2009), reported that "the most important parental role of all is to shape your child's attitude toward learning and school, communicate high expectations, and help him or her set goals and solve learning problems". Further, Huang & Mason (2008) claimed that parents take pleasure in hearing about how their child is doing in school, the new educational objectives and standards in which students are engaged, and what is taking place in the whole school. Having this knowledge and a better understanding of what is going on in the educational classroom for their child helps connect them, forming a partnership with the school, family and their child. The present study revealed that parents do not always know the ways in which they can become engaged and get involved in their child's education. They do not know that homework is a learning experience that should be rewarding rather than a means of giving punishment. Parents need to have acceptance about the individual child's



learning pace and their own capacity instead of comparing them with the rest of their friends, which might have a long-term negative effect. Therefore, homework should be fun and a sort of reinforcement of work. However, educators and parents are concerned with the time that must be allotted to homework, being careful to make it age and learning ability appropriate. Parents shared that they know and understand the power of education and frequently talk to their children about the sacrifices they are making. They make sure that they do not overstress their children while frequently monitoring their regular activities and friends.

The current findings revealed that when parents are involved in their children education program they desire to do better in their academic performance because they feel really cared about their future. This feeling transfers into positive grades, awards, and a sense of great accomplishment for the students. Further, the finding also indicated that parents generally want and need direction to participate with maximum effectiveness and pride. Parents and schools reiterate that they cannot develop and educate the child in isolation. Rather a collective, collaborative effort, and deliberate approach to education must be taken to enhance parent-school relationships. Parents can focus more on taking a genuine interest in their studies, giving specifically consistent support, communicate with teachers, encourage desired behaviours, take pride in their achievement, have trust and respect for your child and be a role model. Providing home support for learning gives the school a chance to see that the parent is making an attempt to collaborate with the school for their child's education. Though parents are aware of what to do, the challenge lies in how to engage them in their child's education to make them more effective partners in education. Beyond volunteering at school or being involved in parent-teacher related organizations, there need to be stronger working relationships developed between home and school to bridge the gap between parents and teachers helping students reach their fullest potential. Educators have to attempt to bridge this gap in education to enable Bhutanese students to make contributions to society and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Conclusion

In this study, parental involvement has been proven to have a positive impact on student academic achievement regardless of parental background. The study revealed the existing major differences between the parents of low achievers and high achievers. Right from their reluctance and willingness to attend the interview to their disingenuousness and genuineness in expressing their views clearly reflected the level and the standard of parental involvement. The result emphasised that parents of low achievers were least concerned about their child's education. Whereas, the parents of high achievers were very authentic and thoughtful in the upbringing of their child and did follow all possible ways in guiding their children for better academic performance.

The result also revealed that parents who were self-efficient in terms of educational background had children with better performance than parents who were not efficient in guiding their children in their studies. Further, children with conducive home environment, having proper care in terms of physical and mental wellbeing indisputably showed elevated academic performance than the ones who haven't had such comfort.

However, there were also truly self-determined students who experience their engagement with their studies as decided by themselves and based on their personal values and interests. In this case, the individual is the initiator of his or her own actions with regard to studying, and the perceived locus of causality is considered to be internal. By contrast, students who were not self-determined experience their actions related to study as being determined by outside pressures such as rewards or various other forces outside themselves.



Parents are an important asset to improving academic achievement, and they should be given the tools necessary to be active in their children's schools. Promoting parental involvement focuses on consistency and teamwork from all stakeholders involved who should work together for the common good of the students and school. Our passion for parenting and the use of our educational leadership skills to make decisions and lead in this challenging, bureaucratic, educational, and political society will benefit all children regardless of race, religions and nationality.

As per study it was found out that parents were hesitant to communicate with teachers due to language barrier most of the time. Parents even stated that children can sustain without education. However fewer parents showed lower self-esteem due to lack of parenting skills. However, parents are willing to learn parenting skills which can have personal development in students. For better performance of student's research suggest to have informal small core group meeting frequently to have better understanding between teachers and parents.

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