The relationship between parental involvement and the academic performance of third and fourth grade students at Snapfinger Elementary School

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS
AT SNAPFINGER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF EDUCATION SPECIALIST

BY
MARIAN S. WILSON

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
APRIL 1990
ABSTRACT

EDUCATION

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SNAPFINGER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Advisor: Dr. Trevor Turner

Thesis dated April, 1990

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a significant relationship between student achievement and parental involvement in the school.

The population of the study included 105 third and fourth grade students from Snapfinger Elementary School in DeKalb County, Georgia. Two classes from each grade level were selected systematically to include both high and low achieving students.

The composite score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills was used to assess the level of student achievement. A student questionnaire was administered to help to assess student perceptions of parental involvement.

The results revealed that parent-teacher conferences and parental involvement in school activities are significantly related to student achievement. The students' perceptions of parental involvement are also significantly related to student achievement.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many to whom I am deeply indebted for assisting me in the writing of this paper. However, there are five special people that I would like to acknowledge.

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Trevor Turner and Dr. Bradley for their efforts in guiding this study.

I would like to thank my husband, Ellis, and my daughter, Barbara, for their support and patience during the preparation of this work.

A special thanks is given to my devoted sister, Barbara, for her invaluable assistance and encouragement. If she had not served as a continued source of support, I would not have progressed as readily.
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CHAPTER I
Introduction

Rationale

The literature presents an array of research on the effects of parental involvement on student performance; however, there is a scarcity of research which identifies the variables which influence high and low student achievement.

Kendrick (1988) assessed the impact of parental involvement in an intervention program observing behavioral and attitudinal changes among parents and teachers. In addition, evaluations using the following four child indices were employed: (1) level of self-esteem, (2) motivation to learn, (3) academic attitudes, and (4) reading achievement. The results reflect a high correlation between family and school environments.

Johnson (1988) investigated the extent to which principals', teachers', and students' perceptions of parents' concerns, interest, and expectations for their children's education predict the variance in school mean student academic achievement, mean student academic self-concept, and mean student sense of futility.

The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that the research focuses upon a practical classroom setting. It can be replicated without difficulty in almost any other classroom situation. Educators have for years searched for
practical approaches to the implementation of recommended research methods. In addition, this study isolates specific variables which are common to the organizational structure of traditional schools. These variables can be used, in part or in whole, to help schools to determine areas in which their institutions can increase the level of student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parental involvement at Snapfinger Elementary School and student academic achievement. Specifically, the study sought to determine to what degree does parental involvement at Snapfinger have on the academic achievement level of students at Snapfinger.

Significance of the Study

There is a scarcity of research on the relationship between parental involvement in school activities and the academic performance of students. The literature reveals that children of parents who are active in school activities perform higher on standardized instruments.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it adds to the research data bank on parental involvement and student achievement. Additionally, the findings of this study will provide insight into those parental factors that
impact upon student achievement, as well as supply
educational guidance for school and community planning.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between parent participation in
   the school and student achievement?

2. Is there a difference in the achievement scores of
   students whose parents meet with the teacher frequently?

Specific research hypotheses were also developed. Each
of those was subjected to a statistical test, the results of
which are described in this chapter. The level of
significance for the study was set at $p < .05$.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the number
of conferences a parent attends and student achievement as
measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the number
of school activities a parent participates in and student
achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between student
perceptions of parental involvement as measured by a survey and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between composite Iowa scores of students whose parents attend 0, 1, 2 or 3 parent-teacher conferences.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations and assumptions are as follows:
1. This study is a correlational study, not an experimental one.
2. The study was limited to four sections of third and fourth grade classes at Snapfinger Elementary School in DeKalb County, Georgia.
3. Subjects for the study consisted only of 105 third and fourth grade students at Snapfinger Elementary School. Of the 105 students in the sample, 45 (42.9%) were in the third grade, and the remaining 60 (57.1%) were in the fourth grade. There were more girls in the sample than boys; 43.8% of the group were males (n = 46) and 56.2% were females (n = 59). The ages of students ranged from eight to eleven. Specifically, 19% of the subjects were 8 years old, 42.9% were 9, 33.3% were 10, and 4.8% were 11.
4. The evaluation instrument was the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Iowa, and a student questionnaire).  
5. The assumption was that the respondents answered the questionnaire honestly. There was no attempt to validate if the respondents were truthful in their responses.

**Definition of Terms**

A. **Parental Involvement** is operationally defined by the following two means:

1. In terms of items one (1) through ten (10) on the student questionnaire to test parental involvement. These questions were structured to assess student perceptions of parental involvement. SEE APPENDIX A.
2. In terms of sign-up sheets and teachers' records. Sign-up sheets were used to determine the number of times parents were in attendance at parent-teacher association meetings, special assemblies and volunteer extra-curricular activities. Teachers' records were used to determine the number of times parents attended classroom activities and/or parent-teacher conferences.

B. **Student Academic Achievement** is defined by the scores achieved by students on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, using the complete composite score.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The researcher engaged in a review of the literature in preparation for this study. The sources for the review included journals, books, newspaper articles, doctoral dissertations, and unpublished articles.

The headings under which the literature was examined included the relationship between student achievement and parental involvement in formal school activities, school-community oriented activities, and the socio-economic status of parents and its influence on schooling.

Parental involvement in formal school activities was researched by several authors, including Kleinstiver (1988), who stated that involvement on the part of parents in the activities of children in elementary public education is crucial for students' success. Further, Kleinstiver stated that a part of the teacher's and principal's repertoire should be the support, guidance and implementation of parental involvement. The Kleinstiver study compared the attitudes of teachers and principals relative to the involvement of parents in elementary public education. The results revealed that the greatest need for parental involvement with the student in public elementary education was homework supervision. Other areas include:
volunteerism, participation in P.T.A., and in school goal setting.

Jowett and Baginsky (1988) identified, described and classified a set of activities that could be undertaken to promote contact between home and school. There was found to be a high correlation between parental involvement in curricular matters and the expansion of activities in innovative practices. Some of the benefits include: (1) improves parents' understanding of schools and education, (2) makes schools more sensitive to local needs and opinions, and (3) provides practical help for hard-pressed teaching staffs. Some of the obstacles include: (1) teacher apprehensiveness about working with parents, (2) lack of time on the part of parents and teachers, (3) lack of space in school, and (4) conflict between the priorities of teachers and parents.

Anderson (1988) discussed the relationship between parental consent to participate in a gifted program and achievement in reading, language arts, and mathematics in grades three and five. The study investigated the relationship between students' participation in a gifted program and their scores on an achievement test. An analysis of the data reflect that there is a positive correlation between the length of time a student is engaged in the gifted program and their scores on a standardized test.
Zerchykow (1984) pointed out that parents' participation can be reduced to three types: parents acting as advocates (lobbyists or watchdogs), parents in decision-making roles, and parents in co-producing schooling. A different type of survey was conducted by Wagenaar (1977) that involved 135 midwestern elementary schools. Wagenaar's research allowed for seven types of parent involvement:

1. Attendance at meetings and school functions;
2. Participation in fundraising;
3. Use of facilities;
4. Involvement in discussion sessions;
5. Parent contracts with school staff;
6. Procedural decision-making; and
7. Curricular decision-making.

Yet, another study was conducted in California by Herman and Yeh (1983). This study involved 256 second and third grade classrooms. This study isolated five areas for research: (1) school-home communications, (2) parent's awareness of school operations, (3) parents' perception of their influence, (4) parents' participation, (5) attendance at P.T.A. meetings and visits, and (6) parent-teacher relations.

In a study targeted to investigate the influence of parents on academically successful males, Coleman (1968) determined that parents provided guidance in both academic and non-academic areas.
Cooper (1984) conducted a study to determine children's attitudes toward parental involvement. The questionnaire was administered in Atlanta, Georgia, to a total of 1,271 children. The study was conducted to investigate the comparison of attitudes of first, third and fifth grade students toward parental involvement. The population included both boys and girls. Analysis of the data reveals that there is a difference in the attitudes of students at different grade levels toward parental involvement. Additionally, the study concluded that the attitudes of girls and boys are not dissimilar.

Several articles dealing with the aspects of school and community-oriented activities involving parents were examined. Norman (1988) revealed that students who participated in partnership programs showed an improvement in academic achievement. In addition, those students demonstrated a predisposition toward entry into the work place.

Desroches (1988) conducted a study on school-community participation. His research concluded that community involvement in the affairs of the school had positive impact not only on achievement, but on self-image and reliance as well.

Donnelly's (1988) research concluded that exchanges between the school and school partners in establishing goals is needed.
Lehming and Kane (1981) expanded their study beyond those of the home and investigated the impact of community involvement. The study referred to community involvement under the broad umbrella entitled partnership. Partnership, according to the study, made new resources available to teachers that otherwise might not be available.

In a study conducted by Devenger (1984) that involved ninety system level Adopt-A-School Programs, the inquiry was carried out in the form of a questionnaire. The result was that when people are involved in a process, they tend to feel a sense of ownership and, therefore, have a vested interest in the outcome.

The perception of the public regarding principals, teachers, and the school was undertaken by Horowitz (1988). His study reveals that a general atmosphere of positivism existed within the community when there is interaction between the two.

Lipsky (1980) conducted a study which revealed that it is not outside resources or new resources that necessarily result from schools reaching outward. Rather, a belief is stimulated on the part of school personnel that change is possible.

In expanding upon parental involvement, Otterbourg (1986) studied school and community partnership. He made the following statements regarding partnerships:
1. There are specific program goals and objectives directly related to the needs of the individual school.

2. Emphasis is placed on the use of direct human resources and services. As a result, there is a high degree of personal satisfaction on the part of the adopter. For the adoptee, the opportunity to receive supplemental resources directly related to on-site needs supports basic curriculum and instruction and staff morale.

3. Although agreements between adopters and adoptees are informal and largely ceremonial, close bonding occurs as people from inside and outside the school work together.

Jean Wallish (1976) conducted a study on the effectiveness of the Emergency School Aid Act on schools. There were three questions dealing with parental involvement: (1) how much have the schools attempted to involve parents?, (2) how much are parents actively involved with the school effort?, and (3) are differences in the level of parental involvement associated with differences in student achievement? The study revealed the following: (1) parent and community involvement showed a high correlation, (2) organizational climate influenced gains in mathematics, and (3) that the use of behavioral objectives, instructional practice and positive reinforcement were
associated with gains in both reading and mathematics.

The third topic in the review of the literature dealt with parental involvement and student achievement as it related to the socio-economic status of parents and its influence on schooling. Bruce (1989) discussed and compared American, British, French, Danish, and Irish schools in relationship to the role of parents. Bruce states that parents must possess the necessary skills prior to becoming active in the schools. The article referred to parents as consumers, and stated that some teachers may regard the use of consumerism as a threat to their professional status.

Chavez (1988) conducted a study on parental involvement of low-income Hispanic parents in a preschool education program and their children's cognitive development. The level of parental involvement did not result in a significant increase or decrease in children's receptive vocabulary or parents' attitudes toward involvement.

Greenberg (1989), in a study entitled 'Ideas that Work with Young Children', lists several crucial ways that parents can influence the success rate of their children. The research stated that (1) family endorsement affects children's self-esteem, (2) negative feelings about school or discomfort in visiting school is probably harmful; parent might should not participate in such an instance, (3) teacher education institutions need to teach how to work in partnership with parents, and (4) that schools should ask
why low-income parents, minorities, and people who speak other languages do not come to school.

Benjamin (1985) engaged in a study with the St. Thomas/St. John School District which involved 521 students, their parents and teachers. The study supported the assumption that parental involvement is central to student achievement. Further, Benjamin pointed out that females are more dependent upon home factors while males are more greatly influenced by school factors, particularly as it relates to reading.

Maykut (1984) conducted a study of the relationship between the psychological and social influences of the household environment and the developmental performance on measures of cognition, affective characteristics, and academic achievement on children.

The study included sixty-nine families comprised of 182 students. Families were characterized as either high or low achievers. A multi-component family assessment instrument was designed to measure family on two aspects of family progress: (1) the quality of the language learning environment, and (2) the quality of the social-emotional environment. The conclusions suggest that the home environment is crucial to the children achieving both cognitively and affectively.

John Berclay (1971) made the following statement relative to parental involvement:
A child's initial learning experiences take place in the home, with parents as first instructors. As the child's world expands, other persons, relatives, family, friends, other children, and those presented through radio, television and movies play an important role in learning. As these other sources of learning become evident, parents may begin to feel that they are losing contact with their child and this feeling can become especially acute when the child enters school (p. 105).

Guttentag (1975) suggests that parents have, by far, more influence on the achievement of their children than any school could ever have.

A study performed by McCarthy (1968) included 41 four-year old children from deprived backgrounds. These children were observed for changes in intelligence test scores and language abilities. The parents were observed for attitudinal changes. The study revealed that while many parents participated to the level of their abilities, little change took place with the parents. However, the children showed significant levels of gain in language abilities where there was a high level of parental involvement.

Judy Melvin and John Stallworth (1977) stated the following:
Parental involvement reinforces the importance of education, narrows the gap between educator's and parents' goals for schools, gives parents keener insights into their children's learning and allows parents to see how the school operates. This kind of involvement can give children an increased sense of their own destiny and a greater sense of self worth, both of which are keys to successful learning. It can allow schools to become flourishing sources of education in communities and, in turn, reduce failures and ineffectiveness. Finally, it brings the home up on more equal footing with schools in the educational process (p. 501).

Benjamin Bloom (1964), in a study entitled *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, stated that children's academic and cognitive development is often in direct proportion to the values placed on education by the family and the family's reinforcement of children's school activities. The central challenge of school personnel in how they work together with families can alter a relationship riddled by anger, fear, and indifference into a relationship which encompasses trust, cooperation, and support. The family is the best source for the teaching of acceptance, discipline, values, and love.

Becker and Epstein (1982) propose that schools should
require parents to sign children's graded papers and folders in an attempt to keep parent abreast of student's progress. There is a direct relationship between parents' attitudes toward school and the achievement of students. When parents demonstrate support for their children's school activities, they foster a climate that is central to student success.

Milne, Myers, and Rosenthal (1986) sought to determine to what extent working parents and single-parent families influenced academic achievement. The study reveals that there is a high correlation between underachievement and a mother's employment and single-parent families. The study investigated other variables such as age, family structure, income, and race.

Various studies included varying activities to define parental involvement. Woods (1974) conducted a study to determine the influence of parental involvement on disadvantaged children. Fourteen kindergarten classes comprised of 109 parents and 269 children were involved in the project. Pretest scores for students of non-participating parents were lower. The results showed that while students in the experimental group showed a slight gain over the control group, all students showed significant gains. It was assumed that the presence of any group of parents in a class setting positively influenced student outcome.

Using the Annual Gallup poll, George W. Gallup (1978)
concluded the following relative to parental involvement:

A joint and coordinated effort by parents and teachers is essential to dealing more successfully with problems of discipline, motivation and the development of good work habits at school and at home. For a little added expense the public can, by working with parents, meet educational standards impossible to reach without such cooperation (p. 53).

Reginald Clark (1983) conducted a study involving 10 low-income black families. He concluded that in those families where a teenage was in the top 20% of his or her class, there was an authoritative figure head in the household. His study suggests that:

A family's overall cultural style - not the more commonly used variables of marital status, educational level, income, or social class - determines whether or not children are prepared to perform well in school (p. 54).

In his study on American high schools, James Coleman (1966) found that students who attended private high schools were more likely to be successful than if they attended a public school. His study compared grades and test scores. Coleman explained that public schools appeared to view its role as being representative of the larger society, while private school viewed its role as extensions of the families
they serve. Catholic schools, according to Coleman, have a further advantage in that they act as agents of a religious community to which many of the students' parents belong. The continuity of values between school and home are continually reinforced. It is more difficult to integrate experiences in the home and school when there is not reinforcement.

Some of the unanswered questions by the researcher are:

1. What type and intensity of parent involvement will raise the achievement level of low-income and minority children to the level expected for middle-class students?

2. What forms of parent involvement are most appropriate for students in middle, junior high, and high schools?

3. What resources do parents and teachers need to work effectively as partners?

4. What are the most appropriate roles for government agencies at all levels in encouraging, nurturing, and expanding parent involvement?

5. What can others in the community - such as service agencies, employers, and business and industry - do to help families and schools work together?

Anne Henderson (1987) contends that while much research on parental involvement has been conducted, the major points are worth reiterating again:
- Involving parents in their children's formal education improves the children's achievement.
- Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, well-planned, and long lasting.
- Involving parents when their children are young has beneficial effects that persist throughout the child's academic career.
- While the effects are particularly strong at the early levels, significant benefits can be derived from involving parents in the intermediate and high school years.
- Involving parents with their children's education at home may not be enough to improve schools; a school's average level of achievement does not appear to improve unless parents are involved in the school.
- Children from low-income and minority families benefit the most when parents are involved in the schools, and parents do not have to be well-educated to make a difference.
- Students' attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment are critical to achievement; these attitudes are formed primarily at home, though they can be profoundly influenced by experience at school.

Ultimately, involving parents in education touches on much larger questions than improving reading and math
scores. Citizens in our democracy must participate in the governing of public institutions. It is also destructive to the family to shut parents out of their children's experience in school. During the same period in which parent involvement has been on the decline, our children have been falling behind and dropping out in record numbers. This research strongly suggests that there is a connection.

We cannot afford to sequester parents on the periphery of the educational enterprise. Parent involvement is neither a quick fix nor a luxury; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

Polly Greenberg (1989) conducted a study concerning parents as partners. She concluded that parent involvement is not a fad. She worked as a teacher, and stated that all teachers know that parents of poor students are the least likely to participate in school programs, or even to show up at school. In an attempt to get parents more involved, she cited the following steps that may be taken:

- Build time for extensive teamwork into teachers' schedules or hire sufficient supplementary staff specializing in various kinds of parent and family work with various kinds of parents and families to do it.
- Allow parents to participate in principal and teacher selection.
- Allow willing and interested parents to
participate in the study of various curriculum materials.

- Show equal, warm welcomes and respect to all parents.

- Hold meetings at varying times of the day and evening to permit parents who work various shifts and parents who live far away to be able to attend.

- Implement a regular policy of reaching out to hard-to-find parents through home visits.

- Plan small gatherings at locations low-income White and minority families frequent and feel at home in.

- Provide a reason for low-income parents to bother to come to school.

- Increase parents' willingness and ability to access, mobilize, or even generate the community services children need through advocacy experiences and informal training.

- Conduct parent-teacher projects and study groups through which all involved learn more about each other's cultures.

- Conduct regular child study sessions in which teachers and parents are together.

- Encourage parents to visit frequently and without an appointment.

- Teach parents how to help young children
learn at home.

- Explore what expert practitioners, educators, and researchers specializing in early childhood education parent participation programs outside of public schools, already know (p. 203).

Derman and Sparks (1989) conducted a study on facing the reality of classism. Almost all school management is comprised of a large segment of the middle class. According to Derman and Sparks, "Many middle-class people feel antagonistic toward the lower class, and both superior to and estranged from people who live their lives in non standard ways." This study explored the issues of race and bias in education. According to the authors, parents need two things in order to be contributors to school: (1) exposure to excellent schools to enable them to develop judgement as to what is excellent and what is not, and (2) a choice as to where their children attend school.

Andrew (1981) conducted a study on parental involvement as the key to student success. Andrew raised the question, how can we get parents involved? This study involved a Head Start program in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana. Efforts were made to involve parents in their children's preschool education.

The results indicated that there was a significant degree of success in getting parents, staff and community to work together to enhance children's development. The
program enrolled 600 children, ages three through five, in thirteen Head Start centers. The students' backgrounds were Black, Creole, Anglo, Cajun and Vietnamese. Staff members invited parents to coffee hours, to chaperone field trips, to participate in group discussion, and to serve as volunteers or aides to teachers. An important role played by parents was to elect a parent-community representative to serve on the team which evaluated achievement. Attitudes and interactions transcend social class or income.

Ronald Gillum (1977) explored a study dealing with reading skills in schools were the population was comprised of approximately 2,000 disadvantaged children in grades two through six. The purpose of the study was: (1) to determine if students in the experimental group had higher reading levels than students in the control group; (2) to determine if there were significant differences among the three reading programs in effect in the school; and (3) to compare the three programs to determine if differences in student performance could be attributed to parental involvement. Gillum reported that the reading scores of students were significantly higher in schools where there was a high level of parental involvement. Gillum's research gives credence to the assumption that the attitude of the family greatly impacts upon the level of student achievement.

Bowers (1988) conducted a study on the influence of
students' parents on teacher attribution and discipline. The issue was ownership and teacher attributions, and discipline choices. Students were characterized as belonging to "good", "bad", and "mixed" backgrounds. Discipline techniques included prescription, proscription, punishment, parents, the use of rewards, and the use of support.

Thomas P. Cooke (1975) proclaims through the presentation of ten postulates that parents have sovereignty over the educational lives of their children. The ten postulates can be summarized as follows:

- Parental involvement seems to decrease the financial cost of reading remediation to society in the long run. Children opposed to school and social requirements are unable to assist in modifying such difficulties. They often develop psychiatric disturbances.
- Parental involvement in the education in their children is further justified, since from our society's perspective, parents are both morally and legally responsible for their children's performance, behavior and development (p. 111).

The content of the ten postulates support the position that parents have a legitimate right to become involved in the educational affairs of their children.
SUMMARY

Numerous studies have been conducted on the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. After a general survey of the literature, the researcher restricted the literature search to three broad topics that related to parental involvement and student achievement. The topics included were parental involvement in: (1) formal school activities, (2) school/community-oriented activities, and (3) the socio-economic status of parents and its impact upon schooling.

The literature suggests that parental involvement across the three topics has a positive influence on the academic achievement of students. In almost every instance, parental involvement has been deemed important to the academic, emotional, and affective development of students.
CHAPTER III

Design and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a significant relationship between student achievement and parent involvement in the school. In this chapter the sample, instruments, and data collection procedures are discussed.

Sample

The subjects in the sample were 105 third and fourth grade students from an elementary school in DeKalb County, Georgia. Two classes from each grade level were randomly selected to include both high and low achieving students. There were nine sections of third and fourth grade classes. Each section was identified by a card which also indicated whether the section was a low or high achieving section. The cards were placed in a box. The cards were pulled from the box until four cards representing a high and low section for both the third and fourth grades were pulled.

Instruments and Data Collection

The composite score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Iowa) was used to assess the level of student achievement. This test is given to students in DeKalb County in the spring each school year. The reliability and validity of

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the instrument has been well established through the years.

A survey developed for this study was used to assess student perceptions of parental involvement. The survey consisted of 10 questions regarding parental involvement in school activities. The surveys were administered to the subjects in the participating 3rd and 4th grade classes. Children were asked to respond to each item by circling one of four responses: always, sometimes, seldom or never. Points were assigned to each response on a scale of 0 to 3, with a 3 being assigned to an "always" response and 0 to a "never". A total score was calculated by summing the 10 items. The survey also included items asking for the student's name, grade, age, and gender. A copy of the survey can be found on page 43 in Appendix A.

In addition to the two instruments, data was collected from school records on parental involvement. Teachers in each of the participating classes provided information on the number of times a parent:

1. attended a parent-teacher conference;

2. attended a P.T.A. meeting;

3. volunteered in the classroom;

4. volunteered for an extra-curricular activity;

5. helped with a special assembly; and

6. participated in the leadership of the P.T.A.

Thus, the study included data of student perceptions (from the survey) as well as direct measures of parent behavior
based on participation in various school activities.
CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

The focus of this research project was student achievement and its relationship to parental involvement in the school. Specifically, the two research questions developed for this study were: (1) is there a relationship between parent participation in the school and student achievement, and (2) is there a difference in the achievement scores of students whose parents meet with the teacher frequently. Specific research hypotheses were also developed. Each of those was subjected to a statistical test, the results of which are described in this chapter. The level of significance for the study was set at $p < .05$.

Descriptive Information

Of the 105 students in the sample, 45 (42.9%) were in the third grade, and the remaining 60 (57.1%) were in the fourth grade. There were more girls in the sample than boys; 43.8% of the group were males ($n = 46$) and 56.2% were females ($n = 59$). The ages of students ranged from eight to eleven. Specifically, 19% of the subjects were 8 years-old, 42.9% were 9, 33.3% were 10, and 4.8% were 11. Demographic information on the students is presented in Table 1.

About 10.5% of the parents ($n = 11$) did not attend any parent-teacher conferences during the academic year. A
larger group (n = 32, 30.5%) met with the teacher one time. A slightly higher number of parents (n = 39, 37.1%) attended two conferences, while the remainder (n = 23, 21.9%) attended three or more. These data are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Students

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<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Parent Participation in Parent-Teacher Conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conferences Attended:</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than one quarter of the parents did not attend any P.T.A. meetings during the year (n = 28, 26.7%). About 15%
(n = 16) attended one meeting, about 11% (n = 11) attended two, and 20% (n = 21) attended three meetings. More than one-fourth (n = 29, 27.6%) of the parents in this sample attended four or more P.T.A. meetings. Information on P.T.A. attendance is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Parent Participation in the P.T.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P.T.A. Meetings Attended</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the analyses presented below, all measures of parent behavior, except those on parent-teacher conferences, were combined into one unit. These behaviors included the number of times a parent attended a P.T.A. meeting, volunteered in the classroom, volunteered for an extracurricular activity, helped with a special assembly, and participated in the leadership of the P.T.A. Although the mean number of activities that a parent was involved in was 2.9, a sizeable portion (n = 28, 26.7%) of the parents were not involved in any of these activities. The range of involvement varied widely. While these parents did not participate at all, about 18% were involved in six or more different activities. Two parents had a total of 17
activities each. Information on these activities is presented in Table 4. The other measure of parent involvement used in the study was a survey of student perceptions. Students in the sample were asked to rate the level of their parent's involvement on a variety of school-related activities. Each item was scored on a scale from zero to three. A total score was calculated by adding the 13 items together. A high score on the survey indicates high levels of participation and a low score is associated with low levels. The summary statistics for the survey are presented in Table 5.

Table 4. Parent Participation in Combined Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Activities:</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 or more</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics on Student Survey: Measurement of Perceptions of Parent Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>12.724</td>
<td>4.718</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>29.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>11.000</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>29.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the perceptions of students, parents tended to be most involved in conferences and homework. Sixty-four students (61%) responded that their parents always came to a conference when the teacher asked for one. Sixty-seven subjects (63.8%) indicated that either their mother or father always checked their homework. Parents were least involved in special events at the school. For example, 83.8% of the students (n = 88) said that their parents never helped with the Spring Spaghetti Dinner. Other special events like the talent shows and field trips also yielded a high percentage of "never" responses from the subjects in this sample.

**Statistical Analyses**

The first hypothesis for this study involved the relationship between the number of parent-teacher conferences and student achievement. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 stated:

There is no significant relationship between the number of conferences a parent attends and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

A Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis (see Table 6). The correlation between the number of conferences attended and the Iowa score was significant ($r = .29, p = .001$), and therefore, Hypothesis 1
was rejected. Although the findings are statistically significant, the correlation is considered to be in the low moderate range, showing a weak to moderate relationship between the two variables.

Table 6. Pearson's Correlation of the Number of Parent-Teacher Conferences and the Composite Iowa Test Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second hypothesis in this research project was related to the amount of parental involvement and student achievement. Parental involvement, in this case, was measured as the total number of activities in which the parent participated during the year. These activities included the number of times a parent attended a P.T.A. meeting, volunteered in the classroom, volunteered for an extra-curricular activity, helped with a special assembly, and participated in the leadership of the P.T.A. Hypothesis 2 stated:

There is no significant relationship between the number of school activities a parent participates in and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Again, a Pearson's correlation procedure was used to test this hypothesis. The correlation (Table 7) between the two variables was calculated to be .69 which is moderately
strong and statistically significant ($p = .000$). Hypothesis 2 was, therefore, rejected.

Table 7. Pearson's Correlation of the Number of School Activities Participated in and the Composite Iowa Test Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third hypothesis involved the relationship between the student survey results and achievement. Specifically, Hypothesis 3 stated:

There is no significant relationship between student perceptions of parent involvement as measured by a survey and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

The results of a Pearson's correlation indicated that student perceptions and student achievement were significantly related ($p = .004$), and therefore, Hypothesis 3 was rejected. However, the correlation (Table 8) was relatively low with $r = .26$, showing that the relationship is somewhat weak.

Table 8. Pearson's Correlation of Student Perceptions of Parent Involvement and the Composite Iowa Test Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A fourth hypothesis was added to look at the issue of attendance at parent-teacher conferences. It was hypothesized that conferences could be related to low as well as high student performance. In other words, parents could have many conferences because their children were having a lot of difficulty or just because the parents wanted to stay in touch with the teacher. The differences in these two motivating factors would not be demonstrated in a correlation. Therefore, analysis of variance was used to determine whether achievement varied according to the number of parent conferences. Hypothesis 4 stated:

There is no significant difference between composite Iowa Scores of students whose parents attend 0, 1, 2 or 3 parent-teacher conferences.

The results of this analysis appear to suggest that students whose parents had no conference with the teacher had significantly lower ($F = 6.1, p = .00$) Iowa Scores than did the other students (see Table 9). The mean score for students in the no conference group was 28.2, while the mean scores for students in other groups ranged from 55.3 to 61.5. The difference in scores for the 1, 2, and 3 conference groups was not statistically significant.
Table 9. Analysis of Variance on Composite Iowa Test Score
Grouped by Number of Parent Conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO CONFERENCES</td>
<td>28.2727</td>
<td>13.7484</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 CONFERENCE</td>
<td>55.3438</td>
<td>23.5120</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 CONFERENCES</td>
<td>59.7179</td>
<td>24.3418</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 OR MORE CONFERENCES</td>
<td>61.5217</td>
<td>23.4751</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Total Sample</td>
<td>55.4857</td>
<td>24.6807</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
F = 6.0745, \quad p = .0008
\]
CHAPTER V

Summary

The focus of this research project was the effect of parental involvement on student achievement. Specifically, the two research questions developed for this study were: (1) is there a relationship between parent participation in the school and student achievement, and (2) is there a difference in the achievement scores of students whose parents meet with the teacher frequently? Specific research hypotheses were also developed. Each of those was subjected to a statistical test. The level of significance for the study was set at \( p < .05 \).

The first hypothesis for this study involved the relationship between the number of parent-teacher conferences and student achievement. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 stated:

There is no significant relationship between the number of conferences a parent attends and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

A Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis. The correlation between the number of conferences attended and the Iowa score was significant (\( r = .29, p = .001 \)), and therefore, Hypothesis 1 was rejected.
Hypothesis 2 stated:
There is no significant relationship between the number of school activities a parent participates in and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Again, a Pearson's correlation procedure was used to test this hypothesis. The correlation between the two variables was calculated to be .69 which is moderately strong and statistically significant ($p = .000$). Hypothesis 2 was, therefore, rejected.

The third hypothesis involved the relationship between the student survey results and achievement. Specifically, Hypothesis 3 stated:

There is no significant relationship between student perceptions of parent involvement as measured by a survey and student achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

The results of a Pearson's correlation indicated that student perceptions and student achievement were significantly related ($p = .004$), and therefore, Hypothesis 3 was rejected.

Hypothesis 4 stated:
There is no significant difference between composite Iowa Scores of students whose parents attend 0, 1, 2 or 3 parent-teacher conferences.
The results of this analysis showed that students whose parents had no conference with the teacher had significantly lower ($F = 6.1$, $p = .00$) Iowa Scores than did the other students. The mean score for students in the no conference group was 28.2, while the mean scores for students in other groups ranged from 55.3 to 61.5. The difference in scores for the 1, 2 and 3 conference groups was not statistically significant.
Conclusions

After an analysis of the data collected, the following conclusions were reached:

1) The number of parent-teacher conferences a parent has is significantly related to student achievement. The correlation is positive, indicating a direct relationship: as the number of conferences increases, so does the level of achievement. The correlation is fairly weak.

2) The number of activities a parent is involved in is significantly related to student achievement. The correlation here is fairly strong (as compared to the other two which were fairly weak). The more involved a parent is, the higher the level of achievement.

3) The student's perception of parent involvement is significantly related to student achievement. However, this (like correlation #1) is fairly weak.

4) Students whose parents do not have any conferences with a teacher have significantly lower Iowa scores. The average score of these students is 27 points lower than the next highest group.

In general, students whose parents are involved do better than students whose parents are not.
Recommendations

The review of the literature, as well as the results of the analysis of data collected for this study, suggest that there is a relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1) That further research studies be conducted on students' perceptions of the impact of parental involvement in school activities and student academic achievement.

2) That further research studies be conducted to determine the correlation between parent-teacher conferences and student achievement.

3) That Snapfinger Elementary School explore the merit of increased emphasis on parent-teacher conferences during the ensuing academic years.
APPENDIX A

Student Questionnaire

The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and the Academic Performance of Third and Fourth Grade Students at Snapfinger Elementary School

Read the following questions and circle the response that best answers the question.

1. Does your mother or father come to P.T.A. meetings?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

2. Does your mother or father come to a conference if your teacher requests one?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

3. Does your mother or father call your teacher to check on your progress?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

4. Has your mother or father done any volunteer work at the school?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

5. Is your mother or father on the board of the P.T.A.?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

6. Does your mother or father come out to conference night if your teacher does not ask him/her?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

7. Does your mother or father go on field trips with your class?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never

8. Does your mother or father check your homework?
   (a) Always (b) Sometimes (c) Seldom (d) Never
9. Does your mother or father help out with field day activities?
   (a) Always    (b) Sometimes    (c) Seldom    (d) Never

10. Does your mother or father ask your teacher for a conference?
    (a) Always    (b) Sometimes    (c) Seldom    (d) Never
Bibliography


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