

THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL VALUATION OF
EDUCATION ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

In today's educational landscape, it is paramount that parents be involved in the education of their children. Research indicates that students whose parents are involved in the educational process are more likely to perform better and achieve more than students whose parents are absent from the process. Notably, studies have shown that the presence of a father in the household can significantly increase the chances of increased student achievement (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). The purpose of this study was to determine if there exists a correlation between parental involvement and student academic achievement.

This study examined parental involvement through a survey concerning the participation of parents in their child's education and school. The Likert-type survey was administered to parents of students in the 2017 graduating class. The study was composed of ten questions which were intended to measure the parents' level of involvement in their child's education, as well as, demographic information concerning the parents' level of education, employment, area of work if applicable, and length of time employed. The data from these surveys were compiled into an average parental involvement score with a score of 3 being neutral, a score below 3 indicating a low level of participation, scores greater than 3 indicating a high level of involvement. The parental involvement score was compared to student grade point averages (GPA) to determine if there was a correlation between the two.

Several statistical measures were used to examine the data to answer the research question directing this study. Pearson's r was used to test the two variables, parental attitudes, and student achievement, and to determine whether or not there is a linear correlation between the parental value of education and student achievement. The data indicated that there is a positive relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. The coding was based on a scale of 1-5 in which a rating of 1 indicated high school education is unimportant; a rating of 2 meant high school education is not very important; a rating of 3 meant high school education is neither necessary or unimportant; a rating of 4 indicated high school is somewhat important; and a rating of 5 meant high school education is very important to parents. These data were compared with student GPA on a 4.0 scale to determine if there was a correlation between parental involvement and student academic success.

When analyzing data, it was found that there was a positive correlation between the variables, $r = 0.033$, $n = 40$, $p = 0.038$ (Appendix B). Considering the p -value is less than 0.05, this requires a rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the means and concludes that a significant difference does exist. These findings illustrate that increased parental involvement can play an important role in student achievement.

The implications of this study suggest that through increased parental involvement in education the parent demonstrates that he or she feels education is valuable. This demonstration of parental valuation of education could influence the child's perception of the importance of education leading to greater academic achievement. Another implication of the study is that greater parental involvement allows for increased communication between the teacher and the parent. A third implication of the study is that parents who are involved with their student's education will have a better understanding of ways to help their child academically.

Key terms: *parental involvement, single parent family, diversity, cultural misalignment.*

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my son Joseph Derrick “Jody” Partin (9/25/89-4/23/16). While I am devastated that we lost you, I am thankful for the time you were with us. You are loved beyond measure and I cannot wait until the day that I see you again.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Whether through failing grades, financial struggles, problems at home, homelessness, bullying, peer pressure or just lack of interest, students become distanced from school and school attendance (Landis & Reschley, 2013). Often, the end result of this is a student's ceasing to attend school before graduating and receiving a diploma. Student attrition is often the ultimate result of a process of disengagement from school. Students failing to complete, at least, their secondary education have a great effect on society in general, on the future of the students personally, and on their own children. The key factors correlated with students failing to reach their educational goals include the quality of parental involvement and stakeholders' attitudes toward education.

Researchers and leaders in the field of education agree that parental involvement is vital to student success (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents desire success for their children (Brandt, 1989; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Ethnic background, race and socioeconomic background have very little bearing on parental concern and contribution to their child's education (Brandt, 1989; Davies, 1987; Mapp, 2002). A nationwide poll exploring the attitudes of parents in the United States concerning their local schools found that the majority valued involvement in the schools and were willing to become more involved in their child's education (Public Education Network, 2000).

Background of Study

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 can be seen as the genesis for much of today's concern for parental involvement in a child's education (Berger, 2008). Experts

agree that the “importance of parental involvement in a child’s academic success is inarguable” (Flynn, 2007, p. 27). According to Garrett (2008) the paramount period of interest for educational researchers regarding the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. Consequently, a consensus regarding the need for parental and community involvement was readily agreed upon in pedagogical circles (Epstein et al., 2009).

The question is what is parental involvement? A child has two main educational providers in his or her life, parent and teachers. The parents Act as the primary educator until the child begins school, at which time both teachers and parents play critical roles. The parents’ influence and support, however, is constantly needed throughout the child's life, but is especially critical throughout his or her school career. While there is no total agreement as to how parental involvement roles may be defined or quantified, two broad areas exist: parental involvement in the school and the commitment in supporting the child (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Parental involvement is essential to the child's social and cognitive development. Even as early as the preschool years, parental involvement has been correlated with greater academic gains. The things that parents do with their children are important for the child's development. Activities performed at home which inspire learning contribute to the child’s social and intellectual development even more than their parent’s occupation or family income (Fisher, McCulloch, & Gershuny, 1999).

Those children with higher test scores, competence, and intelligence usually come from homes where parents hold higher educational expectations and aspirations for them than the parents of those children who did not score as well. Parents who exert increased pressure to

achieve, offer supplementary educational guidance, and demonstrate more interest in their children are more likely to have academically successful children (Admundson, 1988).

Students who receive parental influence at home in the preschool years, such as, playing with letters and numbers, emphasizing the alphabet, reading together, learning songs, nursery rhymes, painting, drawing, and visits to libraries and museums have been shown to demonstrate higher levels of achievement in the long term. This study also found differences in the types of home learning activities that parents conducted with boys when compared to girls. For example, girls' parents reported activities like reading songs nursery rhymes more often. Differences in these parental aspects could account for some of the variation in social behavioral outcomes of boys and girls as they enter primary school (Flouri, 2006).

Studies also indicate that parental involvement continues to benefit students into the teenage years as well as adulthood. A National Child Development study found that 16 year old English and math students from backgrounds of increased parental involvement and interest attained better exam grades compared to those whose parents showed little or no interest. Real involvement has a positive effect on students' achievement even when the influence of other factors such as social class and family size are taken into account (Harris & Goodall, 2007).

Evidence implies that for boys, parental behavior and relationship has a greater influence on achievement for all stages of life. On the other hand, girls' parental education, involvement, and socioeconomic background have greater influence during the teen years in English and math. In general, a father's involvement in his child's education plays a critical role in ensuring the best outcome for his child (Gutman & Akerman, 2008).

The father's interest and involvement in the child's learning can be statistically correlated with a better academic outcome. These outcomes include better test grades, higher education

progress, and more positive expectations and attitudes (O'Brien & Shemilt, 2003). These benefits reduce the risk of suspension, expulsion, or attrition from school (Goldman, 2005). These outcomes are associated with different types of family structures, including two-parent families, families with non-resident fathers, and single parent families. A father's involvement is not only essential while his child attends elementary school, but also high school, regardless of the child's gender. Some studies suggest that paternal involvement may be directly correlational in increased achievement (Benefield, 2001).

Learning begins in the home and the kind of learning which takes place in the home has a direct impact on the learning that occurs in the schools (Amundson, 1988). Rankin reported that children with involved parents were more likely to have higher academic achievement (Linney & Verberg, 1983). For example, quality parental involvement activities with 3 to 5 year olds, including trips to museums, libraries, and reading with them 20 minutes or more per day has been correlated to increased academic gains (Duckworth, 2008).

In 1975, Bittle described a dramatic increase in assessment scores when the school and parents were in regular communication; Dorothy Rich, founder and director of the Home and School Institute in Washington, DC, found that "priority should be given to involving parents in their child's learning activities" (Amundson, 1988, p. 81). Considering the fact that most children spend more time with their parents, especially in the formative years before kindergarten, parents need encouragement and direction in engaging their children in appropriate learning activities.

Gillum, Schooley, and Novak conducted a study of three Michigan school systems which encouraged parents to enter into performance contracts (Henderson & Berla, 1994). They found that the local educational agencies (LEAs) with greater participation showed greater gains. Data

from 135 schools indicated a positive correlation between student success and a supportive and nurturing home environment (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

In a study conducted by Joyce Epstein, teachers in 14 elementary classrooms used many different techniques to encourage parental involvement in school. Epstein found parents to be an oft under-used source of help to their children. Based on Epstein's premise that parents are an "available but untapped and undirected resource that teachers can mobilize to help more children master and maintain needed skills for school," she successfully directed her "teachers' leadership in organizing, evaluating, and continually building their parent involvement practices" (Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 62). Epstein found a dramatically positive impact on the reading achievement of students; when comparing data throughout the year, she discovered that these gains persisted (Epstein, 1996).

The education of students is a responsibility which is shared by educators, parents and the community (Epstein et al., 2009). Joyce Epstein describes a school-family-community partnership model which emphasizes the roles of the family, the community, and the school in collaborating to sway the student learning and development (Epstein et al., 2009). She referred to this as overlapping spheres of influence which support and encourage student achievement and growth (Epstein, 1995). Different experiences, attitudes, and beliefs help shape and influence the success of children (Epstein et al., 2009).

In a 2007 survey, the majority of parents, 92%, reportedly felt at least "fairly involved" in their children's academic progress. About 50% of those surveyed felt very involved with their children's education, which was an increase from 2001, and women expressed greater involvement than men. Single parents and immigrant parents, however, were less likely to feel very involved in their children's education.

Many schools across the United States have made moves toward partnering with parents to ensure that students receive the support they need to become successful. Dr. Joyce Epstein of the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University developed a common framework for building parent partnerships which is comprised of six methods that help instructors cultivate more inclusive partnerships between the school, family and community (Warner, 2007). Epstein's framework encourages schools to customize the methodology of involvement to meet the specific needs and goals of the students.

Epstein formulated six parental involvement types which include (1) providing guidance concerning parenting skills so parents better understand the psycho-social development of children within differing families; (2) communicating effectively concerning school events, activities, student expectations and progress; (3) increasing the opportunities for families to become more involved at the school; (4) giving parents the tools and information needed to help students continue to learn outside of the classroom; (5) giving parents a voice in the decisions being made concerning their children's education; (6) collaborating with the local community to garner resources and manpower to better assist students, families and the school in providing a quality educational environment for all students (1987).

Researchers agree that students who have adults who are actively involved in their education have a greater chance of being academically successful (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002). In an effort to understand the significance of the dynamics that play a role in student success, several models of parental involvement must be examined. These theories of parental involvement are likely to prove useful in identifying the "range and type of activities that might be incorporated in parent involvement programs and can be used as a framework for developing,

evaluating, and redesigning parent involvement programs in schools” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002, p. 87).

Some of the models that are relevant include Gordon's systems approach, the Systems Development Corporation study, Berger's role categories, Chavkin and Williams' parent involvement role, Honig's early childhood education model, Jones' levels of parent involvement, Epstein's typologies and language minority parents' involvement approach (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine if the value parents place on education affects academic success of secondary school students. Though there are significant early warning signs of potential student dropout as early as elementary and middle school, the information gained in this study could help determine the influence parental and community attitudes have on student retention and allow for earlier intervention (APA, 2012; Fan & Woollters, 2014; Heppen & Therriault, 2008; Shahid Farooq, 2013).

Significance of the Study

This study will help in determining whether or not it might be possible to improve student academic attainment by affecting changes in how parents value education. If the evidence points to a significant link between educational valuation and student success, then further study would be needed to determine the best way to positively influence these attitudes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the theories of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Epstein (2001). Bronfenbrenner's theory of human ecological systems and their

influence on child development and Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence combines ecological, educational and sociological perspectives on human societal organization and interactions particularly in the family (Conrad & Serlin, 2006). Bronfenbrenner (1979) indicated that the external forces which contains the larger social system such as parent workplace schedule, which he called the exosystem, has a profound effect in the life of the child even though the child may not have a direct relationship with these external forces. Bronfenbrenner further suggested in his ecological theory of development that there exists a microsystem, the specific family setting and interaction, as well as, the macrosystem, the greater community and peer group. He suggested that these relate equally to the behavior of children and, as a consequence, to their academic performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Building on the hypothesis of Bronfenbrenner and social interaction theories, Epstein's theory emphasizes the need for shared relationships of parents, educators and community partners to discover common goals for students' academic achievement and to welcome each other's contribution to student development (Conrad & Serlin, 2006). Epstein considered this shared relationship and mutual appreciation for the contribution of all stakeholders to be the most beneficial dynamic in the collaborative partnership of child development (Epstein, 2001). She stated that through their exchanges, parents, teachers, and community stakeholders create social ties and exchange information that combines to improve children's school and learning experiences (Conrad & Serlin).

Since the microsystem consists of the child's immediate family and one-on-one relationships, it can greatly influence the student's motivation to learn, as well as, attitudes toward education in general. If the parents and peer group of a child de-value education the student may well have the same lack of concern for their achievement. While this parental and

peer involvement is only one of many factors that may influence student achievement it is an important one. A study by Quilliams and Beran found a link between parental involvement and student achievement. When parents provide less academic encouragement and “give little positive feedback about [students’] abilities and progress, their children are likely to show poor achievement” (Quilliams & Beran, 2009).

Parental behavior has an even larger effect in the school's quality of their achievement at key stages. The research also found that the ability of a child at the beginning of school is the most important factor in predicting his or her achievement across all subject areas (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). Generally, research has shown that parental involvement in a child's education makes a positive difference in their achievement (Brookes et al., 1997). According to the Children's Plan, published by the Department of Children's and families in 2007, a partnership between parents and schools to support children academically is particularly important during the early years of a child’s life (Sammons, 2007).

Research Question

What correlation exists between parental attitudes toward educational attainment and student academic success?

Limitations

The limitations of the study included having a sufficient number of respondents return the survey. Another consideration was whether or not the replies were honest. Parent contact was a concern, if they were unreachable or if they were deceased.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study were the number and type of questions on the survey, the quality of the questions, and the coding and data analysis method used in the survey.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This literature review was prepared in numerous sections, including the history of parental involvement; the various benefits of parental involvement, as well as the frequent obstacles that may interfere with it; the perceptions of parental involvement; as well as the theoretical framework used to construct the methodology of this study.

History of Parental Involvement

Long before formal education, parents have nurtured their children, modeled for their children, and taught their children. A child's first teacher is his or her parents (Berger, 1991). Education was so important to parents in the 14th century that they supported the schools through tuition and donations; the education of their children was an expected part of everyday life. Children during the 14th century not only had academic lessons to learn, but they were trained in trades and skills of their family members and neighbors (Coleman, 1987). Private tutors for upper-class families were often employed within the home and, consequently, parental involvement was routine.

The advent of the boarding school, where students were sent to live and learn, caused a division as educational activities were transferred from the home environment (Coleman, 1987). Until the dawn of boarding schools, however, parental involvement had been a fundamental aspect of education, as well as, providing for their children's food, health, safety, shelter, clothing, and wellbeing (Epstein, 1987).

In 17th century America, pilgrims asserted that education was the responsibility of parents. In fact, the General Court of Massachusetts, in 1642, ordered every town to require all parents to take up the education of their children. Working on the premise that lack of education kept people ignorant of the scriptures, the Old Deluder Satan Act was passed in 1647. This Act required every town to establish its own school, or if it was too small to support a school, children attended classes in the next larger town (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). Though these first requirements for children's education came about in the early 17th century, large public school systems did not come into widespread use until the 19th and 20th centuries (Coleman, 1987).

The community and parents significantly controlled decisions regarding school in the early 19th century. School was a communal affair where parents and community members were involved in decisions regarding the employment of teachers, the school calendar, and the school curriculum (Epstein, 1986). Home, church and local government were in agreement on the curriculum and what should be taught (Comer, 1986). Also several women's groups were formed during the 19th century which became advocates for education. Originally formed as Congress of Mothers, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), was initially intended as a means for women to express political views, but became a parent support group in 1897 (Woyshner, 2003).

Most children were schooled at home until the 1940s (Comer, 1986). In the early part of the 20th century, family and school involvement were closely related due to the fact that the nation was composed primarily of small communities (Comer, 1986). There was little social diversity and much of today's educational technology, such as televisions, did not exist (Fantini, 1980). The main financial undertakings were within the household or neighboring households. During this time, the family was also the basic building block for social and economic organization (Coleman, 1987).

The technological and scientific changes produced after World War II also brought about social changes including in the relationship between the home and the school (Comer, 1986). Financially lucrative undertakings moved outside the home and away from the family (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). The rise of more industry led to men leaving the family farms to work in factories (Coleman, 1987); this same industrial growth led to more women entering the workforce and enrolling children in school. Up until this point, however, parents had played a significant role in the education of children as they worked with them at home in basic reading and writing (Brim, 1965). By the late 1950's the paradigm had shifted to the feeling that teachers should be the ones in charge of education and that the parents' role as teacher was diminishing (Berger, 2008). This began to dramatically change the family dynamic concerning education (Berger, 2008; Epstein, 1996; Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

The technological boom after World War II also changed the face of education as well as the family. Teachers were no longer required to live within walking distance of the school, and television broadcasts could then deliver information into families' homes (Comer, 1986). Unfortunately, these changes diminished the trust between the school and home (Comer, 1986). This lack of trust between school and home helped revive the understanding of the value of parental involvement in education; the role of the parent was again recognized to play a primary role in the schooling of children. In 1956, the Public Education Association, (PEA) an advocacy group comprised of citizens, using monies from a grant through the Ford Foundation, encouraged the directors of schools to use volunteer programs to seek out, train, and find placements for volunteers in the classroom to help students with reading and language (Merenda, 1989). In 1964, the PEA was the recipient of another grant, expanding their volunteer efforts into

20 cities, and by 1982 more than four million parents and community members were providing volunteering in schools on a regular basis (Merenda, 1989).

In the 1960s, several laws were passed which would drastically impact education and family involvement. As part of his War on Poverty, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965. ESEA marked the beginning of federally funded legislation which linked parental involvement and education. The Act's primary purpose was to make sure children from low income families received adequate materials for school (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). ESEA became the basis for Title I which provides for funding to support low income children, and requires that local education associations make steps to increase and require parental involvement in the classroom (Pulliam & Patten, 2007).

Education in America was greatly influenced by the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 (Berger, 2008). Minority groups now had equal access to education and the right to attend the school of their choice. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI mandates that no American "shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015). According to this Act, any entity which receives federal funding that is found to be discriminating against a person or group of persons based on race, color or national origin is in danger of having their federal funds terminated.

In the summer of 1965, the Headstart program began as a part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The goal of this program was to provide early intervention and assist economically disadvantaged families in the areas of health, nutrition, and education (Nedler & McAfee, 1979).

During the late 1960's and early 1970, the Vietnam War greatly impacted many families in the United States (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). The economy of the U.S. was plagued with high inflation which weakened the value of the U.S. dollar. The economic uncertainty was one of the reasons for a surge in the number of mothers leaving home and entering the workforce to supplement their families' incomes (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). Other troubling issues many families faced during the 1970s were concerns over drug abuse, changing social norms, and the lingering effect of the war (Berger, 2008). In spite of these multiple social, political, and educational issues, leaders in educators and politics sought to find ways to involve parents and improve education across the country (Berger, 2008).

During the 1980s, a decline in student scores prompted the school reform movement (Education Week, 1985). Baltimore, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles each hosted The White House Conference on Families. These meetings captured the interest of many families in America by placing the spotlight on ways to assist families, such as help with child care, work schedules, and family support (Steiner, 1981). In 1983, a report issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *Nation at Risk*, helped to refocus parents' attitudes that the education of children begins at home and sought to have parents actively participate in the schools and take some ownership in their child's learning (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1983).

Research indicates that parental involvement is vital to student success and a lack of parental concern seriously hampers the educator's ability to educate the child (Bennett, Finn, & Cribb, 1999). The trend toward increasing parental involvement and valuation of education began to become more prominent. In the 1990s there was an increase in parental involvement which was regarded by many as the most important aspect in the education of children (Berger, 2008). To create strong partnerships between families and schools, the Department of Education

stressed and continued to encourage family participation through national programs such as Title I, Even Start, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Berger, 2008). Another aspect that led to increased parental involvement was the ability to choose alternatives to public schools. Charter schools and home schooling became more popular, giving families other options in the educational process (Berger, 2008). In 1995, Joyce Epstein established the National Network for Partnership Schools to support in linking research, policy, and practices in education; within this research, Epstein identified a hierarchy of six major types of contribution along with practices, challenges, redefinition of terms, and possible results for each type (Epstein et al., 2009).

In an effort to close the achievement gap among American students, an emphasis on parental involvement in the education of students continued during the 21st century. In January 2002, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized when President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Emphasizing parental involvement, section 1118 of NCLB states:

A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents...build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement...conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section, and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this section; and involve parents in the

activities of the schools served under this part. (United States Department of Education, 2004, p. 40)

NCLB requires LEAs receiving Title I funding to put programs, activities, and procedures in place to encourage and support parental involvement. This required yearly assessment of all third through eighth grade students in the areas of math and reading and parents were to be thoroughly educated to their student's progress. Parents had other educational options, such as transferring to another traditional school or charter school if their child's school was not performing up to standards (Berger, 2008). The law also required that states and school districts begin providing annual report cards and assume accountability (United States Department of Education, 2004).

In March of 2010, the Obama administration released its proposal for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which gives support to state, district, and school efforts in engaging families. The plan seeks to support wide-ranging approaches to family involvement while augmenting and funding through the Family Engagement and Responsibility Fund LEA family engagement initiatives. Family literacy is a key component of this blueprint and funds are allocated to support family literacy activities (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Benefits Derived from Parental Involvement

Parents play a crucial role in the progression of the education of their children (Epstein, 2001). Lightfoot (1978) emphasized the significance of constructing encouraging relationships between home and school:

Productive collaborations between family and school will demand that parents and teachers recognize the critical importance of each other's participation in the life of a

child. This mutuality of knowledge, understanding, and empathy comes not only with the .recognition of the child as the central purpose of the collaboration, but also with a recognition of the need to maintain roles and relationships with children that are comprehensive, dynamic, and differentiated. (p. 200-221)

When schools, families, and communities have a shared vision for educating children, they are more likely to provide better programs and opportunities for students (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). When teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders “view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work” (Epstein et al., 2009, p. 9). Epstein et al. (2009) resolved that through regular, significant interactions between families, schools, and communities, students are more likely to realize the value of an education, of persistence and assisting others.

Epstein et al. identified six major types of involvement that support positive outcomes for all stakeholders in education. Epstein et al. clearly described how some types of engagement activities could impact students’ skill, achievement, and evaluation data while other types of involvement may affect outlooks, absenteeism, and behavior. She further stated that the care with which the engagement activities are planned can drastically impact the success or failure of the plan, so these activities must be designed with care (Epstein et al., 2009).

There are many ways in which parental involvement has a positive impact on student success. A link exists between participation and student educational success, both in attendance and attainment (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Since the most widespread measure of school success is student attainment, the link between parental involvement and attitudes concerning education must be examined. Among the first studies to examine a possible connection between school, teacher, and family relations relating to student achievement was the Coleman report.

Nedler and McAfee (1979) reported that Coleman found the “single most important factor in student achievement was the home background of the child, with an additional important variable being family attitude toward achievement and school.” Henderson and Mapp (2002) declared that the most effective plans and practices related to family engagement should focus on student learning. In 1963, a study was conducted by Smith and Brache in which parents joined dialog assemblies that highlighted the importance of parents being positive role models for their children. Parents were asked to read to their children each day, to have their child read to them, and to schedule a consistent time for reading and studying and to make sure their students had necessary school supplies. Within the 5 the month period, students showed overall gains of 5.4 months in reading compared to 2.7 months in a comparison with the control group.

Parental Attitudes toward Education

One of the main factors directly influencing student performance and engagement in school is parental support. If parents take an active role in the student’s education, he or she will more likely remain in school (Foley, Gallipoli, & Green, 2014). If the parents value education, they may encourage the student to exceed expectations and this can set the stage for success. This type of motivation and setting of expectations can help the student develop intrinsic motivation and have higher expectations for the educational experience. This can help the student develop academic confidence and feel more secure in the learning environment (Fan & Wolters, 2014). If the parent does not value education and the student is not encouraged to exceed or even meet the standards, the inverse appears to be the case. The student will lack motivation and have minimal if any expectations for his or her education. The student, consequently, may likely feel a lack of confidence, which can lead to a lower level of engagement in class and lower cognitive development. This combination can lead to behavioral

problems in class or truancy from school, or the student may terminate enrollment altogether. Furthermore, the data suggests that these students are also at a greater risk for delinquency and substance abuse problems (Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

To emphasize the correlation between parental concern and involvement and student success, a survey of parents of dropouts by Civic Enterprises found that approximately 79% of parents who responded did not classify themselves as very involved in their child's schooling. In the same survey, a majority of students indicated that parents only began to become involved when the student reached the point they were in danger of failing (Bridgeland, 2006).

In *The Journal of Human Resources*, Foley (2014) states that for students with "medium and low cognitive ability, family background plays an important role in explaining their dropout decisions." Foley found students in the "medium and low" ability range are more likely to have parents who are themselves high school dropouts, do not value education, are not engaged or involved; these students have a probability of "0.40" of dropping out before graduation. Now, consider these exact same circumstances, changing only the variable of parental engagement; the probability of student attrition decreases dramatically to 0.045. So, in essence, the value that parents place on education and their involvement in their children's education directly influences whether or not students value their own education. If we want to increase student achievement, we must find ways to engage parents and thus engage the students.

Another dynamic affecting student achievement and retention is student engagement. Students drop out of school when they cease to be engaged in their education, or rather when education ceases to engage them. Engagement appears to be one of the key predictors of student success, and disengagement most likely starts outside of the school (Lamote, Speybroeck, Van Den Noortgate, & Van Damme, 2013).

When considering factors involving student achievement among high school students, Eagle (1989) measured the effects of socioeconomic status, family makeup and arrangement, and parental involvement. More specifically, the study inquired about aspects such as whether parents read to the student during early childhood, whether the mother was a stay-at-home mom, and whether the family maintained a specific place set aside for study. After considering these factors and more, the study found parental involvement had the greatest impact upon academic achievement (Eagle, 1989). For this particular study, high school parental involvement was defined as parents communicating with teachers, parents taking an active role in planning for college activities, and parents making sure students completed school work (Eagle, 1989).

Intentional parental involvement impacts academic achievement significantly (Emeagwali 2009; Epstein, 2003; Griffith, 1996; National PTA, 2004). Olmstead and Rubin (1983), in a study of the Parent Education Follow through program, reported a significant link between parental behaviors and attitudes and student achievement. Parental interest and “support affect student achievement, attitudes, and aspirations” (Epstein, 1987; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton, 1989; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Various obstacles affect students’ motivation, progress, and success. Stresses at home, whether financial or otherwise can be a great determinant of future school retention issues. These issues, combined with other barriers such as poverty and unsafe neighborhoods are all too often factors that correlate with students’ academic failure (De Witte & Cabus, 2013). Furthermore, if a child’s parents did not complete high school, this yields an increased risk that the student will eventually drop out of school as well. While data suggests that higher achieving students can fare well in spite of parents’ educational level, those students in the middle and lower achieving groups are significantly impacted.

Community and parental involvement are essential in preventing these risk factors. By bringing the community and parents into the process, students can envision a wider support network (Ziomek-Daigle & Andrews, 2009). If schools can encourage parents to be involved in the educational experience and make them feel welcome, parents can become more involved in the students' education and encourage them to continue. Consequently, parents can convey their concern to their children regarding their wellbeing as well as their academic gains. School administration and faculty may then share information with parents regarding symptoms of at risk behavior, which affords the parents the ability to take a proactive stance in dropout prevention (Ziomek-Daigle & Andrews, 2009).

In an attempt to dismantle these barriers to parental involvement, schools should seek to encourage parental involvement through communication and creating a less intimidating atmosphere in the school (Wherry, 2009). The answer to this educational dilemma may be to "stop treating parents like 'clients' and start treating them like 'partners' in helping children learn" (Wherry, 2009, p. 7).

Since attendance and failing grades are key indicators of dropout, the school could communicate attendance issues to the parents and enlist their help in making sure students are in school. Parents should be updated regularly on students' grades, which gives them an opportunity to intervene before students get so far behind that they become discouraged. This would also give parents a sense of participation and accountability to the school. According to Foley (2014), parental attitudes and educational level can play a major role in determining the students' performance in school. With this in mind, schools could make materials available to help parents in assisting their student with school work. These could take the form of examples

of work, online or printed guides or videos to help parents and students gain a better understanding of the lesson.

Preventative measures must begin early in the students' education. Educators and family must work together to watch for signs of potential problems and address the issues as they arise. Motivation is a key factor. Studies have demonstrated a link between students' self-perceptions regarding their ability in certain subjects and achievement (Fan & Wolters, 2014). Students who believe they can achieve their educational goals often do. These students have confidence to be engaged in their education. This engagement has been found to be a key factor in preventing school dropout (Fan & Wolters 2014; Wilkins & Bost, 2014).

By welcoming the community into the school, opportunities are opened for the students to be more engaged in their own education. Community and business leaders can see what is being taught and find opportunities to engage students in activities that are relevant in the real world. Community leaders and educators can assume the role of mentors to give students a sense of support and security (Lamote, Speybroeck, Van Den Noortgate, & Van Damme, 2013). Research indicates that almost half of students who have dropped out of school felt that their classes were not relevant to the real world (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morrison, 2006). For this reason, community and business leaders should be approached to establish cooperative, work based learning opportunities that utilize practical application of their academic skills, thus making school more relevant to students. Increased parental and community involvement also translates to better student attendance (Landis & Reschly, 2013); only when students attend school do they have the opportunity to learn and interact with their teachers and peers.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study was established to determine if parental attitudes concerning the value of education impacted student performance and achievement (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

A survey was developed to determine the effect, if any, that parental attitudes have on student GPA. The rationale behind using a survey in this type of quantitative research is varied. Quantitative research allows for the gathering of empirical data. The amount of data gathered can be used to calculate trends and make graphical representation of the data in order to discover significant trends which may be important within the context of the study (Witte & Witte, 2007).

Participants and Setting for the Study

This research will be conducted in the sole high school in a rural Tennessee county (Litwin, 2003). This county maintains six elementary schools, grades PreK-8, but no middle school. Students from the entire county must travel to one central high school. The academic schedule must be adjusted to accommodate the number of students in each class, as well as, other activities such as lunch and assemblies.

The school is located in a rural community, which is not racially diverse. In fact, the county's population is approximately 99% Caucasian; unemployment in this area is high, and nearly 82% of the students are classified as economically disadvantaged (TN, 2015).

Geographically, the school is situated on the Cumberland Plateau, a long chain of plateaus that stretches from northern Alabama to the Appalachians. This geographic isolation means that most

of the parents must drive many miles to work or to purchase groceries and supplies. In fact, the closest large retail stores about 45 minutes to an hour away by car.

The poverty levels in the community make it difficult for families to purchase items for school. Several of the factories and plants in which the residents were employed have closed leading to a high unemployment rate (U.S. Census, 2015). Many of the parents and grandparents have lost a good paying job that they held for several years, to a lesser paying job or none at all (Fisher, McCulloch, & Gershuny, 1999). This has greatly affected the availability of resources at the school. The current economic conditions and gasoline prices place an extra hardship on families in this area, since so much driving is required to purchase basic needs and school supplies (Linney & Vernberg, 1983).

There are few academic clubs and organizations that are available to engage students' interests. The school system does not offer opportunities for participation in many science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities such as robotics, engineering, advanced mathematics, science or chemistry clubs. Participation in these clubs requires a sponsor and quite a bit of travel time (U.S. Census, 2015).

Survey

Surveys were distributed to examine parental attitudes toward education and compare the results to GPA of current high school seniors. This survey was administered to parents of current seniors at the school to examine whether or not there is any link between parental attitudes concerning educational attainment and student academic success. The purpose was to determine if the attitudes, educational level and/or parental expectations played a role in student academic success or failure. The data was examined for GPA of the current senior class. This data was then compared with surveys of parents' valuation of educational attainment (Litwin, 2003).

Data Collection Procedures

The data was collected in the form of surveys that were emailed to parents and students (Fink, 2003). Parents of students at risk for failure were called and surveyed by telephone; additionally, parents who were believed to be illiterate or semi-literate were surveyed by telephone. The number of students and parents surveyed was dependent on the number of students who attended school during the period of time the research covered. Each senior was given a copy of the survey and was instructed to take the survey home and ask his or her parent (or guardian) to complete it. The students were told to bring the survey back to school and submit it to their homeroom teacher. Each student who returned the survey completed within a week were entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card.

Pilot Study

In the pilot study, the survey was administered to ten parents of the 2016 senior class from the research site. Five of those surveyed were parents to students in the top ten percentage of the 2016 graduating class and five were parents to students who had to attend summer school to make up credits for graduation. From this pilot, an estimate was made of potential participation, accuracy of contact information and examination responses to see if questions were understood or needed rewording for increased clarity (Fink, 2003).

Proposed Data Analysis

The coding software used was Microsoft Excel© including the Real Statistics Resource Pack (Fink, 2003). The coding was based on a Likert scale of 1-5 in which a rating of 1 indicated high school education is unimportant; a rating of 2 meant high school education is not very important; a rating of 3 meant high school education is neither important or unimportant; a rating

of 4 indicated high school is somewhat important; and a rating of 5 meant high school education is very important to parents.

Other questions using a similar rating included, “How often do I discuss schoolwork with my child?” A rating of 1 indicated the parent never discussed schoolwork with his or her child; a rating of 2 meant the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child once a week; a rating of 3 meant the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child two or three times a week; a rating of 4 indicated the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child four times a week; and a 5 meant the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child five or more days a week.

Students’ academic success was based on calculated grade point averages (GPA). A ranking of 3.0 and higher was considered academically successful, while a GPA below 2.0 was considered at risk.

The purpose of this study was to determine the correlation between parental attitudes toward education and the levels of student achievement in the secondary school setting. Parents responded to a survey with ten Likert-type items (Sullivan, 2013). In addition, parents were asked to provide demographic information including their level of education, employment status, type of employment if applicable, and number of years employed in their particular profession. Several statistical measures were used to examine the data in order to answer the research question directing this study. Pearson’s r was used to test the two variables, parental attitudes and student achievement, and to determine whether or not there is a linear correlation between parental value of education and student achievement.

Ethical Issues

As with any use of personal data, care must be taken to avoid releasing personal or identifying information. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the purpose of the survey is

only to gather data in an attempt to determine if there is a correlation between parental involvement and student success. It was not to be used to make judgments concerning parenting skills. The data will be retrieved from the local education agency information system and will be stored in an encrypted drive at the school.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Data

The intent of this study was to discover if there exists a correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. A survey was developed to determine the effect if any, that parental attitudes have on student grade point averages (GPA). Parents responded to a survey with ten Likert-type items (Sullivan, 2013). This parental involvement survey (Appendix A) was created by the researcher using Google© Forms and administered through email, by phone, and by printed copies given to parents. Parental involvement was rated through a Likert-type survey on a scale from 1-5. Surveys were distributed to examine parental attitudes toward education and compare the results to GPA of current high school seniors. This survey was administered to parents of current seniors at the school to examine whether or not there is any link between parental attitudes concerning educational attainment and student academic success.

The purpose was to determine if the attitudes, educational level and/or parental expectations played a role in student academic success or failure. Also, parents were asked to provide demographic information including their level of education, employment status, type of employment if applicable, and number of years employed in their particular professions. The data were examined for grade point averages of the current senior class. The data were then compared with surveys of parents' valuation of educational attainment (Litwin, 2003).

The coding software used was Microsoft Excel© including the Real Statistics Resource Pack (Fink, 2003). The coding was based on a scale of 1-5 in which a rating of 1 indicated high school education is unimportant; a rating of 2 meant high school education is not very important;

a rating of 3 meant high school education is neither important or unimportant; a rating of 4 indicated high school is somewhat important; and a rating of 5 meant high school education is very important to parents.

Students' academic success was based on calculated grade point averages (GPA). A ranking of 3.0 and higher was considered academically successful, while a GPA below 2.0 was considered at risk.

Several statistical measures were used to examine the data to answer the research question directing this study. Pearson's r was used to test the two variables, parental attitudes, and student achievement, and to determine whether or not there is a linear correlation between the parental value of education and student achievement.

Demographic Data

The parents of current seniors at a secondary school were invited to participate in the study. Of the 116 students in the graduating class, 40 parents chose to participate in the study which equals a response rate of 34.5%. All 40 respondents answered in a usable format and data analysis was conducted on this sample.

As Table 4.1 demonstrates the educational background of the participants varies. Of the participants, 28 (70%) have obtained a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED), 2 (5%) have no high school diploma or GED, 4 (10%) have at least two years of post-secondary education, 5 (12.5%) respondents have obtained a bachelors degree, and 1 (2.5%) has earned a master's degree or higher.

Table 4.1

Educational Attainment of Parents Surveyed

Educational Attainment	N	%
High school diploma/GED	28	70
No High school diploma/GED	2	5
At least 2 years post-secondary	4	10
Bachelor degree	5	12.5
Masters degree	1	2.5
Totals	40	100

When considering the employment status of participants, table 4.2 illustrates that 28 respondents (70%) are currently employed, and 12 (30%) participants are unemployed. Of those who are employed, Table 4.3 reveals that 5 (17.8%) are employed in education, 6 (21.4%) are employed in food service, 13 (46.4%) are employed in factories, and 4 (14.4%) are employed in fields other than the ones listed.

Table 4.2

Participant Employment Status

Employment Status	N	%
Employed	28	70
Unemployed	12	30
Totals	40	100

Table 4.3

Participant Employment Area

Employment area	N	%
Education	5	17.8
Food service	6	21.4
Factory	13	46.4
Other	4	14.4
Totals	28	100

A final question concerning participant demographics concerned the length of time they have been employed in their current field. As seen in Table 4.4, of the 28 employed participants, 3 (10.7%) were employed less than 1 year, 3 (10.7%) were employed between 1 and 3 years, 3 (10.7%) were employed from 3 to 5 years, 4 (14.3%) were employed between 5 and 10 years, and 15 (53.6%) were employed more than 10 years.

Table 4.4

<i>Participant Length of Employment</i>		
Length of Employment	N	%
< 1 year	3	10.7
1-3 years	3	10.7
3-5 years	3	10.7
5-10 years	4	14.3
>10 years	15	53.6
Total	28	100

Parental Involvement Data

The remainder of the survey asks that participants rate, on a scale of 1-5 their level of agreement with ten statements related to their children's education. The participants were instructed to answer the statements honestly and allowed a space for comments at the end of the survey. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with ten statements concerning education using a Likert-type scale as follows: 1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neutral, 4) Agree, and 5) Strongly Agree.

The results of the survey reveal the level of agreement and disagreement with statements concerning parental involvement. Table 4.5 illustrates that 32.5% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to meet in person with teachers at their children's school, while 32.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and 35% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Concerning the importance of involvement with parent groups at school the data show that none of the respondents strongly agreed and only 15% agreed. A majority, 60%, of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the importance of being involved in parent groups at school and the remaining 25% were neutral.

On the topic of communicating with other parents from the school, 10% either agree or strongly agree, while 57.5% either disagree or strongly disagree. The remaining 32.5% are neutral concerning having discussions with parents concerning the school.

In response to the statement, "It is important to help at my child's school." 20% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining 20% were neutral concerning if it was important to help one's child at school.

Of the participants in the study, 30% either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to visit their child's classroom. 47.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was important to visit their child's classroom and the remaining 22.5% were neutral.

In response to the statement, "I check to make sure my child has completed his/her homework nightly" 37.5% agreed or strongly agreed. Responses to the same statement found 32.5% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree, with the remaining 30.0% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 20.0% of participants agree or strongly agree with the statement, "I regularly help my child with class/ homework", 2.5% are neutral and 77.5% disagree or strongly disagree.

In reference to the statement, "I often play with or teach my child" 20% agree or strongly agree, 20% are neutral and the remaining 60% either disagree or strongly disagree. Statement 9 asserts that it is important for a child to visit educational settings, such as, museums and/or libraries. 30.0% agree or strongly agree with this statement, while 15% are neutral, and the remaining 55.0% either disagree or strongly disagree.

The final statement on the survey was, “I encourage my child to set goals and plan for the future”. 47.5% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, 40.0% were neutral and 12.5% either disagreed or disagreed strongly.

Table 4.5

Parental Involvement Survey Results

Question	%	%	%	%	%
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important to meet in person with teachers at my child's school.	27.5	5.0	35.0	22.5	10.0
I have been involved with a parent group(s) at my child's school.	47.5	12.5	25.0	15.0	0.0
I often discuss my child's school with other parents from the school.	37.5	20.0	32.5	7.5	2.5
It is important to help at my child's school.	40.0	20.0	20.0	10.0	10.0
It is important to visit my child's school.	15.0	32.5	22.5	12.5	17.5
I check to make sure my child has completed his/her homework nightly.	15.0	17.5	30.0	17.5	20.0
I regularly help my child with class/ homework.	55.0	22.5	2.5	2.5	17.5
I often play with or teach my child.	37.5	22.5	20.0	2.5	17.5
It is important for my child to visit the public library, zoo, aquarium, museum, or some other place with educational value.	25.0	30.0	15.0	7.5	22.5
I encourage my child to set goals and plan for the future.	2.5	10.0	40.0	15.0	32.5

The level of parental involvement was derived through calculating the average of all responses for each participant. The respondents rated 10 different statements on a scale from 1 to 5. These statements were intended to help determine the respondents’ level of involvement in their child’s education. Considering that responses closer to 5 indicate a greater level of importance attached to the statement by each participant, an average of these scores were used to determine the level of parental involvement. This average level of parental involvement was correlated with the GPA for each student on a 4.0 scale. The data were compared to determine if there is an overall correlation. Table 4.6 illustrates that there was a positive correlation between the variables.

Table 4.6

Correlation Between Parental Involvement and Student Achievement (GPA)

	GPA	Average Parental Involvement
GPA Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.33
Sig		0.038
N	40	40
Average Parental Involvement	0.33	1.000
Sig	0.038	
N	40	40

Conclusion

This study examined the correlation between parental involvement and student academic achievement. In this study data were collect from parents of high school seniors in the 2017 graduating class. The research question was: What correlation exists between parental attitudes toward educational attainment and student academic success? The data were collected in the form of a Likert-type survey consisting of 10 questions and student grade point averages (GPA).

Other questions using a similar rating included, “How often do I discuss schoolwork with my child?” A rating of 1 indicated the parent never discussed schoolwork with his or her child; a rating of 2 meant the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child once a week; a rating of 3 meant the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child two or three times a week; a rating of 4 indicated the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child four times a week; and a 5 meant the parent discussed schoolwork with his or her child five or more days a week.

Students’ academic success was based on calculated grade point averages (GPA). A ranking of 3.0 and higher was considered academically successful, while a GPA below 2.0 was considered at risk. Pearson’s r was used to test the two variables, parental involvement and student achievement, and to determine if there is a linear correlation between parental value of

education and student achievement. Included in this chapter are the survey questions and responses, demographic information and student GPA. The next chapter will summarize the findings of the study, discuss the implications and make recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there exists a correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. This study examined parental attitudes concerning their child's education and the parent's level of involvement through the administration of a Likert-type survey (Appendix A), as well as, demographic data concerning the parents' level of education, employment, field of employment and length of time in that area of employment. Surveys were distributed to examine parental attitudes toward education and compare the results to GPA of current high school seniors. This survey was administered to parents of current seniors at the school to examine whether there is any link between parental attitudes concerning educational attainment and student academic success. The purpose was to determine if the attitudes, educational level and/or parental expectations played a role in student academic success or failure. The data were examined for grade point averages of the current senior class. These data were then compared with surveys of parents' valuation of educational attainment (Litwin, 2003).

The data indicated that there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. The coding was based on a scale of 1-5 in which a rating of 1 indicated high school education is unimportant; a rating of 2 meant high school education is not very important; a rating of 3 meant high school education is neither important or unimportant; a rating of 4 indicated high school is somewhat important; and a rating of 5 meant high school education

is very important to parents. These data were compared with student GPA on a 4.0 scale to determine if there was a correlation between parental involvement and student academic success. When analyzing data, it was found that there was a positive correlation between the variables, $r=0.033$, $n=40$, $p=0.038$ (Appendix B). Considering the p -value is less than 0.05, this requires a rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the means and concludes that a significant difference does exist. These findings illustrate that increased parental involvement can play a significant role in student achievement.

Implications

The results of this study suggest that there is a significant link between parental involvement and student academic achievement. Taking this into account, it could be implied that through increased parental involvement in education the parent demonstrates that they feel education is valuable. This demonstration of parental valuation of education could influence the child's perception of the importance of education leading to greater academic achievement.

Another implication of the study is that greater parental involvement allows for increased communication between the teacher and the parent. This increased communication would allow the parent to keep abreast of the student's needs, the teacher's goals and expectations for the student, and the needed areas for refinement and reinforcement concerning the student's academic progress. This open line of communication between teacher and parent allows them to work in concert to see that the student meets expectations and received remediation as needed. This type of parental communication helps prevent confusion and misunderstandings between them and the parents.

A third implication of the study is that parents who are involved with their student's education will have a better understanding of ways to help their child academically. If the parent

is involved with their child and their school, they will be more supportive of the child and the school. Parents who value their child's education will ensure they are in school and on time. They will try to make sure that the student is in class and engaged. They will also be more likely to encourage their child to participate in academically related trips and activities.

Recommendations

This research only considered one parental involvement in relation to GPA as an indicator of academic achievement. The study could be designed to investigate the effect of parental involvement on graduation rates. In a broader study, graduation rates could be compared to several of the data in this survey such as parental attitudes, involvement, and demographic data. Data could be gathered to determine if there is a correlation between the parents' educational attainment level and students' graduation rate.

Another study could involve determining if the students' perception of the parents' attitude impact student success. Parents could be surveyed concerning their attitudes and value of education and students could be surveyed to determine how they think their parents feel concerning education. These data could be correlated along with student GPA to determine if the students' perception of parents' attitude had a significant impact on student success.

The third area of investigation could involve researching these same attitudes and involvement levels concerning elementary and middle school students and parents. The same type of parental involvement survey could be administered to elementary and middle school parents. These data could be correlated with data from STAR or some other type of standardized testing to determine if there is a correlation. The data from the elementary and/or middle school study could then be repeated when these students reach high school to determine if the level of parental involvement changes and if so, does that change impact student achievement.

A fourth suggested area of investigation should analyze a possible link between parental involvement and student attendance. If a student is not in class and on time, he or she is missing important instructional time. It would be a worthwhile study that determines whether a correlation between parental value of education and truancy rates exists.

Concluding Statements

Research indicates that students whose parents are involved in the educational process are more likely to perform better and achieve more than students whose parents are absent from the process. The purpose of this study was to determine if there exists a correlation between parental involvement and student academic achievement. This study examined parental involvement through a survey concerning the participation of parents in their child's education and school and compared these results to the students' grade point averages. These findings illustrated that increased parental involvement can play an important role in student achievement. While these data indicated a positive correlation, it was not exceedingly large. If the study were expanded to a larger population the positive correlation may be greater.

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Appendix A

Parental Involvement Survey

Please answer the following questions honestly. All respondents will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card.

Email address: _____

1. It is important to meet in person with teachers at my child's school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. I have been involved with a parent group(s) at my child's school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I often discuss my child's school with other parents from the school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. It is important to help out at my child's school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. It is important to visit my child's school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I check to make sure my child has completed their homework nightly.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. I regularly help my child with class work/ homework.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. I often play with or teach my child.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. It is important for my child to visit the public library, a zoo, an aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. I encourage my child to set goals and plan for the future.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree