

## **Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement from the Arab Secondary School Students' Perspectives at Some Arab Schools in Malaysia**

**Chafai Yasmine**

*PhD student in Educational Psychology, International Islamic University Malaysia  
mimina162009@hotmail.fr*

**Assoc. Prof. Dr.Siti Rafiah Abd. Hamid**

*Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia  
srafiah60@iium.edu.my*

**Assoc. Prof. Dr.Mohd Burhan Bin Ibrahim**

*Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia  
mburhan@iium.edu.my*

### **ABSTRACT**

The concern of the association between school and home as well as parents' role towards their children's educational attainment has caught the attention of researchers and educational psychologists since many years. The involvement of parents is crucial for pupils' success in their academic endeavors. Students' academic success may increase or decrease as a result of this participation or involvement. Therefore, the main aim of this current study was to ascertain the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement from the students' views. The quantitative research method was employed in this research. The data was collected via an adapted questionnaire namely "Parent and School Survey" (PASS). In overall, 300 Arab secondary school students at some Arab schools in Malaysia participated in this study and they were selected by using random sampling method. The result depicted a significant weak positive correlation between parental involvement and participants' academic achievement ( $r = .136$ ). It is recommended to carry out additional research using a variety of research approaches on the phenomenon of this study among Arab students.

**Keywords:** Relationship, Parental Involvement, Academic Achievement, Arab secondary school students' perspectives, Arab Schools in Malaysia.

### المستخلص:

إن الاهتمام بقضية المشاركة والتعاون بين المدرسة والمنزل وكذلك دور الوالدين تجاه التحصيل التعليمي لأطفالهم، قد جذب انتباه الباحثين وعلماء النفس التربوي منذ سنوات عديدة. تعد مشاركة أولياء الأمور أمراً بالغ الأهمية لنجاح التلاميذ في مساعيهم الأكاديمية. قد يزيد النجاح الأكاديمي للطلبة أو ينقص نتيجة لهذه المشاركة أو التعاون. لذلك، كان الهدف الرئيس من هذه الدراسة الحالية؛ التأكد من العلاقة بين مشاركة الوالدين والإنجاز الأكاديمي من وجهة نظر الطلبة. تم استخدام التصميم الترابطي في هذا البحث مع استبيان أولياء الأمور والمدرسة. بشكل عام، شارك ٣٠٠ طالبا عربيا من المرحلة الاعدادية والثانوية في بعض المدارس العربية بماليزيا في هذه الدراسة، وتم اختيارهم باستخدام طريقة أخذ العينات العشوائية. وقد أظهرت النتيجة ارتباطاً ضعيفاً إيجابياً ملحوظاً بين مشاركة الوالدين والتحصيل الأكاديمي للطلبة. هذا ويوصى بإجراء مزيد من البحوث باستخدام مجموعة متنوعة من مناهج البحث حول ظاهرة هذه الدراسة بين الطلبة العرب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العلاقة، مشاركة الوالدين، التحصيل الأكاديمي، وجهات نظر طلبة المدارس الثانوية العربية، المدارس العربية بماليزيا.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since many years ago, researchers have been interested in the relationship between parental involvement and their children's academic performance because schools, instructors, and policymakers view it as an essential component of modern educational reforms.

Parental Involvement is not restricted only to activities conducted at home, but

It also comprises the activities at school such as visiting school, asking teachers about their children's performance, volunteering in both classroom and parent-teacher association activities and many others (Epstein., Sanders., Simon., Salinas., Jansom., & Van Voorhis., 2009).

Parental involvement in education has been defined in terms of parents' investment of resources in their children's education, and also characterized in terms of parents' behaviors, their personal support for education, and their provision of cognitively stimulating materials and activities (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Altschul, 2012).

Despite the growing interest about the issue of parents' involvement in their children's education, studying the relationship between home and school, publishing a large amount of research in this field and agreeing on the importance of parental involvement, however, the term "Parental Involvement" is still clouded with ambiguity as there are variety of definitions that may differ or agree on certain aspects.

In this study, parental involvement is defined as "the combination of parental home-based involvement, parental school-based involvement, and parent's adolescent relationship that leads to better academic achievement".

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The issue of the relationship between home and school and the role of parents in their children's educational achievement have witnessed an increase interest from the part of researchers and educational psychologists. Parents' involvement in their children's education has a positive impact on their academic achievement regardless their age.

Parents' role does not terminate with their child going to school, but it is rather continuing through their constant following up of everything in school and cooperating with it for ensuring the success of the learning process. Parents' participation or involvement may enhance or reduce students' academic achievement.

However, there is still a need to further investigate the relationship and the influence between parental involvement and students' academic achievement, especially among the Arab parents.

## 1.2.

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

In this study, there are four main objectives:

1. To determine the level of parental involvement towards their children's learning from the students' perspectives at some Arab Schools in Malaysia.
2. To examine the relationship between parental involvement and participants' academic achievement.
3. To determine any significant differences in parental involvement across Parents' Educational Levels.
4. To determine any significant differences in parental involvement across Parents' Socio-Economic Statuses (SES).

### 1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses (Ho) are tested at  $\alpha=.05$  level of significance and they are described as the following:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and the participants' academic achievement.

Ho2: There are no significant differences in parental involvement between parents who have tertiary education and those who have secondary education.

Ho3: There are no significant differences in parental involvement between the three different Socioeconomic Statuses (SES).

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework for the current study was created based on the research questions, research objectives, and the evaluation of related research. The current author adopted Epstein's Typology of Involvement to illustrate the association between parental involvement and academic achievement in secondary schools.

A significant positive correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement was demonstrated by the majority of the related research (Ghahdari Jani & Rahimi, 2021; Otani, 2020; Veas et al., 2018; Gogoi, 2017; Mott-Baptiste, 2016; Namok Choi et al., 2015).

According to the literature, parents have a crucial part in their children's education because they influence their performance academically when they are involved at home, at school, and in their local community.

Epstein contends that partnerships between parents, schools, and communities place the student at the center; these partnerships do not just produce successful students; rather, they can be used to engage, mentor,

energize, and motivate students to create their own successes (Epstein et al., 2002).

### **3. REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH**

In this section of the study, the author reviewed the most pertinent recent studies on parental involvement, academic achievement among secondary school pupils.

The chosen articles were selected by using the systematic literature review and they were analyzed. A synthesis of the findings have been written at the end of each section.

#### **3.1. Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement**

Research related to parental Involvement towards their children's academic achievement have been divided based on the findings into two categories.

First, some authors found a significant relationship between Parental Involvement and students/pupils' academic achievement. For instance, a study done by Mohammed Almutairi (2021) assessed the contribution of parental involvement toward their children's success at school. The participants were five hundred parents whom their children study at one of the secondary schools in USA. The author used the quantitative research method and an online questionnaire regarding parental involvement. The findings depicted that parental involvement had a significant effect on secondary school students' academic success (Mohammed Almutairi, 2021).

Ghahdari Jani, M., and Rahimi, A. (2021) studied the relation between Parental Involvement and students' English Language Achievement. The sample of this study consisted of 60 Iranian high school students and their parents (60). The quantitative research method used in this study. In order to assess parental involvement, the authors adapted a measurement namely "Family Involvement Questionnaire"; for assessing students' English achievement, an English achievement test made by teachers has been used. A significant positive relationship found between Parental Involvement and high school students' English language achievement (Ghahdari Jani & Rahimi, 2021).

Otani (2020) was eager to examine the link between parental involvement and academic achievement. The sample for this study consisted of 3601 secondary school students from various Japanese schools; 51% of them were females while the rest (49%) were males. The quantitative research approach was used in this study. The participants' perceptions of their parents-home involvement were gauged using a self-developed survey. The findings

demonstrated that parental participation improves children's attitudes and aspirations, which is related to students' educational outcomes (Otani, 2020).

Veas, A., Castejon, J. L., Minano, p., and Gilar-Corbi, R (2018) conducted a study in Spain in order to investigate the relationship between parent involvement and the academic achievement of their children. 1398 Spanish high school pupils participated in this study; 53% of them were boys and the rest were girls. The quantitative research method was used along with a survey namely the Parent Involvement Questionnaire. The results indicated that Parental Involvement affected significantly their children's academic achievement (Veas et al., 2018).

On the other hand, limited amount of research their authors did not find any significant relationship between Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement. For example, in USA, Mitchell Jr., D. G (2020) assessed the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among 108 parents and their children of grade 7. The correlational design was utilized in this research together with a parental involvement questionnaire. Meanwhile, pupils' academic achievement was examined by an English Language Arts (ELA) test. The results did not indicate any significant relationship between pupils' ELA scores neither with parental home-based involvement nor with parental school-based involvement (Mitchell, 2020).

In Texas, Langevine, J. A. E (2020) conducted a research in order to investigate the correlation between parental home-based involvement, parental school-based involvement and students' academic achievement. 87 lower secondary school pupils and their parents participated in this study. The author used the quantitative research approach along with a parental involvement questionnaire to assess parents' involvement and CGPA to assess pupils' academic achievement. The correlational analyses indicated that no significant correlation existed between children's academic achievement and parental involvement at home and at school (Langevine, 2020).

Six included studies were reviewed in order to assess the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. The existing articles were conducted in three main countries "USA, Iran, Japan and Spain".

The included articles adopted the quantitative approach and four major questionnaires were used to assess parental involvement which are as the following: "Self-developed questionnaire, Family Involvement Questionnaire, Parental Involvement Questionnaire, and Parent Involvement Questionnaire".

As for the participants, 40% of the discussed studies their authors selected the sample from either lower or upper secondary school students, 40% of the studies their researchers have chosen both parents and their children to be the participants, meanwhile, the parents have been chosen to be the participants of only 20% of the included research.

For the sampling techniques, some of the authors used the Convenience and Purposive sampling method. These sampling methods are not appropriate for the quantitative research design because the results cannot be generalized to the population of the study.

The findings felt under two categories; as for the first section, 60% of the included studies their authors depicted statistically significant relationship between Parental involvement and students' academic achievement. Moreover, parental involvement was considered as a significant predictor of academic achievement. On the other hand, 40% of the related research findings did not indicate any significant correlation between the two variables.

No differences have been found when comparing the newest and the ancient included articles; the authors had the same objective, same method, and almost similar findings.

The current study has the same objective and method as the included research, however, the criteria of the sample is different, as in the current research the sample is selected from immigrant Arab secondary school students.

### **3.2. Parental Involvement and Parents' Educational Level**

Extremely limited authors were interested to study the relation between parents' involvement and their educational level.

The findings felt under two categories; the first category found significant differences between parents' educational levels in relation to their involvement. For example, a study conducted by Voltisa Thartori (2018) aimed to examine the differences across parents' educational level in relation to parental involvement. The participants were 80 Albanian parents from 5 different educational levels (no degree, high school degree, college degree, bachelor degree and post-graduate degree). The participants were selected via a convenience sampling technique. The author used the cross-sectional study along with an adapted questionnaire namely "Parental Involvement Questionnaire" developed by Epstein et al. (2009). The result indicated that parents who have tertiary Education involve more in their children's educational achievement than the other educational levels (Voltisa Thartori, 2018).

On the other hand, the second category could not find any significant differences, for instance, Erdener, M.A., and Knoeppel, R.C (2018) from Turkey conducted a study in order to determine any differences in Parents' involvement in relation to their educational level. 742 parents participated in this study; 368 of them did not have any degree, 199 were having a high-school degree, 93 of them had a bachelor degree, and 6 parents had a post-graduate degree. The quantitative research method has been used. An adapted questionnaire developed by Epstein et al., 2009 was used to assess participants' Parental Involvement. The results did not indicate any significant affect between Parental Involvement and their educational level (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018).

Only two studies were included in this section in order to evaluate the differences across parents' educational levels on parental involvement and they were conducted in Turkey and Albania.

The quantitative research method and Parental Involvement Questionnaire developed by Epstein et al. (2009) were adapted in both research.

The findings were divided into two sections; the first section found significant differences between parents' educational levels in relation to their involvement. In the contrary, the second findings could not find any significant differences across parents' educational levels.

These two including studies and the current research shared the same aim and research design, however, the classification of parents' educational level is one of the main differences between the studies. As the author of this current study divided parents' educational level into two levels "secondary and tertiary education", furthermore, the instrument used to assess parental involvement is not the same in the current study, so the result may not be similar.

### **3.3. Parental Involvement and Socio-Economic Status**

Some authors studied the relation between Parental Involvement and Socioeconomic Status (SES), for example, Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) wished to examine the effect of family SES on Parents' involvement. Out of 742 participants; 391 of the parents were belonging to the low socioeconomic class, 245 parents were from the working class; 83 were from the middle class, 15 of them belonged to the upper middle class, while the rest of them (8) were from the upper class. Based on the findings, family SES was the most significant factor of parental involvement (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018).

In USA, the researchers Namok Choi., Mido Chang., Sunha Kim., Thomas G. Reio Jr (2015) aimed to study parents' involvement and their SES. 8673 grade 10<sup>th</sup> pupils were the sample of this study. The authors used the



Structural Equation Modeling; parental involvement was assessed by using a self-report questionnaire.

From the findings, parents who belonged to the high SES class participated and involved more in their children's mathematics achievement (Namok Choi et al., 2015).

Only two research were included in this section to examine the differences between family SES classes on parental involvement, and they were conducted in Turkey and USA.

The quantitative research method has been adopted in the included articles and the family income was used to gauge family Socioeconomic Status.

The current research had the same aim and method, however, the grouping of family Socio-economic Status classes is different. As in the reviewed articles, family SES was divided either to five or two classes, whereas, in the current study, family SES is divided into three classes "high, average and low". Moreover, the criteria of the sample is different, as in the current research the sample is selected from the Arab secondary school students.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The correlational design was used in this study in order to examine the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement from the Arab Secondary School Students' perspectives. Through a simple random technique, 300 Arab secondary school students from eight Arab schools in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia, took part in this study.

In order to examine participants' parental involvement, Parent and School Survey (PASS) developed by Ringenberg et al (2005) was adapted by modifying the statements and translated them into Arabic in order to be assigned to the students.

The data was analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, independent sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA.

#### **5. RESULTS**

##### **5.1. Parents' Involvement Level towards Their Children's Learning**

The mean scores and standard deviations of the dependent variable "Parental Involvement," as well as its six components, were calculated to determine the level of parental involvement from the perspectives of Arab secondary school students, as shown in table 1 below.

The formula of Leong et al (2016) was used to determine the three categories "low, average and high". Because the Parent and School Survey

(PASS) had a likert point scale ranging from 1 to 5, the calculation is as follows:  $(5-1)/3= 1.33$ . The means scores were divided into three categories, with the first level "low" ranging from 1 to 2.33, the second level "average" ranging from 2.34 to 3.67, and the third level "high" ranging from 3.68 to 5.

Table 1 Parents' Involvement Level

Variable/Sub-Construct	M	SD	The Level
Parent and School Survey (PASS)	4.31	.44	high
*Learning at Home	4.45	.40	high
*Communication	4.44	.41	high
*Parenting	4.40	.33	high
*Collaborating with Community	4.30	.42	high
*Decision-Making	4.15	.44	high
*Volunteering	4.14	.45	high

\*sub-construct

Based on the table 1 above the level of parents' involvement was high ( $M=4.31$ ,  $SD= .44$ ) which indicates that parents had a high level of involvement towards their children's learning both at school and at home. The parents of the participants had high levels in each of the six sub-categories, as their mean scores was ranging between 4.14 to 4.45.

### 5.2. The relationship between Parental Involvement and Participants' Academic Achievement

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was computed in order to examine the correlation between participants' academic achievement and their parents' involvement from the students' perspectives. The current author hypothesized having no significant correlation between parental involvement and participants' academic achievement.

The academic achievement of the participants had a mean of 3.29 and a Standard deviation of .50, while parental involvement's mean was as the following: ( $M= 4.31$ ,  $SD= .44$ ).

The finding depicted statistically significant weak positive correlation between participants' academic achievement and parental Involvement,  $r=.136$ ,  $n= 300$ ,  $p=.019$ , thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

In conclusion, the researcher discovered a substantial association between parental involvement and academic achievement among the participants after analyzing the findings. (See Table 2).

Table 2 Relationship between Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

<b>Motivation to Learn</b>		
<b>Academic Achievement</b>	Pearson Correlation	.136*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019
	N	300

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

### 5.3. Parental Involvement and Parents' Educational Level

In order to determine whether there were significant differences in parental involvement across parents' educational levels (secondary and tertiary Education) , an independent sample *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that there were no significant differences in parental involvement between the two educational groups "Secondary and Tertiary Education".

It was shown from the analysis that there were statistically significant differences in the mean score of parents who had Secondary Education (M= 4.27, SD= .47) and those who had Tertiary Education (M= 4.37, SD= .40) in relation to their parental involvement. The independent sample *t*-test was significant,  $t(298) = -2.029$ ,  $p = .043$  at .05 alpha level two tailed. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected (See Table 3).

The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in parental involvement (PI) in relation to parents' Educational Level; parents who had tertiary education tend to involve more in their children's learning compared to those who had secondary education.

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>sig (2 tailed)</b>
PI Secondary Education	153	4.27	.47	-2.029	.043
Tertiary Education	147	4.37	.40		

### 5.4. Parental Involvement and Socio-Economic Status (SES)

Table 3 Parental Involvement and Educational Level

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to define whether there are any differences between parents' Socioeconomic Status which it was comprised of 3 levels: 1= low SES class, 2= average SES class, and 3= high SES class in regard to their parental involvement.

The author of this current study hypothesized that there were no significant differences in parental involvement across parents' SES classes.

The mean score for each Socioeconomic Status class was reported as followed: low SES class (M= 4.36, SD= .21), average SES class (M= 4.40, SD= .18) and high SES class (M= 4.39, SD= .20).

The result indicated that the ANOVA test was not significant,  $f(2,30) = 1.459$ ,  $p = .234$  at .05 alpha level two tailed (See Table 4). Thus, the null hypothesis was failed to be rejected, in other word, there were no statistically significant differences in parental involvement in relation to their Socioeconomic Status.

Table 4 Parental Involvement and SES

Sum of	df	Squares	Mean	F	Sig.	Square
Between Groups	.112	2	.056	1.459	.234	.038
Within Groups	11.386	297				

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1. Parents' Involvement Level

The first aim of this current study was to examine the level of parents' involvement towards their children's learning from the students' perspectives. The findings depicted high level of parental involvement in all its 6 dimensions "volunteering, learning at home, parenting, communication, decision-making, and collaborating with community".

This result was supported by the Islamic perspective as well as by Epstein's typology of involvement.

From the Islamic perspective, Islamic Sharia obligated parents to educate and take good care of their children, and it did not allow them to neglect their children and their rights such as the right to learn and the right for nutrition.

Children are one of the important cells in the entity of Islamic society, as Islam highlighted their importance from a stage prior to their existence (Saidi, 1996). The role of the family in Islam cannot be restricted to the process of procreation and the preservation of the human species, but it is more than that, it is a task that goes beyond the task of gratification to the task of creativity in bringing forth righteous Muslim generations, which the prophet -may God bless Him and grant him peace- will be proud of on the day of judgment. In general, in Islam, education is the development and the

care of all aspects of the human being; whether mental, psychological, emotional, physical, or behavioral.

Epstein typology of involvement was created to increase parental, school, and community involvement in students' learning processes, which can improve their academic performance. Epstein's model emphasized the role of parents, school and environment in the youth's educational process; the support and the encouragement of the parents and the clear communication between parents, teachers and schools from the other part are deemed to be important in youth's emotional, cognitive, psychological and physical development.

### **6.2. The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Participants' Academic Achievement**

The second study's aim was to examine the relationship between parental involvement and the participants' Academic Achievement. The findings depicted significant relationship between the two factors.

The current finding was align with the findings of many authors as they found a significant relationship between Parental Involvement and secondary students' academic achievement (Mohammed Almutairi, 2021; Ghahdari Jani & Rahimi, 2021; ; Otani, 2020; Veas et al., 2018).

On the other hand, limited studies did not find any significant relationship between the two variables such as the study of Mitchell Jr., D. G (2020) who assessed the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among 108 parents and their children of grade 7. The results did not indicate any significant relationship between pupils' ELA scores neither with parental home-based involvement nor with parental school-based involvement (Mitchell, 2020).

### **6.3. Parental Involvement across Parents' Educational Levels**

The third objective aimed to determine any significance differences in parental involvement towards the students' learning across parents' Educational levels (secondary and tertiary Education).

The result revealed statistically significant differences in parental involvement in relation to parents' Educational level; parents who had tertiary Education tend to involve more in their youths' education.

This finding was supported by the study of Voltisa Thartori (2018) who aimed to examine the differences across parents' educational level in relation to parental involvement. The result indicated that parents who have tertiary Education involve more in their children's educational achievement than the other educational levels (Voltisa Thartori, 2018).

In contrary, some studies were not aligned with this current study's finding such as the study of Erdener, M.A., and Knoepfel, R.C (2018) from

Turkey who aimed to determine any differences in Parents' involvement in relation to their educational level. The results did not indicate any significant affect between Parental Involvement and their educational level (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018).

#### **6.4. Parental Involvement across Parents' Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

The last objective aimed to determine any significance differences in parental involvement towards the students' learning across parents' Socioeconomic Statuses (low, average and high classes).

The finding did not show any statistically significant differences in parental involvement in relation to their Socioeconomic Status (SES).

In contrast, the reviewed articles have shown a different result, for example, the study of Erdener and Knoepfel (2018) who found that family SES was the most significant factor of parental involvement (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018).

Similarly, the study of Namok Choi et al (2015) found that parents who belonged to the high SES class participated and involved more in their children's mathematics achievement (Namok Choi et al., 2015).

## **CONCLUSION**

The correlational design was used in this study in order to examine the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement from the Arab Secondary School Students' perspectives. Four research questions and three null hypotheses were developed to evaluate the current study's main objectives. The current study found a significant weak positive correlation between parental involvement and participants' academic achievement.

It is really necessary to conduct more studies by using different research approaches among Arab population for the purpose of understanding the interaction of these two constructs better and to help the Arab students to achieve high grades by letting their parents to involve more in their education.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the results derived from the current study, the researcher hereby suggests the following recommendations:

1. Further studies may support the current research's findings by employing large population from different schools and ethnicities.
2. Schools must involve parents more in their children's learning by having meetings and workshops about the benefits of parental involvement regularly.
3. High cooperation is needed between parents, schools and community in order to solve students' educational problems.
4. Enhancing the relationship between the adolescent and his/her parents by spending more time together in order to have a strong relationship and to help the adolescent to cope with the different obstacles in the learning process successfully.
5. More qualitative and experimental studies should be carried out in the Arab context regarding Parental Involvement and Academic achievement in order to have a better understanding of these phenomena.

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