# Relationship between the Direct Roles of Principles in Assisting Parents to Improve Students' Academic Achievement

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**ABSTRACT:** The objective of this research is to identify the direct relationship of priciples roles in helping parents to improve students' academic achievement.  This research will focus on how school management through principle and teacher's role towards four main aspects; parenthood, communication, home schooling and volunteerism that enable teachers to increase the students' academic development. 100 standard six students at West Country Barat primary school were used as the sample for this research and questionnaire is used as instrument. All the data were processed using SPSS software to identify the mean score percentage frequency, Pearson correlation and One Way ANOVA. The findings of the research indicated positive significant relationship between direct roles of principles and teachers in assisting parent to improve students' academic achievement in the aspect of volunteerism. Several suggestions were also made to improve principle and teacher's role in assisting parents in improving the academic achievement in the aspect of communication, parents and home schooling.

**KEYWORDS:** Principle & teachers'role, students' academic achievement, parents, communication, home schooling and volunteerism

## INTRODUCTION

Educaton is a gift to improve and enhance the social and economy standard of an individual with their own effort (Ross & Wu, 1996). Many researchers (Coleman et.al, 1998, Jencks, 2000, Edmonds, 1999, Schalock, 1996, Tajul Ariffin & Noraini, 2002) have testified that there are several variables that contribute to the success of a student's academic achievement. Among the varibles that were mentioned; roles of teachers, involvement of parents and schools as the main organization. Jencks (2009) & Edmonds (1999) associated an individual success despite the gender, social and economy standard with ones dedication towards their eduation. Schalock (1996) supported by Tajul Ariffin & Noraini (2002) indicated that the success of an individual are contributed not only by the individual themselves but by other variables such as teachers and parents in influencing today's learning process. Colemen (et. al, 1996) supported the role of schools by stating that school is also the main organization that is responsible to educate and shape students to face their future. However looking at school as an organization, it links the roles of the school workforce especially the academic staff (teachers) as the most important variable that contribute to the advancement of students' education.

There are also claims that principle and teacher has to be proactive in emphasizing the importance of parents, teachers and community relationship (Stoll & Fink, 1996) whereby the tension and conflict between teachers and parents can be reduced through the positive assistance of teacher to parents (Wentzel, 1998). Gunman & Midgley (2000) indicated that roles between teacher and parents in a two way communication can create a situation that is able to control education at the fundamental base.

Research after research conducted by the western countries by using their education system as example provided evidence that the cooperation between school and parents can improve students' academic achievement in which the relationship indirectly create the perception that school is a safe and conducive place to be due to the support that both are providing to the students (U.S Department of Education, 1993, Chavkin, 1998).The perception differs in Malaysia. The importances of teacher parents' cooperation are not being emphasized as what have been done by its western counterpart.  According to Zaidi (1998) parents' involvement is merely in the parents – teachers association meet (PTA).

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However, now, there is an increase of awareness from teachers towards the positive impact that parents' involvement has been increasing students' academic achievement. Teachers believe that parents should be exposed towards the positive impact of their involvement and not just limit it to only to a specific occasion organized by the school.

Harper, Briar & Lawson, (1994) emphasized that the responsibilities of an educator should not fall solely on teachers, but cooperation of parents are also needed throughout the daily process of learning. Students' self-development is formed through the fundamental values that embedded by families. Weiss & Greene (1992) strongly supported by stating that parents are a child first teacher through the teaching of daily activity and the norm of life, by which the teaching helps in making the learning that they received in school to be more effective.

Principles and teachers believe that students' academic achievement can be improved by exposing parent and providing them opportunities to be a part of students' academic growth. Berger (1991) stated that the relationship is to ensure that principles are able to achieve the goal set by the schools. Partnership formed through the assistance provided by teachers for the involvement of parents can be considered as a common effort (Seely, 1982, Moore & Littlejohn, 1992).

Duber and Epstein (1993) in their study distinguished that perception and teachers'practices have more influence on parents then the students' grades, parents' education, family size, parents' judgments towards children academic ability. Several studies also discussed on the different impact that active versus passive involvement of parents have in children education. Further studies were used to discuss on several claims made by the researcher by understanding; 1) the role of teachers towards students' academic achievement, 2) teacher's role in guiding parent towards student academic achievement 3) enforcement of learning 4) contribute specialties as references 5) contributing through manpower and sources, 6) teachers' perception towards the concept of cooperation in improving academic achievement 7) concept of teachers involvement in assisting parent to guide their children. In relations to those studies, this research was conducted among the standard six students that will be sitting for UPSR in the 2012, with the general aim to identify the relationship between the direct roles of teachers in assisting parent to improve students' academic achievement. The researcher wished to foresee the roles of teachers in preparing parents to guide their children in improving their academic performance. The specific aims of the research were to identify the level of academic achievement among students of West Country Barat (Tamil) Primary School, to identify the direct roles of teachers in assisting parents based on the priority off improving students' academic achievement, to decide the relationship between 4 types of aspects and to identify the differences between classes based on students' academic achievement.

The Joyce Epstein Model (1999, 2002) was used in the research to show the important of parents' involvement and it depends on school roles. Other than that, roles and cooperation shown by the community as well as the school society will influence parents' involvement in their children achievement. The theory has six main approaches, however only four will be discussed in implicating the involvement of teacher in assisting parents in their children academic achievement; "parenthood", "communication", "volunteerism" and "home schooling".

**METHODOLOGY**

Questionnaire was used as the instrument in this research. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) questionnaire is suitable because it is able to directly collect data from a large size sample whereby it will improve the accuracy of the statistic sample to estimate to population parameter thus decreasing the sample differences, it is also believed to increase the accuracy and true reaction given by respondents without being influence by the researcher' behaviour (Mohd Majid Konting, 2005). 135 standard six students who will be sitting for UPSR Government Examination were the population. In order to avoid biasness, random sampling was used because it is easier to control. Especially for this research, the selection of sample will be based on the students' attendance sheet (table). The final sample of the research consists of 100 standard six students from West Country Barat Primary School, Kajang, Selangor. The sample includes male and female students from various family backgrounds. 22 samples were selected randomly through selection of odd numbers for the reason of pioneer study. L.G Gay, G.E. Mills and P. Airasian (2006) and Sekaran (2000) stated that selection of sample from population must be similar to the real sample.

The researcher used questions that were modified and shaped from the Joyce Epstein Model. The questionnaire consists of two parts; part A are 3 questions related to respondent's background and academic achievement, while part B used likert scale with the score value of 1 to 5, which are items related to the research questions that were modified from main aspect of the model (communication, parenthood, home schooling, volunteerism). 40 items in part B were formed based on adaption of previous researches.

As for the pioneer study the data obtained for 30 samples will be analysed using SPSS software to determine the items that are required to be modified or maintained in order to improve the reliability of the instrument and to enforce the questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was also proven. According to Mohd Majid Konting (2005) testing the level of validity of questionnaire is vital to determine whether the item formed are suitable with the respondent. Internal Consistency Reliability in

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the Alpha Cronbach Test indicated the value of Alpha Cronbach for all aspects in Part B are 0.6 till 0.9, which indicate a high value of reliability.

In conducting the research, approval from the school was required. The duration of time in conducting the research was after school session (curriculum period) to ensure that it will not impede with the students' learning process. All questionnaire collected will be analysed by using SPPSS software. Inferential statistic is used to assist in analysing the data. Pearson correlation was used to analyse research question 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6.

**FINDINGS**

In this research, analyses were done based on the research objectives. With the feedback rate of 100%, descriptive statistics test was used to explain the respondents background and to analyze research objectives 1 and 2. Pearson Correlation Inferential Statistic was used to analyze research objective 3, whereas One Way Anova was used to analyse research objective 4.

The finding of the frequency and percentage of the respondents were based on gender and classes. In the research, 51% of the respondents are male and 49% are female. All four classes have the same percentage of 25% whereas the findings for parents' occupation indicated 55% of parents are professional and 49% are not. The frequency and percentage of student's academic achievement level was categorized based on mean score which indicate an average level of achievement (B = 91%).

Finding in relation to research objective 2, focused on the 4 main approaches selected from The Joyce Epstein Model (volunteerism, home schooling, communication and parenthood). The finding of the analysis indicated that involvement of teachers' role in assisting parents begin with volunteerism with the mean score of 4.38 followed by home schooling with the mean score of 4.36, communication with the mean score of 4.29 and parenthood with the mean score of 4.28.

As for the 3$^{rd}$ research objective, the finding to determine the relationship between all four aspects also showed that volunteerism has a positive significant correlative value to students' academic achievement compared to other variables $r = .205$, $p <. 041$. This finding indicates the existence of positive relationship between both variables if more parents show interest to be involved and willing to cooperate with teachers for the development of the students' academic achievement. The aspect of parenthood, communication and home schooling indicated a non-significant value.

**Table 4.5: Pearson correlation, Min, Standard deviation of principles direct roles in four aspects towards academic achievement. (n=100)**

| variables | Academic achievement | p | Min | Sd |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle/teachers role** | | | | |
| parenting | .151 | .135 | 4.28 | 0.26 |
| communication | -.009 | .929 | 4.29 | 0.26 |
| Learning at home | .107 | .288 | 4.36 | 0.25 |
| Volunteering | .205* | .041 | 4.38 | 0.23 |

*Correlation significant level p< .05

The finding for the final research objective using One Way Anova Analysis is to investigate the differences between class and students' academic achievement. It shows that 6 UPM with the highest mean followed by 6 UKM, 6 UTM and finally 6 USM. The Anova analysis indicated a significant differential statistic in mean score test between the classes which are $F (3, 96) = 5.748$, $p = 0.001$. The Post Hoc various comparison test shows a significant statistical difference in score test for both pair of classes; 6 UPM with 6 USM and 6 UPM with 6 UTM.

**Table 4.6:** ANOVA for four classes with academic achievement (n=100)

| Variables | n | Min | S.D. | F | sig-F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class | | | | 5.748 | .001 |
| 6 UKM | 51 | 73.79 | 4.60 | | |
| 6 UPM | 32 | 76.46 | 3.20 | | |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 USM | 40 | 71.11 | 6.31 |
| 6 UTM | 9 | 72.93 | 3.85 |

**DISCUSSION**

Generally, this research is to identify the direct relationship of principles and teachers in assisting parents towards students' academic achievement. The findings of the research were discussed in details based on the research objectives.

**Research Objective 1**

 *To identify the level of students' academic achievement in West Country Barat primary school*
The overall achievement of the students is on satisfactory level between 60 to 79 marks. The findings indicated that the parents' education backgrounds do not affect the students' academic achievement in which students' self-realization and effort have more effect. Other than that according to Eagle Eva (1994) there are also possibilities that the teachers educate the students well to improve the academic achievement as well to assist parents to guide their children at home

**Research Objective 2**

*To identify the direct role of teachers in assisting parents based on priority to improve students' academic achievement*
Finding indicates that teachers play an important role in assisting parents from the aspect of parenthood, home schooling, communication and volunteerism in improving the students' academic achievement based on Epstein Model (1998). Volunteerism has the highest mean value followed by home schooling, communication and parenthood. Seely (1999) suggested the involvement of parents only exist in the aspect of volunteerism. This is due to the factor of limited time that can be spend by parents only for activities organized by schools (Epstein, 1997) because of work, as for the three main aspects (home schooling, parenthood and communication) are non-significant due to lack of commitment.

**Research Objective 3**

*To determine the relationship between the aspect of volunteerism, communication, parenthood and home schooling with students' academic achievement*
Based on the Epstein (1998; 1995; 2002) cooperation between teachers and parents is a must in all of the activities organized by school, because through those activities' teachers have the opportunity to strengthen the parents' teacher relationship besides sharing the responsibilities to improve students' academic achievement. Jennifer (1999) also stated that parents have to play a role in shaping the individuality of children; this responsibility should not be bear solely by teachers.

**Research Objective 4**

*To identify the differences between classes and academic achievement*
The finding for this research question shows that extra efforts have to be put in by teachers in order to improve the class achievement.  Haley & Berry (1998) stated that extra efforts have to be put in for students with average achievement in order to assist them to improve. The statement was also supported by (Dietz 1997; Epstein 1995, 1992; Henderson & Berta 1994; Stevenson & Baker 1987; Henderson 1997; Epstein & Dauber 1991; Chavkin & Gonzalez 1995).

**SUGGESTION (S)**

 Based on the research and the discussion conducted, several suggestions were suggested to be implemented by teachers besides teaching in order to improve students' academic achievement. Among the suggestions are:
1) To conduct workshop or lectures and seminar in terms the communication aspect to improve the role of the teachers improving students' academic achievement. This will also encourage an active two ways communication between parent to holistically smoothen the teaching and learning processes.
2) To conduct workshop and seminar to improve teachers' role in the aspect of home schooling in improving students' academic achievement.
3) To organize talks and counselling in the aspect of parenthood to improve teachers' roles in assisting parent on their responsibilities to improve students' academic achievement.
4) To encourage teachers to play a role in inviting parents, guardians and local community in school activities.
5) To organize Progressive report Card days 4 times a year compared to only once a year as being practice currently.

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**Suggestions for extended research in this field were also made in order to assist future and upcoming researches:**

1) To conduct researches in schools in the rural area by involving parents and teachers. Research conducted can involve various levels of the community for a more significant comparison.

2) Conduct researchers to foresee the relationship between students and involvement of parents from various races and ethnicity in their children education whether primary, secondary or higher institutions.

3) Conduct a quantitative method research to obtain perspective from various sides on teachers' role in assisting parent toward students' academic achievement.

4) To use parents as sample in order to identify the justification to involve parents in cooperating with teachers in the teaching and learning activities to improve students' academic achievement.

5) Extended research can be conducted through the sample selection of teachers and parents to obtain reaction towards the much need cooperation of parents and teacher in education in order to improve academic achievement.

**CONCLUSION**

This research indicated that based on the Epstein Model Approaches, parents' involvement can only be seen from the aspect of volunteerism, as for the rest of aspects, communication, home schooling, and parenthood there is no significant relationship that can be seen, even though there are existence of teacher's assistance to assist parents in the aspect stated. Various activities can be conducted to encourage more parents' involvement with the assistance of teacher to improve the students' academic achievement.

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