

**Perceptions of Students about Home-Based and School-Based Parental Involvement at Secondary School Level**

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**Abstract**

*The role of parental involvement in their children's educational growth and development has become a dominant theme in academic discussion. One way to examine the role of parental involvement in children's educational performance is to view it broadly in the context it takes place i.e., at home or in school. In literature, these forms of parental involvement are referred to home- and school-based parental involvement. Results of research indicate that there is sufficient evidence about positive and consistent impact of home-based parental involvement on children's academic outcomes in comparison with limited evidence about impact of school-based parental involvement. These results show that nature and context of parental involvement is also important for positive academic outcomes for students. This research work is, therefore, particularly focused on examining the perceptions of students about home- and school-based parental involvement at secondary level in district Multan. This research further investigates the impact of children's gender in choosing home- and school-based parental involvement practices. Finally, it examined the relationship between home-based and school-based parental involvement in secondary school. This research was descriptive in nature and survey design was used. All students studying at 69 public and private schools of Multan city were selected as a population. Of these, 392 students were randomly selected as sample using cluster and stratified random techniques. For data collection, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was administered. For data analysis, mean, SD, independent-sample t-test and Pearson correlation were used. The results found that the level of home-based parental involvement is very higher in contrast with low-moderate level of school-based involvement. Finally, it was recommended for teachers and schools to develop collaboration with parents for the mutual benefit of both.*

**Keywords:** Parental involvement, home-based; school-based; students, school.

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## **Introduction**

In literature, the term *parent involvement* has been used in broad perspective. It includes many different forms of involvement in children's education, both within and out of school activities. For example, parents support children's schooling by responding to school obligations and by attending numerous school-based activities such as parent-teacher meetings (Chowa, Masa, & Tucker, 2013; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989). By engaging in such activities, parents help their children in improving their schoolwork, providing encouragement to them, arranging suitable space and study time, help them in modeling wanted behavior, monitoring their homework, and teaching their children at home. In other activities, parents can volunteer themselves with school- or classroom-based activities (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989).

In the context of parental involvement, the term parent refers to students' biological parents and guardians. Chowa et al. (2013) asserted that parental involvement consists home- and school-based activities. Hiatt-Michael (2008) explained that parental involvement includes: helping children in studies, monitoring their activities inside and outside home, motivating them to do their homework, and providing tutoring services for children to improve their learning in school subjects. At advance level of parent involvement, parents take an active role in schools' governance and decision making for provision of children's education (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989).

From the deeper perspective, the term parental involvement refers to multifaceted concept and, therefore, has been defined in several ways in literature. For example, Epstein's framework of parental involvement is amongst the most useful work that helped academia in defining various practices related to parental involvement (Epstein, 1995). This widely accepted, and the highly cited, framework of parental involvement comprises six major types and thus serves as a guide for educators and schools to develop comprehensive school-family partnerships. The six major types of involvement in Epstein's work include: parenting (i.e., helping parents with parenting skills), learning at home (i.e., facilitating learning at home), communicating with school (i.e., developing an effective school-home communication), volunteering (i.e., creating ways for involving families in school-based activities), decision-making (i.e., families' participation in decision making), and collaborating with community i.e., serving community (Epstein, 1995; Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010). Researchers have based their types of parental involvement on Epstein's work (Chowa et al., 2013; Sheldon, 2003).

Importance of each of these types of parental involvement is evidenced from the literature as well as research. Prior research on various types of parental involvement mostly shows that all these types of involvement are positively linked with students' outcomes (Topor et al., 2010). For example, Epstein (1995) emphasizes that each of these parental involvement comprises a range of practices undertaken by

students, teachers, and parents and are, therefore, related with different outcomes for them. She further emphasized that educators and parents be encouraged to select such set of practices that are likely to produce desired outcomes for them. Despite producing desired outcomes for students, not all forms of involvement are likely to improve students' achievement. For example, while the certain types of involvement practices are likely to impact students' achievement scores, other practices may be helpful in improving their attitudes and behaviors (Chemagosi, Odongo, & Aloka, 2016; Epstein, 1995). Epstein (1995) further emphasized that that some types of parental involvement practices may have indirect or secondary effects.

Overall, the results of prior research clearly show the positive linkage of parental involvement with children's performance, irrespective of type of involvement (Hara & Burke, 1998; Topor et al., 2010). For example, Barnard (2004) reported positive association between early parental involvement and students' academic success in schools. Conversely, Bronstein, Ginsburg, and Herrera (2005) found that lack of guidance by students' parents is related with poor academic performance of students. At the same pattern, a meta-analysis of 50 studies by Hill and Tyson (2009) revealed positive association between parental involvement and pupils' achievement. Parents' involvement in school is positively associated with children's grades also (Marschall, 2006; Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007).

Another way to review role of parental involvement in children's achievement is to view it in the context it occurs i.e., at school or at home (Jeynes, 2003). In literature, these contexts of parental involvement are generally referred to as *home-based* and *school-based parental involvement*. The home-based involvement activities includes: speaking with children about school, to help them in homework, encouraging them for an academic success, expressing high expectations from them, and providing environment to them conducive to learning (Altschul, 2012; Chowa et al., 2013). School-based involvement, on the other hand, includes contacting with teachers, monitoring children's attendance and their activities, examining their progress on periodical basis, volunteering at school, communicating with staff and teachers, and participating in school organizations and events (Oyserman et al., 2007).

The context of the home-based parental involvement is broader than just those activities which take place at home. Home-based involvement includes taking children to the places and events that foster their academic performance i.e., to museums, historical places, libraries, galleries, and to performances (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012; Hill & Tyson, 2009). There are two important reasons for distinguishing school/home-based involvement. First, some research studies distinguish school- and home-based parent involvement and reported contradictory impact of both on children's outcomes (Jeynes, 2003). Second, intervention programs focused on encouraging parental involvement differ based on the context of involvement (Chowa et al., 2013).

Interventions encouraging school-based parent may comprise teacher-training programs to build school-parents relationships, whereas interventions focused on home-involvement include parental workshops for building parents' educational knowledge and skills (Chowa et al., 2013; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Studies have reported contradictory impact of home/school-based parents' involvement on children's outcomes. Results about impact of home-based involvement on students' outcomes are positive, consistent, and significant (Chowa et al., 2013). Results about the effect of school-based involvement on students' outcomes are, however, mixed. For instance, Chowa et al. (2013) found significant negative impact of school-based involvement on students' outcomes. On the other hand, some studies reported very positive relationship of school-based parents' involvement with children's emotional and social adjustment (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009).

Considering the results of above-cited research, there is sufficient evidence about the positive and consistent impact of home-based parental involvement on students' academic outcomes in comparison with limited evidence about impact of school-based involvement (Westmoreland et al., 2009). It can, thus, be concluded that the nature and the context of parental involvement is also important for positive students' academic outcomes. In the context of Pakistan, however, very little has been explored to understand the nature and the context of home- and school-based parental involvement at schools. It is, therefore, significant to explore the nature and the context of parental involvement at school level in Pakistan. Likewise, context of home/school-based parental involvement has not much been explored from students' gender perspective. This article is, therefore, focused on examining students' perceptions about home- and school-based parental involvement at secondary schools of Multan. This research further investigates the impact of children's gender in choosing home/school-based parental involvement practices.

### *Objectives and Hypotheses*

This study examines students' perceptions about home- and school-based parental involvement at secondary schools of Multan. Key objectives of this research were as follows:

- To examine students' perceptions about home- and school-based parental involvement practices at secondary schools.
- To examine differences between students' perceptions about home- and school-based parental involvement by their nature at secondary schools.
- To examine the differences between students' gender-based perceptions about home/school-based parental involvement.

Keeping in view the key objectives of research, two sets of research and null hypotheses were stated to understand nature and context of home/school-based parent involvement at secondary schools of Multan. The hypotheses of this study were as follows:

- Research Hypotheses 1 ( $H_1$ ): There is statistically significant difference between students' perceptions about the nature and context of parental involvement, namely, between home/school-based parental activities at secondary schools.
- Null Hypotheses 1 ( $H_0$ ): Vice versa.
- Research Hypotheses 2 ( $H_1$ ): There is statistically significant difference between students' gender-based perceptions about home/school-based parental activities at secondary schools.
- Null Hypotheses 2 ( $H_0$ ): Vice versa.

## **Research Methodology**

### *Research Design, Population and Sample*

This research study was mainly descriptive in nature and survey design was used. All students, currently studying at public and private sector secondary schools of the Multan City, both male and female, served as a population of this study. Considering the diverse nature of population, the children studying in selected schools belong to diverse socio-economic status, with varied educational background of their parents. Furthermore, population comprised all 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Total number of public sector secondary schools, both male and female, situated in Multan city was 59. While, the total number of private sector secondary schools included in this study, both male and female, were 10. All students, studying at these 69 schools were selected as a population.

Out of 69 public and private secondary schools, ten schools (i.e., 12% of the population) were selected using cluster sampling technique. Of these 10, five schools were selected from each gender, eight from public sector and two from private sector schools. Of these ten schools, two classes were randomly selected, one each from 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. This resulted into random selection of 20 classes from ten schools. All 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students; both male and female, studying in selected 20 classes were selected as a sample. Total number of students, available on the specific days of data collection, in these twenty classes was 392, who served as a sample using cluster and stratified random sampling techniques. Of these 392, 183 students (i.e., 47%) were girls and 209 (i.e., 53%) were boys.

### *Research Tool*

For data collection, a questionnaire was used as a research tool. Questionnaire comprised three sections. First section was designed to seek demographic information

of the participants. The second section comprised 15 closed-ended items, designed on five-point Likert scale, ranging from *SD* (strongly disagree=1) to *SA* (strongly agree=5). These 15 items were based on the literature, representing various dimensions of home/school-based parental activities. Of these 15 items, eight were designed to examine the extent of home-based parental involvement, while seven to examine the extent of school-based involvement. Final section of the questionnaire comprised five open-ended questions to explore various dimensions of home- and school-based parental involvement, as perceived by students. The questionnaire was found to be highly reliable with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82. Validity of the questionnaire was determined by ensuring that all 15 closed-ended and five open-ended items represented various dimensions of home- and school-based parental involvement.

#### *Data Collection and Data Analysis*

The tool was administered personally by the researchers to 392 secondary school students. The opinion on the open-ended questions was optional. For the analysis of closed-ended items, the mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were used, with help of latest version of SPSS. For the analysis of open-ended items, content analysis was used.

### **Results**

The results have been presented in three sub-sections in response to objectives and hypotheses, followed by a subsection related to findings of qualitative data analysis.

#### *Perceptions of students about home- and school-based parental involvement*

To examine students' perceptions about the level of home-based parental involvement, values of mean and standard deviations were calculated, and these results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *Perceptions of students about home-based parental involvement*

S. No.	Themes	Mean	SD
1	Involvement in schooling	4.13	1.22
2	Knowing teachers	4.40	1.13
3	Knowing friends	4.37	1.15
4	Having contact with teachers	4.38	1.14
5	Diary for communication	3.92	1.40
6	Helping in homework	4.02	1.39
7	Providing books and materials	4.59	0.98
8	Taking pain for study	4.46	1.11
	Overall	4.28	1.19

Table 1 shows that the mean values for seven statements lies between 4.00 and 4.60. The mean value for one statement is just approaching 4, i.e., 3.92. These values indicate a higher parental involvement on all aspects of home-based parental involvement, as perceived by their children. Overall mean value of 4.28 also confirms the same and it can be thus concluded that students believe that their parents are involved in home-based activities to a higher extent. The values of standard deviation, however, indicate a moderate consensus of participants. To examine students' perceptions about level of school-based involvement, mean and standard deviations were calculated, and Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2  
*Perceptions of students about school-based parental involvement*

S. No.	Themes	Mean	SD
1	Parent-teacher conferences	3.53	1.46
2	Parent-teacher meetings	3.41	1.53
3	Open day events	3.11	1.58
4	Co-curricular activities	3.05	1.63
5	Occasional visits	3.45	1.51
6	Volunteering	3.39	1.53
7	Regular contact	3.77	1.32
Overall		3.39	1.51

Table 2 shows that the mean values for all statements lies between 3.05 and 3.77. These values indicate a very low level of parents' involvement on two aspects of school-based involvement i.e., in participation of events and co-curricular activities. Mean values on the remaining five aspects of school-based involvement is moderate, which shows a moderate level of parental involvement in these activities. Overall mean value of 3.39 indicates that children perceive that the level of their parents' involvement in school activities is low-moderate. Values of standard deviation indicate moderate consensus among participants.

*Differences between Students' Perceptions about home/school-based parental involvement*

To examine differences between students' perceptions about the extent of home/school-based parental involvement, an independent sample t-test was used, as in Table 3.

Table 3

*Differences between level of home- and school-based parental involvement*

Involvement Nature	N	Mean	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
School-based	392	23.71			
Home-based	392	34.27	-22.78	782	.000

Table 3 shows that the mean value of the home-based parental involvement activities is greater than school-based activities. The p-value of 0.000 (i.e.,  $p < 0.05$ ) shows a statistically significant difference between students' perceptions about level of home/school-based parental activities. Students believe that their parents are more involved in home-based parental activities than school-based. On these results, research hypothesis was accepted, while null was rejected.

*Difference between students' gender-based perceptions about home/school-based parental involvement*

To examine the differences between students' gender-based perceptions about home/school-based parental involvement, an independent sample t-test was used, and Table 4 shows results.

Table 4

*Differences between students' gender-based perceptions about home/school-based parental involvement*

Involvement Nature	Gender	N	Mean	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
School-based	Females	183	22.54	-3.05	390	.002
	Males	209	24.73	-22.78		
Home-based	Females	183	35.32	3.50	390	.001
	Males	209	33.35	-22.78		
Overall	Females	183	57.86	-0.20	390	.841
	Males	209	58.08	70.80		

Table 4 shows that mean value for male students is greater than female in school-based parental activities. The p-value of 0.002 shows statistically significant difference between perceptions of both and male students believe that their parents are more involved in school-based activities than female. On these bases, null hypothesis was rejected, while research was accepted.

On the other hand, Table 4 further indicates that mean value for female students is greater than male in home-based activities. The p-value of 0.001 shows statistically significant difference between students' perceptions and female students believe that



their parents are more involved in home-based parental activities than male. Null hypothesis was, thus, rejected and research was accepted, in favor of female students.

Overall analysis of parental involvement in home/school-based activities shows that the mean for male students is greater than female. The p-value of 0.841 shows statistically insignificant difference between both and, therefore, children's gender has no impact on level of parental involvement. On basis of these results, null hypothesis was accepted, and research hypothesis was rejected.

### *Results of Open-Ended Questions*

For analysis of open-ended questions, content analysis technique was used. Analysis revealed five most frequently-occurred themes. These themes, in order of their occurring frequency, include: motivating children regularly, contacting teachers to monitor children's performance, help in homework, arranging tutor for studies, and having teachers' contact number. Of these five frequently-emerged themes, three are focused on home-based involvement and two are focused on school-based parental involvement. These results confirm quantitative results.

### **Discussion**

This study found that secondary school students believe that their parents are involved in home-based activities to a higher extent in contrast with low-moderate level of involvement in school-based activities. Considering the positive, consistent, and significant impact of the home-based parental involvement on children's academic outcomes (Chowa et al., 2013), the results of this study are highly satisfactory from the perspective of students. Considering the positive but inconsistent relationship of school-based parental involvement with students' emotional and social adjustments (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Westmoreland et al., 2009), results of this study are comparatively less satisfactory from students' students. These results show the lack of collaboration between parents and schools and there is a need to develop linkage between both stakeholders for the mutual benefit of both. Results showed that students *perceive* that their parents are more concerned about the education of their male children, in context of school-based activities. Results also showed that parents are more careful about the education of their female children, in context of home-based activities. Overall, it was concluded that although parents are involved in both school- and home-based parental activities, the focus is on the later.

### **Conclusions**

The following four conclusions were drawn from the results of the study, in response to four objectives of this research.

- First, secondary school students believe in higher degree of their parent's involvement in home-based activities in contrast with the low-moderate involvement in school-based activities.

- Second, a statistically significant difference was found between students' perceptions about the level of home- and school-based parental activities, and they believe that their parents are more involved in home-based activities than school-based.
- Third, male students significantly believe that their parents are more involved in school-based parental activities than female. In contrast, female students significantly believe that their parents are more involved in home-based parental activities than male. Both these differences were statistically insignificant, when counted overall.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for teachers, parents, schools, administrators, and policy makers. First, the results of this study observed the lack of collaboration between parents and schools and, therefore, it is recommended for teachers and schools to develop collaboration with parents for the mutual benefit of both. Second, results of this study showed that students perceive that their parents are more concerned about education of their male children, in school-based activities. It is, therefore, important to examine in future researches whether gender differences in school-based parental activities is due to expression of opportunity differences between male and female schools or the differences in interest or willingness to participate on the part of parents. It is further suggested for the parents to take an equal interest in school-based activities of their female children. Third, results showed that parents are more careful about education of their female children in context of home-based activities. It is, thus, recommended that parents should focus equally on their male children at home. Overall results showed that the level of parental involvement in school-based activities is low-moderate in contrast with bit higher level in home-based activities. It is, therefore, recommended for teachers, schools, administrators, and policymakers to devise and implement workable policies for the promotion of parental involvement at school level. Finally, it is also worthy to examine whether students' perceptions about parents' involvement in school- and home-based activities correlate with their academic outcomes.

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