May 1996

Parent Involvement Typologies and Student Achievement: A Correlational Study of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence

Phillip J. Elliott
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PARENT INVOLVEMENT TYPOLOGIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:
A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF THE
OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Phillip Elliott
May 1996
APPROVAL

This to certify that the Graduate Committee of

Phillip J. Elliott

met on the

Eighteenth day of March, 1996.

The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his
defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that
his study be submitted to the Graduate Council, in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Educational
Leadership and Policy Analysis.

Signed on behalf of
the Graduate Council

Interim Dean, School of Graduate
Studies
ABSTRACT

PARENT INVOLVEMENT TYPOLOGIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:
A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF THE
OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

by

Phillip J. Elliott

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between six types of parent involvement and student achievement. These typologies included parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community.

Four research questions guided the study and nine null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the .05 level of significance. The degree of relationship between the independent variables, parent involvement typologies, and student achievement were analyzed by utilizing Spearman's rho correlation coefficient, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The study sample consisted of 627 elementary and middle school parents in Mitchell County, North Carolina.

The results of this study indicate significant yet relatively weak relationships between student achievement and the parent involvement typologies volunteering and collaborating with community; however, the relationships between student achievement and the parent involvement typologies in conjunction with parent education level and parent educational expectation for their child were much stronger. While the importance of parental involvement remains undisputable, an inherent purpose of this study was to enhance perceptions of the value of parent involvement within the theoretical context of the overlapping spheres of influence, to encourage further research on the relationships between parent behaviors and student achievement, and to proclaim with conviction that schools, parents, and communities, though somewhat distinct in their roles, are natural allies, sharing common goals.
TO: Phillip J. Elliott

FROM: David N. Walters, M.D., Chairman
Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 10, 1996

SUBJECT: Parent Involvement Typologies and Student Achievement: A Correlational Study of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence.
IRB #95-096e

I have reviewed the above-referenced study and find that it qualifies for exemption from further IRB review. Subjects are asked to participate on a voluntary basis. All surveys will be coded for purposes of statistical analysis with no identifiers linked to survey questionnaires. All steps are confidential. Federal Guidelines Title 45--Part 46.101 allows for categories of studies to be exempted from further IRB review.

If you feel it is necessary to call further IRB attention to any aspects of this project, please refer to the above-titled project.

I appreciate your bringing this project before the IRB for its concurrence of exempt status. Good luck with your study.

Respectfully submitted,

David N. Walters, M.D.
Chairman, IRB
IN MEMORY OF

Millicent Lorraine Miller
April 23, 1977 - September 3, 1993
daughter of Johnny and Becky Miller

and

My Grandmother,
Pearl Herrell Street
January 2, 1903 - August 24, 1985

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for some have entertained Angels, unaware."

IN HONOR OF

My Mother,
Josie Street Potter

Whose self-sacrifice exemplifies parental involvement from the singular context.
DEDICATION

To Vickie Thomas Elliott, my wife, and to my precious daughters, April Lauren Elliott and Morgan Leigh Elliott for their unrelenting support and encouragement.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Dr. Marie Somers Hill, my committee chair, for her support and encouragement in the completion of this process. I also thank Dr. Elizabeth Ralston, Dr. Louise McKay, and Dr. Russell West for serving on my committee and sharing their expertise.

Grateful acknowledgment and appreciation is extended to Joyce S. Masters, Truett West, Neil Hall, Bruce Herrell, Herbert Armentrout, Pat Knight, and the many other educators, friends and students who encouraged, motivated, and positively influenced me. Thank you for comforting my afflictions yet afflicting my comfort.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Across this Nation, we must cultivate communities where children can learn......Where the school is a living center of a community; where people care- people care for each other and their futures. Not just in the school but in the neighborhood. Not just in the classroom, but in the home.

President George Bush, April 18, 1991, in a White House address announcing America 2000: A National Education Strategy

An abundance of research has appeared in the last few years emphasizing the importance of parent involvement in education. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers consistently rank parent involvement high among the components of effective schools. In fact, Henderson (1994) concluded that the evidence is now beyond dispute: parent involvement is the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school. Children develop attitudes that are conducive to learning when parents show an interest in the education of their children; however, the amount of parent involvement in children's education has declined sharply in recent years (Coleman, 1991). This is not surprising when one considers the vast changes that have occurred in American families. Today, single-parent families abound, mothers working outside the home are the norm rather than the exception, and parents everywhere confront perplexing choices about how to use their time and energy (Coleman, 1991).

Meanwhile, schools are addressing responsibilities that in the past were considered parent and community concerns. If America 2000 is to lead American education from a "Nation at Risk" to a "Nation of Students", Alexander (1992) has cautioned that revitalization will not occur unless and until it is acknowledged that schools cannot do the
job alone. In fact, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed into law by President Bill Clinton on March 31, 1994, includes a new national goal that calls on schools to encourage parental involvement. In addressing school initiated activities, Coleman (1991) suggested that schools must devise strategies to reinvolve parents with their own children and with the schools. More recently, Secretary of Education Richard Riley (1994) suggested that schools must engage and involve parents and families to improve schools and provide every student with a world-class education.

Terms like "parent involvement" are so broad they can refer to very different types of activities. Past studies have often emphasized a composite measure of parent behaviors as they relate to student achievement without capturing the significance of specific types of parent involvement and their overlap. Typologies as proposed by Epstein (1987) provide a useful framework for categorizing parent behaviors into more specific types of parent involvement. In regard to the establishment of school initiated parent involvement strategies as prescribed by Goals 2000, the need exists to identify which specific types of parental involvement activities correlate most favorably with student achievement within an array of diverse settings.

Statement of the Problem

Parental involvement in the schools has been continuously investigated by researchers in an effort to determine its impact, if any, on student achievement. The concept of parental involvement has been correlated with a variety of variables. The problem is to determine the relationships between specific types of parental involvement and student achievement.
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between six specific typologies of parental involvement and student achievement. The six typologies explored were parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. In addition, combinations of typologies were assessed to determine the influence of their overlap.

Significance

One of the most significant variables of effective schools research is the involvement of parents in the educational process. When parents are involved, student achievement increases. In reviewing 49 studies of the effects of parent involvement, Henderson (1987) observed that everyone benefits when parents are involved, especially students. Questions concerning parent involvement have evolved from: "Are parents important for student success in school?" to "If parental involvement is important, which types of involvement or combinations of types relate most positively to student achievement?" The question may be expanded to include a variety of variables including different settings, cultures, and demographics of parents.

Traditionally, the relationships between families and schools have been viewed from the theoretical perspectives of either separate influence, in which families and schools maintain and pursue independent goals, or sequential influence, in which parents and schools contribute independently at critical stages in the child's development. In this study, however, parental involvement was addressed from an integrated perspective based on "overlapping spheres of influence." This model, developed by Epstein (1986) is grounded in the theoretical perspective that student success is affected by a variety of
influences, specifically, the school, the family, and the community; and that these components have overlapping, shared influences on student success. The concept of parental involvement may then be presented as a culmination of "overlapping spheres," namely, Epstein's six types of involvement:

Type 1 -- Parenting
Type 2 -- Communicating
Type 3 -- Volunteering
Type 4 -- Learning at Home
Type 5 -- Decision Making
Type 6 -- Collaborating with Community.

This study is significant in that it presented information regarding the relationships between parental involvement and student achievement within the theoretical context of overlapping spheres of influence and that such information will further enhance perceptions that schools, parents, and communities, though somewhat distinctive in their roles, are natural allies, sharing common goals.

The Question

If schools are to initiate, seek, and enhance parent involvement activities, which specific types of parent involvement have the strongest positive correlations with student achievement?

Research Questions

The following questions provide additional focus for this study:
Question 1

What relationships exist between each of the six types of parent involvement and student achievement?

Question 2

What relationships exist between the six types of parent involvement and student achievement?

Question 3

What relationship exists between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement?

Question 4

What relationships exist between the six types of parent involvement and parent demographic characteristics to include education level, number of parents or guardians in the home, and parent as native to the area and student achievement?

Research Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant relationship between each of Epstein's six types of parent involvement and student achievement.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between Epstein's six types of parent involvement and student achievement.

H3: There will be a significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the
value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement.

H4: There will be a significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement and parent demographic characteristics to include education level, number of parents or guardians in the home, and parent as native to the area and student achievement.

Limitations of the Study

1. Specific results of this study are generalizable only to the groups involved.

2. The accuracy of the responses to the questionnaire items is dependent upon the perception of the respondents. No attempt was made to determine causes for these perceptions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used according to the given definitions.

Type 1 Activities of Parent Involvement - Parenting

Those activities in which the parent portrays the importance of education (Epstein & Salinas, 1993a).

Type 2 Activities of Parent Involvement - Communicating

Those activities in which the parent communicates with the child's teacher (Epstein & Salinas, 1993a).

Type 3 Activities of Parent Involvement - Volunteering

Those activities in which the parent volunteers or audiences at the school or in other locations to support the school and students (Epstein & Salinas, 1993a).
Type 4 Activities of Parent Involvement - Learning at Home

Parental involvement in learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular-linked activities and decisions (Epstein & Salinas, 1993a).

Type 5 Activities of Parent Involvement - Decision Making

The participation of the parent in meetings or conferences related to school decisions.

Type 6 Activities of Parent Involvement - Collaborating with Community

Those activities in which the parent provides for the child's interaction with the community (Epstein & Salinas, 1993a).

Student Achievement

In this study, student achievement will be operationally defined as the student's total battery percentile score on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test (Public School Laws of North Carolina, 1991).

Organization of the Study

This first chapter was devoted to establishing the basis and the need for this study. Chapter 2 consists of a review of related literature pertaining to parent involvement and serves to support further the undertaking of this particular investigation. Chapter 3 contains the methodologies and procedures that were utilized to obtain data in reference to the research questions. Chapter 4 presents statistical analyses of the results gleaned from the data. A summary of results, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study are presented in Chapter 5.
Educators have known for some time that parents play a critical role in their children's academic achievement as well as in their socioemotional development. Evidence continues to grow that active parental involvement is a critical factor in a child's educational success at all grade levels (Epstein, 1987). In the past century, however, schools have noted a decline rather than an increase in parental involvement (Coleman, 1991).

Only recently have researchers begun to look at the role schools might play in facilitating parents' positive roles in children's academic achievement. Critical to this role is the relationship that develops between schools, parents, and communities. Although this is a relatively new research area, increasing evidence supports the notion that the quality of these links, which the schools may have to initiate, does influence students' success. It seems quite imperative, then, that schools become more aware of the theoretical perspectives, the history, the current research, and the typologies of parent involvement along with the relationships such typologies have with student achievement.

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Currently, three distinct perspectives exist in reference to the relationships between families and schools: separate responsibilities, sequential responsibilities, and shared responsibilities. These perspectives are distinct in regard to specific roles that are assumed applicable as schools and families present goals and influences and are quite sequential or Darwinian in nature, themselves, in response to "postmodern changes in the family and in
the larger society" (Elkind, 1995, p. 12).

The first perspective assumes that schools and families possess separate responsibilities for the education of children and that both the school and the family will operate most efficiency and effectively when parents and teachers maintain independent goals, standards, and activities (Epstein, 1986). This separate perspective is not unlike Seeley's Delegation Model (1989) in which he suggested that a fundamental gap exists between families and schools; as a result of the specialization that has emerged in our society, many parents have delegated the responsibility of educating children to the schools.

The second perspective, which assumes the sequencing of responsibilities, maintains that parents and teachers contribute to children's development at different critical stages. This approach is based on the belief that the early years of a child's life are critical for later success, and that by age 5 or 6, when the child enters formal schooling, the child's personality and attitudes toward learning are well established. At the time of the child's formal entry to school, teachers assume the primary responsibility for the children's education.

The third perspective, based on the shared responsibilities of schools and families, stresses the coordination and cooperation of schools and families while encouraging communication and collaboration (Epstein, 1986). This perspective assumes that schools and families share responsibilities and that the education and socialization of children occurs not so much in separate or sequential contexts but, more appropriately, from the perspective of overlapping spheres of influence from the school, the family, and the community. In this theoretical perspective it is assumed that families and schools are more effective when intersecting connections are developed, and when valued information, advice, and experiences are shared on a continuing basis among members of these
institutions. The major element of the model of overlapping spheres of influence is the child's central role in school and family partnerships. The model is based on the assumption that the child's achievement, development, and success are the main reasons for family-school partnerships. Productive connections may contribute to improved academic skills, self-esteem, positive attitudes toward learning, independence, and other behaviors characteristic of successful individuals (Epstein & Connors, 1992). In fact, Epstein and Connors (1992) state that students are the main actors in their own success in school, yet, when schools and families work in partnership, thus allowing for the influence of overlapping spheres, students value school as important and perceive that caring people in both environments are investing and coordinating time and resources to help them succeed.

**Historical Perspective and Social Capital**

The current relationships of schools and families may be better understood when viewed from a historical perspective. Coleman (1991) suggested that during the past two centuries, society has come to be transformed from a set of communities where families were the central building blocks to a social system in which the central organizations are business firms, and families are at the periphery. In the 18th century, nearly all production was carried out within the household and children were involved in these activities. This environment provided a valuable by-product in that it supplied a setting in which children gained skills they would need as adults. As employment moved outside the home in the 19th and 20th centuries, households were less involved in occupational training and less well equipped to transmit work habits such as responsibility for completing a task, punctuality, pride of craft, and other characteristics that are necessary for productive activity. However, Coleman (1991) suggested that families did not become incapable of transmitting these characteristics; yet, to instill these traits or personal habits now called
for conscious design and intentional intervention on the part of parents. Thus, the household shifted from a locus where productive activities themselves induced personal habits of industry, responsibility, and pride of performance to one in which these habits were learned only if the parents acted to inculcate them (Coleman, 1991).

The 20th century has seen another important transformation of the household; it consists of the woman leaving the household to enter the paid labor market. The mother's move has produced additional demands on the school:

1. Child care from an increasingly early age;
2. Earlier hours for school opening in the morning;
3. Lengthening the effective school day, until parents arrive home; and
4. A school-equivalent to care for children throughout the summer.

(Coleman, 1991, p.6)

Coleman (1991) suggested the general principle to which all these demands point is that the school is a constructed organization designed to complement the family in child rearing and that as the family has weakened in its capacity to raise its young, the constructed organization that is the school must change its character as well; part of this change consists not in substituting for the family but in facilitating those actions of the family that can aid most the joint task of family and school in bringing children into adulthood. This study may then be viewed as an attempt to identify those actions of the family, herein called typologies, and their relationships to achievement while providing an impetus for the facilitating of site-specific action.

The idea of capital may also be useful in characterizing the evolutionary tract of parental involvement. Flap and DeGraaf (as cited in Coleman, 1991) suggested that sociologists have recognized that the social relations that exist in the family or in the community outside the family constitute a form of capital. Whereas physical or financial
capital exists wholly in tangible resources, and human capital is a property of individual persons, social capital exists in the relationships between persons (Coleman, 1991). While the forms of social capital may vary, so may the purposes it serves. In fact, Coleman (1991) suggested that:

If a child trusts an adult, whether a parent or a member of the community, and the adult is trustworthy, this relation is a resource on which the child can draw when in difficulties, whether with schoolwork, with friends, with a teacher, or with other problems. If the relations in a community are strong enough to establish norms about the behavior of children and youth and to impose effective sanctions toward their observance, this constitutes a resource for children, protecting them from the predations of peers, and a resource for parents to aid in shaping the habits of children. These are two forms of social capital; more generally, social capital held by a person lies in the strength of social relations that make available to the person the resources of others (p. 7).

Children's education is affected by all forms of capital, yet from a historical perspective, the quantity of social capital, as opposed to financial and physical, has declined as a result of adult lifestyle changes, divorce, and illegitimate births. The availability of social capital in the family is not merely the presence of adults in the household, but is more adequately represented by the amount and types of involvement of adults in children's learning. From a sociological perspective, this study may then be viewed as an assessment not only of parent involvement typologies, but an indicator of the quantities of social capital in families.

**Importance and Effects**

Past research on families, schools, and communities has evolved from studies of these institutions as separate spheres of influence to studies of them as overlapping spheres of influence. In this progression, research has examined the importance of family environments and the beneficial effects parent involvement can have on students, parents, and teachers.
Research on family environments has shown that children have advantages when their parents support and encourage school activities. In reviewing family influences on cognitive development and school achievement, Scott-Jones (1984) examined the assumptions underlying the research on the relationship of family influences to cognitive development and concluded that:

1. A child's knowledge and understanding grow, in part, from interactions with other people.
2. The entire family system (including fathers and siblings) is important.
3. The influences are two-way; a child's behavior and attitudes may influence the parents as well as the reverse. (p. 259-304)

Past studies have shown that, on average, families with higher socioeconomic status (SES) and education are more invested and involved in their children's education, and their children achieve more. Yet, the results of many studies also indicate that parents' practices of involvement compensate for less education and less income. In fact, Stevenson and Baker (1987) concluded:

Parent involvement is a significant predictor; parents who are more involved in school, regardless of their own educational background, have children who perform better in school. Parent involvement mediates almost all the influence of a mother's education on the child's school performance. By itself, the mother's educational level has little effect on her children's success. If they become actively involved in school activities, mothers with less formal education can have as much positive impact as do highly educated mothers. (p. 1357)

The research continues to send a strong message: families are important for children's learning, development, and school success. Students at all grade levels do better academic work and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviors if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved.

The primary goal of school and family partnerships is to increase student motivation, achievement, and success in school. Research on the positive effects of family
and school connections has improved over the years and has evolved from studies that were suggestive to more focused studies.

In an extensive review of the literature on parent involvement, Becher (1984) examined a wide range of educational research documenting the critical role of parents in the development and education of children, and the ways parents can be trained to improve their children's academic achievement. In her review, the author covers four major areas:

1. The role of parents and family in determining children's intelligence, competence, and achievement.
2. The effects of parent-education programs on student achievement, and the characteristics of effective programs.
3. The benefits of parent involvement for schools and educators.
4. The principles of effective programs for parent involvement.

In examining how the effects of parent involvement influence the child, Becher (1984) found that there are several key family process variables, or ways of behaving, that are clearly related to student achievement: children with high achievement scores have parents who have high expectations for them, who respond to and interact with them frequently, and who see themselves as "teachers" of their children; parents of high-scoring children also use more complex language, provide problem-solving strategies, act as models of learning and achievement, and reinforce what their children are learning in school.

Becher (1984) also found that parent-education programs, particularly those training low-income parents to work with their children, are effective in improving how well children use language skills, perform on tests, and behave in school. These programs also produce effects on parents' teaching styles, the way they interact with their children, and the home learning environment. The most effective programs are guided by these perspectives:

1. All parents have strengths and should know that they are valued.
2. All parents can make contributions to their child's education and the school program.
3. All parents have the capacity to learn developmental and educational techniques to help their children.
4. All parents have perspectives on their children that can be important and useful to teachers.
5. Parents should be consulted in decisions about how to involve parents (p. 6).

There are many important effects of parent involvement on the educational process as well as the achievement of students. Parents, themselves, develop more positive attitudes about school, help gather support in the community for the program, become more active in community affairs, develop increased self-confidence, and enroll in other educational programs; teachers become more proficient in their professional activities, devote more time to teaching, experiment more, and develop a more student-oriented approach (Becher, 1984).

In summarizing the research on parent involvement, Becher (1984) concluded that extensive, substantial, and convincing evidence suggests that parents play a crucial role in both the home and school environments with respect to facilitating the development of intelligence, achievement, and competence in their children.

The climactic realm of parent involvement research emerged in 1994 with the release of Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla's *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*. This report discusses 66 studies, reviews, reports, analyses, and books on relevant research concerning parent involvement. In conveying that the most accurate predictor of student achievement is the extent in which the family is involved in his or her education, this report presented major findings which indicate that the family makes critical contributions to student achievement from the earliest childhood years through high school, and efforts to improve children's outcomes are much more effective when the family is actively involved. This research is actually the third part of an *Evidence* series: the first edition, *The Evidence Grows*, was published in
1981, when it was not generally recognized that involving parents was important to student achievement; the second edition, The Evidence Continues to Grow, was released in 1987 when the subject had come into its own as a special research topic. In this 1994 study, Henderson has inserted the term "family involvement" in lieu of "parent involvement," because in many communities children are raised by adults who are not their parents, or by older siblings.

As a result of her extensive analysis, Henderson (1994) concluded that a student's achievement is most accurately predicted by the extent to which that student's family is able to:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning.
2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.
3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community (p. 1).

When schools support families to develop these three conditions, the studies suggest that children from low-income families and diverse cultural backgrounds approach the grades and test scores expected from middle-class children. In addition, these children are more likely to take advantage of a full range of educational opportunities after graduating from high school. Henderson (1994) summarized the benefits from parent involvement as affecting students, families, and schools.

**Benefits to students:**

1. Higher grades and test scores.
2. Better attendance and more homework done.
3. Fewer placements in special education.
4. More positive attitudes and behavior.
5. Higher graduation rates.
Benefits to families:

1. Parents develop more confidence in the school.
2. The teachers they work with have higher opinions of them as parents and higher expectations of their children.
3. Parents develop more confidence not only about helping their children learn at home, but about themselves as parents.
4. Parents often enroll in continuing education to advance their own schooling.

Benefits to schools:

Schools that work well with families have:

1. Improved teacher morale.
2. Higher ratings of teacher by parents.
3. More support from families.
4. Higher student achievement.
5. Better reputations in the community. (Henderson, 1994, p.1)

Evidence Studies of Family Background and Student Achievement

In reviewing past studies which look at the relationships between socioeconomic status (SES) and student achievement, a strong positive correlation exists. Children's grades, test scores, graduation rates, and enrollment in post-secondary education tend to increase with each level of education that their mother's have completed (Baker & Stevenson, 1986). Yet, Sattes (1985) suggested that the positive relationship between family SES and school achievement does not mean that rich kids are born smarter; it means that, in more affluent families, children are more likely to be exposed to experiences that stimulate intellectual development. Furthermore, Eagle (1989) concluded that,
regardless of SES, parents who provide a quiet place to study, emphasize family reading, and stay involved in their children's education have students who are more likely to enroll in and complete post-secondary education. In the same light, Ziegler (1987) emphasized that parent encourage at home and participation in school activities are the key factors related to children's achievement, more significant than either student ability or SES. In an extensive review of over 100 studies covering not only SES, but also family structure and mother's employment outside the home, Milne (1989) drew an even broader conclusion:

Family structures are not inherently good or evil per se; what is important is the ability of parents to provide proeducational resources for their children—be they financial, material, or experiential. (p. 58)

In summarizing the research on family background and student achievement, Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, and Bloom (1993) concluded that:

The socioeconomic level or cultural background of a home need not determine how a child does at school. Parents from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with different levels of education, income or occupational status can and do provide stimulating home environments that support and encourage the learning of their children. It is what parents do in the home rather than their status that is important. (p. 144)

Families as Learning Environments: A Prelude to Typology

A number of studies may be categorized in regard to their analysis of family interactions and behaviors that are associated with high-achieving students. Clark (1990) pointed out that high-achieving children from all backgrounds tend to spend approximately 20 hours a week in constructive learning activities outside of school and that supportive guidance from adults is a critical factor in whether such opportunities are available. In addition, Clark (1990) suggested that since students spend about 70% of their waking hours outside of school, the way that time is spent can have a powerful influence on what and how much children learn.
In reviewing other studies, certain family behaviors or characteristics emerge as to their similitude. These distinguishing family qualities and behaviors include:

Establishing a daily family routine: providing time and a quiet place to study, assigning responsibility for household chores, being firm about times to get up and go to bed, having dinner together (Benson, Buckley, & Medrich, 1980; Clark, 1993; Eagle, 1989; Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993; Walberg, Bole, & Waxman, 1980).

Monitoring out-of-school activities: setting limits on TV watching, arranging for after-school activities (Benson et al., 1980).


Expressing high but realistic expectations for achievement: setting goals and standards that are appropriate for children's age and maturity; recognizing and encouraging special talents; informing friends and family about successes (Bloom, 1985; Kellaghan et al., 1993; Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Hagemann, & Bezruczko, 1993; Schiamberg & Chun, 1986; Scott-Jones, 1984; Snow et al., 1991).

Encouraging children's development and progress in school: maintaining a warm and supportive home; showing interest in children's progress at school; helping with homework; discussing the value of a good education and possible career options; staying in touch with teachers and school staff (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Eagle, 1989; Kellaghan et al., 1993; Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Melnick & Fiene, 1990; Mitrosomwang & Hawley, 1993; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Snow et al., 1991; Ziegler, 1987).

Reading, writing, and discussions among family members: reading, listening to children read, and talking about what is being read; discussing the day over dinner; telling stories and sharing problems; writing letters, lists, and messages (Becher, 1984; Epstein, 1991; Kellaghan et al., 1993; Scott-Jones, 1987; Snow et al., 1991; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982; Ziegler, 1987).

Using community resources for family needs: enrolling in sports programs or lessons; introducing children to role models and mentors; using community services (Beane, 1990; Benson et al., 1980; Chavkin, 1993; Nettles, 1991).
**Contemporary Evolution**

Traditionally, studies of schools, parents, and communities were conducted as if they were separate, nonsymbiotic units. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, researchers differed in their beliefs as to which were more important - schools or families. Eventually, the dual contributions of schools and families were acknowledged: students are advantaged or disadvantaged by the economic and educational resources and guidance offered by their families and students are advantaged or disadvantaged by the quality of their experiences in schools (Epstein, 1995). The debate changed as it became increasingly clear that neither schools nor parents, alone, can do the job of educating and socializing children and preparing them for life. Rather, schools, parents, and communities share responsibilities for children and each influence them simultaneously (Epstein, 1995).

With the implementation of federal Head Start and Follow-Through programs in the 1960s, the topic of parent involvement gained prominence in preschools and early elementary grades. These programs legislated the involvement of low income parents in the education of their children to prepare them for successful entry to school.

At the same time, other factors increased the involvement of additional parents in education. Some mandates and emphases in early federal programs, such as the parent councils in Title I, offered activities that informed and involved parents, although they were often perfunctory in nature (Keesling & Melaragno, 1983). Other demonstration programs were quite comprehensive with home visits, assistance to parents in understanding their children, good communications with teachers, opportunities to volunteer, and other active interactions (Gordon, 1979). Yet, the early efforts to increase parent involvement were largely unsystematic, with few measures of the effects of specific practices of involvement (Epstein, 1995). First attempts at parent involvement focused mainly on the roles parents were to play and not on the roles schools were to play in actively seeking the involvement of all parents in their child's education.
In the 1970s, the effective schools movement captured the attention of educators of students who were at risk of failing (Edmonds, 1979). Although parent involvement was not an initial element, it was quickly added to the expanding list of elements that research and practice suggested would improve schools and increase student achievement. By the mid-1980's, the report *A Nation at Risk* directed attention to the need to improve all schools, not just those for students from economically distressed homes and communities (Epstein, 1995). Thus, the initiative sharpened as schools began to focus on curriculum, instruction, and connections with families.

**Political Perspective**

In 1990, former President George Bush and the nation's governors met to adopt a national agenda for education reform. The resulting "America 2000" was continued and expanded under the Clinton administration, with the new name "Goals 2000." In fact, Goals 2000 included two additional goals, one of which focused on the importance of parental involvement. This goal reads:

> Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

If schools must take the leadership role in promoting partnerships, Epstein (1992) proposed that educators should consider the following:

1. Families remain important to adolescents, even as peers become more important.

2. School-family partnership practices are declining dramatically at each grade level. Coincidentally, with each year in school, more families report they are unable to assist their children and understand the schools. School correct this when they implant comprehensive partnership programs.

3. Most parents cannot and do not participate at the school building level, either as volunteers or in decision-making and leadership roles.
4. By contrast, most parents (up to 90 percent at the middle level and 80 percent in high schools) want to know how to help their own children at home and what to do to help them succeed at school. Studies of middle level and high schools, and of public, Catholic, and other private schools, confirm that families need and want more information and guidance from the schools.

5. The social, academic, and personal problems that increase in adolescence require the concerted attendance of all who share an interest and investment in children. The efforts of schools and families have not been well-organized to date. Each institution usually works separately, often without knowledge of or communication with others.

6. The community also has a contribution to make, but community services and resources also have been applied without collaboration or communication with schools or families. This disorganized delivery of services has contributed to the failure of many students to reach their potential. It helps explain the well-known and unacceptable statistics on school failure, retentions in grade, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and the other problems that increase in adolescence.

7. Involving families will not, by itself, make students successful learners or high achievers. That takes the hard work of teachers, administrators, and the students themselves on a daily agenda of excellence. Nevertheless, even in good schools, more students will benefit, go farther, and reach higher if they are part of successful school, family, and community partnerships extending through the secondary years. (p. 2)

To accomplish the targets given in Goals 2000, Smith, Lincoln, and Dodson (as cited in Decker, Gregg, & Decker, 1994) suggested that:

1. Communities must begin to take responsibility for their children's education, and they must be willing to help schools get students ready to be educated.

2. Schools have to encourage and accept community involvement, believe that all students can be educated, and begin adapting education to the learning styles of these students rather than expecting the students to adapt to a traditional school teaching style. (p. xii)

Theory to Practice

More than 50 years ago, William G. Carr, (1942) then executive secretary of the National Education Association, described the typical public school:
Many schools are like islands set apart from the mainland of life by a deep moat of tradition. A drawbridge is lowered at certain periods during the day in order that the part-time inhabitants may cross over to the island in the morning and back to the mainland at night. Why do these young people go out to the island? To learn how to live on the mainland. When they reach the island, they are provided with books that tell them about life on the mainland. After the graduates leave the island for the last time, they are bombarded by problems of life on the mainland. Sometimes one of the graduates may mutter, "On the island I read something about that in a book."

Although Carr's island image persists with some validity, educators today are increasing their efforts to connect schools and families. However, these attempts may be more successful if schools accurately assess the realities of site specific family and community involvement, as is the basis of this study, and design substantive ways to involve parents and community members in their children's education based on positive correlations of parent involvement typologies and achievement.

Recent studies by Epstein (1995) have begun to clarify the often ambiguous term, "parent involvement," and recast the emphasis from the involvement being left up to the parent, to parent involvement in the context of parent, school, and community partnerships. The concept of shared responsibility led to the development of a theoretical perspective called "overlapping spheres of influence." Results of data analyses could not be explained within a sociological theory that stressed the independence of institutions with separate, unique missions. Rather, Epstein (1995) suggested that a social organizational perspective was needed that posited that the most effective families and schools have overlapping, shared goals and missions concerning children. In placing students at the model's center, this theory assumes that parents, schools, and communities share an interest in and responsibility for children across the school years, and that a major reason that schools, parents, and communities should interact is to assist students to succeed in school and in life. The tide has evolved somewhat then from identification of
the value of parent involvement to the need for identifying specific types of parent involvement and investigating the relationships of typology and student achievement.

**Typologies of Parent Involvement**

In every decade in this century, many have advocated vigorously that parents should be involved in all educational efforts (White, Taylor, & Moss, 1992). The term "parent involvement" can refer to a wide range of activities. For example, some of the parent involvement literature focuses on programs designed to teach effective parenting and child-rearing skills (Gamson, Hornstein, & Borden, 1989). Still others focus on the appropriate role of parents in normal developmental processes (Vartuli & Winter, 1989). For the purposes of this study, however, specific parent involvement behaviors will be addressed within the context of Epstein's six types of parent involvement; namely, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. An examination of each of these follows.

**Parenting**

Although this type of parent involvement is associated with a wide range of activities, it is grounded in the establishment of home environments that support learning. Within the parenting framework are the basic obligations of parents to provide an environment conducive to learning. More specifically, these obligations refer to the responsibilities of families to ensure children's health and safety; to the parenting and child-rearing skills needed to prepare children for school; to the continual need to supervise, discipline, and guide children at each age level; and to the need to build positive home conditions that support school learning and implant positive attitudes toward the importance of education.
The research of Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, and Fraieigh (1987) suggested that these basic obligations are a more powerful predictor of student achievement than parent education, ethnicity, or family structure. In fact, Mayeske (1973), in a massive analysis of the 1966 Coleman report, concluded that such parenting activities are crucial to student achievement. In this study, parenting elements will be addressed as those attempts made by the parent to establish positive attitudes toward school and learning.

Communicating

Just as parenting may refer to the basic obligations of the family, communication may be a basic obligation of the school. Parent-teacher conferences, curriculum nights, open houses, phone contacts, report cards, and standardized test results are typical examples of this type of parent involvement. The value of open communication between teachers and parents cannot be stressed too strongly. Several studies have found a positive relationship between parent-school communication and student achievement; in fact, Barth (1979) concluded that teacher-parent communications focusing on reinforcing positive school behavior resulted in improved academic performance. In a study of 250 California elementary schools, Herman and Yeh (1980) found a positive connection between student achievement and the amount of communication between schools and parents although parents revealed that they felt schools should initiate such communications. Communication, then, appears to be an important aspect of parent involvement activities and should be actively sought by schools as an effective means of improving student achievement. In this study, communication will focus on the actual frequency of parents talking to their child's teacher either at school or on the phone.
Volunteering

Parent involvement at school refers to parent volunteers who assist teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or in other areas of the school. It also refers to parents who come to school to support student performances, sports, or other events.

In a research review conducted in conjunction with the Department of Education, Bennett (1986) concluded that a strong relationship exists between student achievement and parent involvement at the school. In conducting two reviews of the literature, Becher (1984) found that bringing parents into the schools as volunteers and as audiences improved student achievement: children improved their language skills, test performance, and school behavior. Mortimore and Sammons (1987) believe that schools with an informal open door policy are very effective in involving parents; such a policy allows parents to visit the classroom and see the way that their child is being taught. It makes them feel welcome and gives them ideas on what they can do at home to help the child. According to VanDevender (1988), parents can set a good example by never missing a conference or school function; their presence at all school meetings shows the child that they place value on education and are willing to contribute to the child's education.

Volunteering, then, appears to be an important element of parent involvement in regard to increasing student achievement. In this study, volunteering activities will include those instances in which the parent actually visits the classroom, volunteers at school, or audiences special school events.

Learning at Home

Parent involvement at home refers to parent-initiated activities or child-initiated requests for the involvement of parents in learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular-linked activities and decisions. In a study of 764 sixth graders in
Oakland, California, researchers Benson, Buckley, and Medrich (1980) found that children whose parents spend time with them in educational activities within the home achieve more in school, regardless of socioeconomic status. Walberg, Boie, and Waxman (1980) reported that students in grades 1-6 whose parents responded intensively to a city-wide program helping parents create academic support conditions in the home gained .5 to .6 grade equivalents in reading comprehension over students whose parents were less intensively involved. Additional studies contend that a strong learning environment at home, high expectations of success, and positive attitudes toward education affect student achievement positively. In fact, Coleman (1966) contends that the key to achievement may lie in students' positive attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment; these attitudes are largely formed at home. When parents show an interest in their children's education and maintain high expectations for their performance, they are promoting attitudes that are critical to achievement—attitudes that can be formed independently of social class or other external circumstances (Henderson, 1988). The studies show that learning within the home has a significant place in the typologies of parent involvement. Thus, for purposes of this study, learning at home will include those activities in which the parent is actually involved in learning activities within the home; including homework and other curricular-linked activities and decisions.

**Decision Making**

Parent involvement in decision making refers to those activities in which parents take an active role in the decision-making processes in parent teacher organizations, association councils, or in other committees and groups at the school, district, or state level. According to VanDevender (1988), parents often feel alienated from the schools. Frymier (1987) believes parents may currently lack motivation to become involved in schools because they no longer feel confident that what they say or do will make a
difference. In the 1960s, consolidation, centralization of authority, and desegregation gave parents few opportunities to make decisions about their schools. In successful parent involvement programs, Becher (1986) found several principles that propelled success, including involvement of parents in decision making and the explanation to parents of administrative decisions. In the development of site-based management, the proponents of shared decision-making components claim to have as their goal the sharing of ownership by all stakeholders. According to Guthrie (as cited in Clark, 1994) long-lasting school reform requires the active involvement of all stakeholders, including parents, in the educational process. While few studies examine the experience of involving parents in decision making roles, Leier (1983) found that educators, parents, administrators, and school boards members would like more parent impact in decision making. However, no studies looked at the effect of decision-making on student achievement. In this study, decision making will refer to the parent's attendance at meetings or conferences involving school decisions.

**Collaborating With Community**

Collaborating with the community includes a wide range of activities. Parent involvement of this typology may include parents who provide opportunities for their child to interact with the community and who attempt to connect such interactions with learning activities. Collaborating with the community may also include coordinating the work and resources of community businesses, agencies, colleges or universities, and other groups to strengthen schools programs, family practices, and student learning and development. The community is one of the overlapping spheres of influence on student learning and development in the theoretical model of parent involvement (Epstein, 1992). While the expectations or norms of the community may influence student attitudes and thus, achievement, the interactions a child has within the community also have significant
influences. Gordon (1978) divided parent involvement into several models: the Parent Impact Model, the School Impact Model, and the Community Impact Model. Findings from this research suggest that children of parents who provide for their direct interaction with the community in the framework of learning experiences score higher on achievement tests than other children. In this study, collaborating with community will refer to those parent involvement activities in which the parent provides for the child's interaction with the community at special places or events.

**Summary**

Research on parent involvement provides extensive, substantial, and convincing evidence which clearly suggests that parents play a crucial role in facilitating student achievement (Becher, 1984). In fact, Henderson (1994) concluded that "to those who ask whether involving parents will really make a difference, we can safely say that the case is closed" (p. x). Knowing more about the qualities of families whose children perform well in school does not relieve schools of their obligation to make extra efforts for children who are falling behind. To the contrary, this knowledge can enable schools to support families, to help them develop and maintain an environment that encourages learning, to keep them informed about their children's progress, and to help them manage their children's advancement through the system. Neither families nor schools can do the job alone (Henderson, 1994). In addition to the studies reviewed, this study intends to expand the understanding of parent involvement and student achievement and, more specifically, to identify relationships between six types of parent involvement and student achievement. This study will help educators and parents gain insights into the ways different types of parent involvement affect learning. The need exists for the exploration of such insights in a wide variety of settings.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between specific types of parent involvement and student achievement. For purposes of this research, the six types of parent involvement studied were parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. This study also investigated these relationships while including parent beliefs and demographics. This chapter includes a discussion of the population, a description of the instrument, the hypotheses tested, the procedures used, and the analysis of data.

Population

The population consisted of the parents of students in grades 4 through 8 (N=934) in Mitchell County, North Carolina. This system was chosen because of its location, which facilitated data retrieval, and its size in terms of providing a relatively large sample. Students whose parents were surveyed attended four different schools within the county. These students are administered the North Carolina End-of-Grade Achievement Test annually. Parent participation was strictly on a voluntary basis and data were presented on all those who chose to be participants. In order to obtain a sample estimate of plus or minus 3% with a 95% degree of confidence (Sawyer, 1982), a minimum return rate of 54% of the parent surveys was deemed necessary to continue the study; a minimum number of 505 parents must have returned the questionnaire in order to accurately represent the population of 934 within the established criterion. To insure an appropriate number of responses, each homeroom teacher was given a monetary incentive of five dollars and each student returning the survey was given a coupon redeemable at McDonald's for a free order of fries.

30
Instrumentation

School and Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in the Elementary and Middle Grades

This instrument, developed by Epstein and Salinas (1993b), was designed to produce a profile of the current levels of parent involvement in schools. Parent involvement is a short form for the better, more inclusive term — "school and family partnerships" (Epstein & Salinas, 1993a). The total survey is composed of two independent questionnaires: Survey of Teachers in Elementary and Middle Grades and Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades.

Although not used in this study, the seven-page survey of teachers includes 12 sections with 131 items that assess teacher attitudes about involvement, school programs, practices to involve families, estimates of family involvement, estimates of support for involvement by other educators, parents and the community, teaching experiences. Open-ended questions are also included.

The six-page, easy-to-read Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades includes 10 sections with 89 items of information on family attitudes about the school; family practices of involvement in child’s education; school practices to inform and involve families; information desired by families about children, classes, schools, and community services; homework patterns; family background and experiences; and open-ended questions. For purposes of this study, only Section Three of the parent survey, Family Practices of Involvement, was utilized. A copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix B.

Section Three, Family Practices of Involvement (PARDOALL) consists of 18 items that Epstein, Salinas, and Horsey (1994) report as having an overall reliability coefficient of .77 based on analyses of data collected in 1992 (N=1999). The reliability of this scale is reported in terms of the internal consistency of scores on items that purport to
measure the same concept. In accordance with Mueller's recommendations (as cited in Epstein et al., 1994), scale reliability involved the use of the Cronbach alpha formula because the survey included Likert-type items; the alpha reliability formula reflects the intercorrelation of a set of items, accounting for variations in responses to the items.

For purposes of this study, survey items were matched to the six types of parent involvement according to recommendations by Epstein et al. (1994): items (a) and (r) were used to measure Type I Parent Involvement - Parenting; items (j) and (k) were used to measure Type II Parent Involvement - Communicating; items (b), (n) and (o) were used to measure Type III Parent Involvement - Volunteering; items (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (m), and (p) were used to measure Type IV Parent Involvement - Learning at Home; items (l) and (s) were used to measure Type V Parent Involvement - Decision Making; and items (q), (t), and (u) were used to measure Type VI Parent Involvement - Collaborating With Community.

In response to Epstein's (personal communication, September 6, 1995) suggestion as to the addition of local option questions, the final form of the survey included three questions referring to parent demographics, three questions referring to parent beliefs, two additional questions referring to collaborating with community, and one additional question referring to decision making. These additions provided further insight into the relationships between parent involvement and student achievement. A copy of the survey instrument appears in Appendix B.

**Student Achievement**

In this study, student achievement is defined as student's percentile score on the 1995 North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests (Public School Laws of North Carolina, 1991).
This assessment, based on student grade level, is a norm-referenced and state-mandated test given to all students in grades 3 through 8 in North Carolina.

**Procedures**

After approval was obtained from the central office administration, packets containing the *Family Practices of Involvement Questionnaire*, along with a cover letter, were given to each teacher in grades 4-8 at all four schools. Each child was given a questionnaire by his or her teacher and asked to return it to the teacher. All questionnaires were coded as to grade level and identification of the student for purposes of matching parent response to student achievement score. Parents with more than one child in school returned separate surveys in relation to their involvement with each individual child. Parents were assured in the cover letter that their responses would be confidential. A copy of the cover letter appears in Appendix A; the request for central office permission appears in Appendix C.

Parents who did not respond within one week were contacted by phone and/or letter in an effort to collect as many questionnaires as possible. A 54% return rate was set as the minimum requirement before continuing the study.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

As a first step in the data analysis, Spearman's correlation coefficient for ranked data (Spearman's rho) and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient were used to describe the relationships between the independent variables, Epstein's six types of parent involvement, and the dependent variable of student achievement. Multiple regression analysis was used to describe the relationships between Epstein's six types of parent involvement and student achievement. To further elaborate the relationships between the study variables, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the
relationships between parent involvement and student achievement while including parent beliefs and demographics. Internal consistency reliability of the Family Practices of Involvement Questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha (as cited in DeVellis, 1991) to determine the degree to which the items within the scale were related.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested in the null form as indicated below:

H1. There is no significant relationship between parent involvement typology parenting and student achievement.

H2. There is no significant relationship between parent involvement typology communicating and student achievement.

H3. There is no significant relationship between parent involvement typology volunteering and student achievement.

H4. There is no significant relationship between parent involvement typology learning at home and student achievement.

H5. There is no significant relationship between parent involvement typology decision making and student achievement.

H6. There is no significant relationship between parent involvement typology collaborating with community and student achievement.

H7. There is no significant relationship between the parent involvement typologies and student achievement.

H8. There is no significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement.
H9. There is no significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement and parent demographic characteristics to include education level, number of parents or guardians in the home, and parent as native to the area and student achievement.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between six specific typologies of parental involvement and student achievement. The typologies explored were parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. Combinations of typologies were also assessed to determine the influence of their overlap. In addition, relationships between typologies and student achievement were explored while controlling for parent demographics and beliefs.

The Family Practices of Involvement Questionnaire was used to measure parent involvement typologies. Student achievement was measured by the student percentile score on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test (Public School Laws of North Carolina, 1991). Data collected from 627 parent surveys matched with their child's student achievement score were analyzed by utilizing Spearman's rho correlation coefficient, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analyses.

Sample Demographics

Six hundred eighty-nine (73.7%) of the 934 parent surveys distributed for this study were returned. Six hundred twenty-seven (91%) of the 689 questionnaires were analyzed; 62 were unusable because of missing student achievement scores. This return rate exceeded the minimum requirement of 505 (54%) surveys in addressing the 95% level of confidence with a plus or minus 3% degree of accuracy (Sawyer, 1982).

Demographic variables selected for analysis included the parent's educational level, the number of parents living in the home, and the parent's origin. Frequency distributions with percentages were computed for each demographic variable and are presented in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Level of Education</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>34.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some College or Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Parents Living at Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>One</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Is Native To The Area</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>495</td>
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<td>132</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The highest education level of the majority of the parents participating in this study was high school (34.8%) followed by those who had some college or training (30.6%), a college degree (22.6%), and some high school (12%). The cumulative percentage of respondents' highest education level indicated that 88% of the parents had completed high school. This value does not parallel Mitchell County census data (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1990) which indicates that 44.67% of the inhabitants of Mitchell County did not complete high school. Although no data were available concerning the educational levels of specific age groups, the differences in education level of the respondents to this study and the general population of the county limit the generalizability of results.

Most of the students lived in homes in which two parents were present (83.4%). No data for comparison to this demographic variable were available.

The majority of the parents were native to the area (78.8%). No data were available for comparison to this demographic variable.

In exploring parents' beliefs, variables selected for analysis included parents' belief as to the level of education they expect their child to complete, parents' belief that a good education is necessary for success in this community, and parents' belief about the primary locus of responsibility for the education of a child. Frequency distributions with percentages were computed for each parent belief variable and are presented in Table 2.

Most of the parents participating in this study believed their children will graduate from college (56.4%). The majority of the respondents (59.3%) strongly agreed that to be successful in this community, one must get a good education. Most parents (47.2%) disagreed that the education of one's child is mainly the school's responsibility; 13.6% strongly disagreed while 27.9% agreed and 11.3% strongly agreed.
### TABLE 2

PARENTAL BELIEFS REGARDING EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS, SUCCESS IN THE COMMUNITY, AND LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Belief As To The Level Of Education They Expect Their Child To Complete</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Complete High School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete High School</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Some College Or Training</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate From College</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Belief That A Good Education is Necessary for Success In This Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Belief That The Education Of One's Child Is Mainly The School's Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of Parent Involvement Typologies

The independent variables addressed in this study, parent involvement typologies, included parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. These variables represent the composite raw score of the questionnaire items assigned to each typology. The aggregate means and standard deviations for each typology and the reliability coefficients for items assigned to each typology are presented in Table 3 for each typology.

For each of the survey items, response choices were assigned the value (1) for never, meaning the parent does not do this or has not done this yet this school year; the value (2) for 1-2 times, meaning the parent has done this one or two times this school year; the value of (3) for a few times, meaning the parent has done this a few times this school year; and the value of (4) for many times, meaning the parent has done this many times this school year.

As indicated by the mean scores (see Table 3), parents responded that they were more involved in parenting, learning at home, and collaborating with community. In regard to parenting, 89.6% of the parents responded that many times they had made attempts to establish positive attitudes toward school and learning. Analysis of items categorized as learning at home activities indicate that 78.8% of the parents checked many times to see that their child had done his/her homework and 69.1% had helped their child plan time for homework and chores many times. Analysis of items categorized as collaborating with the community indicate that 51.8% of the parents had many times provided for their child's interaction with the community in the framework of learning experiences.

As indicated by the mean scores (see Table 3), parents responded that they are least involved in communicating, volunteering, and decision making. In regard to
communicating, 9.7% of the parents had never talked with their child's teacher while 67.3% had talked with their child's teacher only 1-2 times or a few times.

**TABLE 3**

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ITEMS ASSIGNED TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT TYPOLOGIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Reliability of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning at Home</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.**

Range. 1 = Never  
2 = 1-2 Times  
3 = Few Times  
4 = Many Times

Analysis of items categorized as volunteering indicated that 51.4% of the parents had never volunteered at school or in their child's classroom. Parent responses associated with decision making revealed that 50.4% of the parents had never gone to meetings like PTO meetings, school board meetings, or other committee meetings related to school decisions; 12.6% of the parents responded that they had never attended a parent-teacher conference and discussed school decisions while 42.7% indicated they had attended parent-teacher conferences only 1-2 times or a few times.

Reliability coefficients for the parent involvement typologies ranged from .42 to .82. The coefficients in Table 3 indicated that learning at home was the most reliable
typology. Epstein, Salinas, & Horsey (1994) report a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .77 for items seven through 24 of this instrument. The internal consistency reliability coefficient for the present study, which included three additional questions, with Cronbach's alpha was .87. Cronbach's alpha for items 7-24 of the present study was .85. The reliability of the instrument was increased by the addition of items 25, 26, and 27. These items expanded the review of the typologies classified as decision making and collaborating with community.

Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Four research questions guided the study and nine null hypotheses were tested. Table 4 presents the format of the assignment of hypotheses to each research question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH ASSIGNED HYPOTHESIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 1

What relationships exist between each of the six types of parent involvement and student achievement?
Spearman's rho correlation coefficient and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient were used to address this question and null hypotheses one through six:

\(H_01: \) There is no statistically significant relationship between Parenting and student achievement.

In analyzing the data to determine if a significant relationship existed between parenting and student achievement, no significant relationship existed when testing at the .05 probability level; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Data are depicted in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable - Parenting</th>
<th>( r )</th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho correlation</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.0025</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's product-moment correlation</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.0016</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(H_02: \) There is no statistically significant relationship between Communicating and student achievement.

In analyzing the data to determine if a significant relationship existed between Communicating and student achievement, no significant relationship existed when testing at the .05 probability level; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Data are depicted in Table 6.
TABLE 6
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN COMMUNICATING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable - Communicating</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho correlation</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.0025</td>
<td>.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's product-moment correlation</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.0004</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H_o3: There is no statistically significant relationship between Volunteering and student achievement.

Data analysis utilizing Spearman's rho and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients revealed a significant relationship between Volunteering and student achievement (r = .09, p < .05; r = .09, p < .05). These extremely low correlations indicate that less than 1% of the variance in student achievement is explained by Volunteering. Hypothesis 3 was rejected. Data are depicted in Table 7.

TABLE 7
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable - Volunteering</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho correlation</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.0081</td>
<td>.018*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's product-moment correlation</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.0081</td>
<td>.026*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
Hₐ₄: There is no statistically significant relationship between Learning at Home and student achievement.

In analyzing the data to determine if a significant relationship existed between Learning at Home and student achievement, no significant relationship existed when testing at the .05 probability level; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Data are depicted in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable - Learning at Home</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho correlation</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.0025</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's product-moment correlation</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.0016</td>
<td>.286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hₐ₅: There is no statistically significant relationship between Decision Making and student achievement.

In analyzing the data to determine if a significant relationship existed between Decision Making and student achievement, no significant relationship existed when testing at the .05 probability level; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Data are depicted in Table 9.
TABLE 9
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN DECISION MAKING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable - Decision Making</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho correlation</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.0049</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's product-moment correlation</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.0049</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hₐ6: There is no statistically significant relationship between Collaborating with Community and student achievement.

A significant relationship was found to exist between Collaborating with Community and student achievement (r = .143, p < .001; r = .141, p < .001). These extremely low correlations indicate that less than 2% of the variance in student achievement is explained by Collaborating with Community. Hypothesis 6 was rejected. Data are depicted in Table 10.

TABLE 10
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable - Collaborating With Community</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho correlation</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.0003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's product-moment correlation</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.0004*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .001
Research Question 2

What relationship exists between the six types of parent involvement and student achievement? Multiple regression analysis was utilized to address this research question and null hypothesis 7:

H0:7: There is no statistically significant relationship between the parent involvement typologies and student achievement.

TABLE 11
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT TYPOLOGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology No.</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.766</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>.955</td>
<td>.339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.978</td>
<td>.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-.261</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.627</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>2.960</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .023, F(6,620) = 2.518

*p < .01

Note: Typology 1 = Parenting
Typology 2 = Communicating
Typology 3 = Volunteering
Typology 4 = Learning at Home
Typology 5 = Decision Making
Typology 6 = Collaborating with Community
Data analysis indicated no significant relationship between student achievement and the parent involvement typologies. The parent involvement typologies accounted for only 2% of the variance in student achievement scores. The null hypothesis was retained. There was a significant relationship at the .01 level of confidence between student achievement and one predictor variable, Collaborating with Community. The p value for Collaborating with Community was .003. The variables Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making were not significant. Data are depicted in Table 11.

Research Question 3

What relationship exists between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement? Multiple regression analysis was utilized to address this research question and null hypotheses 8:

H₀₈: There is no statistically significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement.

Data analysis indicated a significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement. These variables accounted for 21.7% of the variance in student achievement. The null hypothesis was rejected. One predictor variable, parental beliefs about the educational expectations they have for their child, was statistically significant at the .001 level of confidence. The inclusion of the
parental beliefs variables resulted in an incremental gain of 19.4% of accountable variance in student achievement scores. Data are depicted in Table 12.

**TABLE 12**

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT TYPOLOGIES WHILE CONTROLLING FOR PARENTAL BELIEFS ABOUT EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS, THE VALUE OF EDUCATION, AND THE LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>-1.060</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>.940</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>-.238</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>1.039</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>-.379</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>14.344</td>
<td>.463</td>
<td>11.663</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>-.731</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td>.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>-1.635</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>1.501</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .217$, $F (9, 617) = 19.079^*$

*Note: T1 = Parenting
  T 2 = Communicating
  T 3 = Volunteering
  T 4 = Learning at Home
  T 5 = Decision Making
  T 6 = Collaborating with Community
  Q2 = Parent Educational Expectation for Child
  Q4 = Parent Belief of Value of Education
  Q5 = Parent Belief as to the School's Responsibility for the Education of Child

* p < .001
Research Question 4

What relationships exist between the six types of parent involvement and parent demographic characteristics to include education level, number of parents or guardians in the home, and parent as native to the area and student achievement? Multiple regression analysis was utilized to address this research question and null hypothesis 9.

Ho9: There is no statistically significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement and parent demographic characteristics to include education level, number of parents or guardians in the home, and parent as native to the area and student achievement.

Data analysis indicated a significant relationship between the six types of parent involvement in conjunction with parent demographics and student achievement. These variables accounted for 12% of the variance in student achievement. The null hypothesis was rejected. One predictor variable, parent education level, was statistically significant at the .001 level of confidence. The inclusion of parent demographic variables resulted in an incremental gain of 10% of accountable variance in student achievement scores. Data are depicted in Table 13. Data analysis of all factors: parent involvement typologies, parental beliefs, and parent demographics, indicated that these variables accounted for 25% of the variance in student achievement. This composite run of all variables resulted in only a 4% increase in accountable variance over the inclusion of parental beliefs only.
TABLE 13
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT
TYPOLOGIES WHILE CONTROLLING FOR PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS TO INCLUDE EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE PARENT, THE NUMBER OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS IN THE HOME, AND PARENT AS NATIVE TO THE AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>-.235</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.307</td>
<td>.759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>-.271</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>1.110</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>-.519</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>1.234</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>8.166</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>7.931</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .119, F (9,617) = 9.26*  

* p < .001

Note:  
T1 = Parenting  
T2 = Communicating  
T3 = Volunteering  
T4 = Learning at Home  
T5 = Decision Making  
T6 = Collaborating with Community  
Q1 = Parent Education Level  
Q3 = Number of Parents in the Home  
Q6 = Parent as Native to the Area
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary
The primary goal of this study was to determine what relationships exist between six types of parent involvement and student achievement. These typologies included parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. The instrument selected, the Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades, had previously demonstrated a high degree of reliability yet the inclusion of three additional items increased the total instrument reliability for this study. The dependent variable, student achievement, was measured by the student percentile score on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test.

Four research questions guided the study and nine null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the .05 level of significance. The degree of relationship between the independent variables, parent involvement typologies, and student achievement were analyzed by utilizing Spearman's rho correlation coefficient, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis.

The population for the study consisted of 934 middle and elementary school parents in Mitchell County, North Carolina. A total of 689 surveys were returned which resulted in a return rate of 74%. The data were statistically analyzed with the Number Cruncher Statistical System.

Findings

Research Question 1
The first research question was: What relationships exist between each of the six
types of parent involvement and student achievement? Results of the Spearman's rho correlation coefficient and the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient indicated no significant relationship between student achievement and parent involvement typologies parenting, communicating, learning at home, and decision making. A significant relationship was found between parent involvement typologies volunteering and collaborating with community and student achievement. These findings are consistent with other research on volunteering and collaborating with community. Becher (1984) found that bringing parents into the schools as volunteers improved students' language skills, test performance, and school behavior; Epstein (1992) proposed that the interactions a child has with the community positively influence student attitudes and achievement. In light of these findings, schools should consider the inclusion of the parent involvement typologies volunteering and collaborating with community in their initiation efforts as a result of their relationship to student achievement.

Research Question 2

The second research question was: What relationships exist between the six types of parent involvement and student achievement? Results from multiple regression analysis indicate no significant relationship between student achievement and the parent involvement typologies. However, a significant relationship was revealed between one predictor variable, collaborating with community, and student achievement. Parents who are more involved in providing for their child's interaction with the community to include taking their child to special places in the community, taking their child to special events like festivals and fairs not only because they are fun but also because they can provide learning experiences, and encouraging their child to participate in after-school programs that offer learning experiences have students who score significantly higher on student achievement tests.
Research Question 3

The third research question was: What relationship exists between the six types of parent involvement, parental beliefs about the expectations they have for their child, parental beliefs about the value of education, and parental beliefs about the locus of responsibility for the education of their children and student achievement. A significant relationship was revealed between the parent involvement typologies in conjunction with parental beliefs and student achievement. Of the three parental beliefs analyzed, one variable, parental beliefs about the educational expectations they have for their child, was statistically significant. Data analysis suggests that the relationship between the parent involvement typologies and student achievement is positively affected by the inclusion of parental beliefs. The significance of parental expectations suggests that parents who exhibit expectations that their child will attain higher educational levels have students who score significantly higher on student achievement tests.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was: What relationships exist between the six types of parent involvement and parent demographic characteristics to include education level, number of parents or guardians in the home, and parent as native to the area and student achievement. A significant relationship was revealed between the parent involvement typologies in conjunction with parent demographics and student achievement. Of the three parent demographics analyzed, one variable, parent education level, was significantly significant. Data analysis suggests that the relationship between the parent involvement typologies and student achievement is positively affected by the inclusion of parent demographics. The significance of parent education level suggests that parents with higher levels of education have students who score higher on student achievement tests.
Conclusions

As a result of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn concerning the relationships between parent involvement typologies and student achievement:

1. Parent involvement typology volunteering is significantly related to student achievement.

2. Parent involvement typology collaborating with community is significantly related to student achievement.

3. Parent involvement typology collaborating with community is significantly related to student achievement in the presence of the other parent involvement typologies.

4. The parent involvement typologies and parental beliefs are significantly related to student achievement. Parents' educational expectations for their child are significantly related to student achievement.

5. The parent involvement typologies and parent demographics are significantly related to student achievement. Parent education level is significantly related to student achievement.

Recommendations

As a result of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should consider the inclusion of the parent involvement typologies volunteering and collaborating with community in initiation efforts to enhance parental involvement. These practices may include sending personal letters to families seeking their involvement, inviting parents to be guest speakers, tutors, or advisory committee members, and enhancing efforts to connect the school to resources in the community.

2. Schools should communicate to parents that the typologies of parenting communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community along with the educational expectations they have for their children are
significantly related to student achievement. These types of involvement and expectations may positively affect student attitudes which are conducive to learning and thus achievement (Epstein & Connors, 1992).

3. As a result of the positive relationship between parent education level and student achievement, schools should direct initiation efforts to include all parents and provide direction to parents in specific parent involvement behaviors.

4. Administrative personnel should encourage principals to communicate to their staff and to parents the value of parental involvement and to develop site-specific programs to enhance the involvement of parents in their children’s education.

5. Schools should develop strategies to increase communication with parents. Communication is imperative if lasting partnerships are to be developed between schools and families.

6. Administrators should take a leadership role in the initiation and development of parental involvement activities while seeking input from all stakeholders. Planning, establishing goals, training, and evaluation should be addressed as essential components of proposed activities. The selection of practices to involve parents should be appropriate to the grade level of the student and the culture of the community while maintaining clear-cut distinctions as to the role each institution is to play.

7. Schools should invite local businesses and industries to form partnerships with schools which encourage greater parental participation in education.

8. Additional study and revision of the survey instrument should be undertaken to control for the effects of social desirability.

9. Additional study and revision of the survey instrument should be considered to parallel student grade level with survey items.
10. A survey instrument should be developed to control for the ambiguity of response choices. In the present survey, the response choices of 1-2 times, few times, and many times are inherently subjective.

11. Future studies should be conducted to assess how students, themselves, perceive the involvement of their parents in their education.

12. A recommended study would be to assess teachers' perceptions of parent's involvement for comparison to the results of this study.

13. Further investigation of within item responses of this study excluding the categorization of items by typology.

14. Serious consideration should be given to the development of an instrument in which the number of items associated with each typology are more equally distributed.

**Implications**

The following implications of the study on the relationships between parent involvement typologies and student achievement are presented:

1. The results of this study can supplement current information on the relationships between parent involvement and student achievement.

2. The results of this study indicate significant, yet relatively weak, relationships between student achievement and the parent involvement typologies volunteering and collaborating with community; however, the relationships between student achievement and the parent involvement typologies while including parent education level and parent educational expectations for their child were much stronger.

3. The results of this study indicate the need for schools to provide meaningful direction to parents in enhancing their involvement with their children; this implication is exemplified by the fact that many parents who responded that they were actively involved in each typology have students with low student achievement scores. The effects of
parent education level suggest that the quality and nature of the involvement may exceed the mere presence of quantity.

4. The limitations of the survey instrument and the effects of social desirability among parent responses suggest the need for further study. The inclusion of validation items should be considered in future revisions of the instrument. It is this researcher's belief that many responses were affected by social desirability and other extraneous variables outside the primary area of interest. This belief is exemplified by the fact that many parents circled the response choice, "many times", in the initial portion of the survey which contained the instructions. If an individual, a respondent in this case, is strongly motivated to present himself or herself in a way that society regards as positive, item responses may be distorted. Future studies should consider the inclusion of a social desirability scale which allows investigators to assess how strongly individual items are influenced by social desirability; items that correlate substantially with the social desirability score should then be considered as candidates for exclusion unless there is sound theoretical reason that indicates otherwise (DeVellis, 1991).

5. This study attempted to establish a link between parent involvement typologies and student achievement. The vast range of behaviors within each typology limits the empirical establishment of significant relationships. While the value of parent involvement remains undisputable, an inherent purpose of this study was to enhance perceptions of the value of parent involvement within the theoretical context of overlapping spheres of influence, to encourage further research on the relationships between parent behaviors and student achievement, and to proclaim with conviction that schools, parents, and communities, though somewhat distinctive in their roles, are natural allies, sharing common goals.
References


APPENDIX A

Cover Letter
Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Mitchell County School System is interested in ways that schools and families can help children succeed in school. We would like your ideas about this. To do the best job, we need responses from EVERY FAMILY.

Your answers will be grouped together with those from many other families. No individual will be identified. Of course, you may skip any question, but we hope you will answer them all.

Please have your child return this survey to the teacher TOMORROW or AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. If you have more than one child in elementary or middle school, please return all surveys as they pertain to the EACH CHILD.

This survey is part of a research project assessing parental involvement in Mitchell County. Data analysis will be conducted by Phillip Elliott, a Mitchell County teacher and student at East Tennessee State University. Statistical results will be made available upon request.

This survey should be answered by the PARENT or GUARDIAN who has the most contact with the school.

Place the completed survey in the envelope provided. DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFY YOUR CHILD'S NAME IN ANY WAY. Your child's teacher will collect returned surveys. If you prefer to not answer the survey, please place a check here [ ] and return the unanswered survey.

Dale Duncan
Mitchell County Superintendent of Schools
Larry Fortner, Principal
Bowman Middle School
Phillip Elliott
Tipton Hill School
APPENDIX B

Survey of Parent Demographics and Beliefs
Question 1. What is your highest level of education? CHECK ONE

___(1) Some high school
___(2) Completed high school
___(3) Some college or training
___(4) College degree

Question 2. I believe my child will: CHECK ONE

___(1) Not complete high school.
___(2) Complete high school.
___(3) Get some college or training.
___(4) Graduate from college.

Question 3. How many parents live at home? CHECK ONE

___(1) One
___(2) Two
___(3) Other

Question 4. To be successful in this community, one must get a good education.

CHECK ONE

(1)____ Strongly agree; (2)____ Agree; (3)____ Disagree; (4)____ Strongly disagree

Question 5. The education of one's child is mainly the school's responsibility.

CHECK ONE

(1)____ Strongly agree; (2)____ Agree; (3)____ Disagree; (4)____ Strongly disagree

Question 6. I am a native (lived most of my life) to this area.

CHECK ONE

(1)____ Yes (2)____ No
APPENDIX C

Parent Involvement Survey Instrument
Parent Involvement Survey

Families get involved in different ways at school or at home. Which of the following have you done this school year? Please CIRCLE one choice for each question.

NEVER---------means you do NOT do this or NOT YET this school year
1 -2 TIMES--------means you have done this ONE or TWO TIMES this school year
A FEW TIMES-------means you have done this a FEW TIMES this school year
MANY TIMES--------means you have done this MANY TIMES this school year

A. Talk to my child about school. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

B. Visit my child's classroom. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

C. Read to my child. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

D. Listen to my child read. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

E. Listen to a story my child wrote. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

F. Help my child with homework. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

G. Practice spelling or other skills before a test. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

Please continue on the next page
H. Talk with my child about a TV show. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

I. Help my child plan time for homework and chores. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

J. Talk with my child's teacher at school. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

K. Talk with my child's teacher on the phone. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

L. Go to meetings involving school decisions like PTO meetings, school board meetings, or other committee meetings related to school issues. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

M. Check to see that my child has done his/her homework. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

N. Volunteer at school or in my child's classroom. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

O. Go to special events at the school. NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES

Please continue on the next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P. Take my child to a library.</th>
<th>NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>Take my child to special places in the community.</td>
<td>NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.</td>
<td>Tell my child how important school is.</td>
<td>NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.</td>
<td>Attend parent-teacher conferences and discuss school decisions with either a teacher or the principal.</td>
<td>NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.</td>
<td>Take my child to special events like festivals and fairs not only because they are fun but also because they can provide learning experiences.</td>
<td>NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.</td>
<td>Encourage my child to participate in after-school programs that offer learning experiences.</td>
<td>NEVER 1-2 TIMES FEW TIMES MANY TIMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Central Office Approval
LETTER REQUESTING APPROVAL

January 2, 1996

Dale Duncan
Mitchell County Superintendent of Schools
Mitchell County, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Duncan:

As a student at East Tennessee State University, I am currently involved in a research project concerning parent involvement in education. My dissertation, Parent Involvement Typologies And Student Achievement: A Correlational Study Of The Overlapping Spheres Of Influence, will address the relationships between specific parent behaviors and student achievement.

I would like your permission to survey the parents of students in grades 4-8 in Mitchell County. Parents will be asked to complete the Family Practices of Involvement Questionnaire. This instrument, developed by Epstein and Salinas (1993) at the Johns Hopkins University, was designed to produce a profile of the current levels of parent involvement in schools. Parents are asked to not sign the survey or identify their child's name in any way.

I am also seeking permission to access non-identifiable student scores on the North Carolina 1995 End-of-Grade Tests. These scores and the surveys will be assigned a random number to prevent the identification of any student or parent.

As an incentive to the student for the return of the survey, I would like permission to distribute to the students a coupon redeemable at McDonald's for a free order of fries. In response to their interest in this study and education in general, McDonald's of Spruce Pine has donated 600 coupons.

In preparation for the study, I plan to meet with each principal to discuss the most appropriate means of survey distribution and to request their permission with regard to the study. Distribution and collection of data will be conducted in a manner as to limit the disruption of normal school activities.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Phillip Elliott
January 10, 1996

TO: Phillip Elliott
FROM: Dale Duncan, Mitchell County Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Dissertation Research

This memo is to grant you permission to conduct your dissertation research involving Mitchell County Schools. This permission encompasses the surveying of parents, the acquisition of non-identifiable test scores, and the distribution of student incentives as described in your request.

The Mitchell County Central Office Administration will be highly interested in the results of this study as we feel it will prove beneficial to the system in its quest for higher academic achievement.

Dale Duncan
Mitchell County Superintendent of Schools
APPENDIX E

Approval for Use of Instrument
Date: 6/21/95

To: Phillip Elliott

From: Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors, Karen Clark Salinas

Re: Permission to use:

☐ School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries, (Revised, 1993)
  • Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades
  • How to Summarize Your School's Survey Data
    Joyce L. Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas.

☐ High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries. (1993)
  • Questionnaires for Teachers, Parents, and Students
  • How to Summarize Your High School's Survey Data

This is to grant permission for you to use or adapt the survey(s) noted above in your study.

We ask only that you include appropriate references to the surveys and authors in the text and bibliography of your reports and publications.

Best of luck with your work.
VITA

PHILLIP ELLIOTT

Education:
Public School, Mitchell County, North Carolina
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; biological science, B. S., 1976
Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina; curriculum and instruction, M. A., 1987
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; educational leadership and policy analysis, Ed. D., 1996

Professional Experience:
Teacher, Tipton Hill School; Green Mountain, North Carolina, 1975-1996
Principal, Buladean School; Bakersville, North Carolina, 1996

Honors and Awards:
Mitchell County Teacher of the Year, 1988