

Effect of Parental Involvement on Students' Behavioral Adjustment at Primary School Level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

* Saman Yasin, PhD Scholar

** Shakeel Ahmad

*** Anum Irshad

Abstract



The study explores the effect of parental involvement that contributes to the broader domain of behavioral adjustment in terms of externalizing, internalizing and hyper active behavior. The research was carried at district Peshawar of province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The objective of the study examined the effect of parental involvement on students' behavioral adjustment with respect to three aspects of behavioral adjustment. The literature review and data analysis showed the significant effect of parental involvement in the adjustment process during the initial years of school. The children at pre-primary level are energetic with lesser stress modules therefore can't be classified as having behavioral issues however, when they come in the phase of practical learning in primary level they may face acute adjustment problems. However the early intervention of these problems may help the child to excel in school and also to stabilize him/her behavior in adolescence. 220 primary school teachers were selected through multistage sampling technique. Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliot, 1990) used by Margetts in 2005 was adapted for collecting data from the respondents. The collected data was analyzed by applying various statistical tools. The validity of the instrument was checked and the reliability was found within a good range. The mean value for all variables showed agreement of respondents towards the questions asked. No significant difference was found between the perceptions of two different organizations. The results of linear regression reflected inverse/ negative relationship between parental involvement and indicators of students' behavioral adjustment. Thus, with the effective parental involvement undesired effects of students' behavioral adjustment can be decreased.

Keywords: Externalizing Behavior, Hyper Active Behavior, Internalizing Behavior, Parental Involvement.

Introduction

Parental involvement especially during a child's school life has evolved as an integral concern in their academic achievement and adjustment (Kirkhaug *et al.* 2013). Parents and teachers set an example as being the child's first role model by their attitude and behavior within their social community including family (Manz *et al.*, 2014). For better growth and development, they require continuous guidance, inspiration and encouragement (Jones *et al.*, 2005). Good parental support fosters a healthy and good life (Boots *et al.*, 2016). The child's education starts informally by interaction with his/ her mother or caregiver. This informal learning includes the teaching of appropriate customary behavior like dealing with emotions, appreciated interactions with family, siblings, relatives and community and to acquire moral values of society (Brown *et al.*, 2012). The rules set up by the family members help in maintaining discipline in a child's behavior (Baum & McMurray-Schwarz, 2004). The three dimensions that generally regard the parental involvement include the academic socialization of their child with being involved at both home and school related matters (Hornby, & Lafaele, 2011). Academic At home, parents must look upon their child's daily activities and home work while participation in school related matters involve attending Parent-Teacher Meeting and

* Institute of Education & Research, University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
Email: samanyasin123@gmail.com

** Institute of Education & Research, University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
Email: kittynaz2000@yahoo.com

***Institute of Education & Research, University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
Email: anumirshad161@gmail.com

being concerned about their child's progress in school. Academic socialization includes parental anticipation, hopes and expectations about their child's academic performance.

Primary level is the most crucial step in a child's life. It serves as a foundation for the overall development i.e. physical, social, emotional, intellectual and behavioral management (Umoh, 2006). The aim of primary schooling is to provide the child such environment where they can develop self-confidence and skills to understand their worth by feeling happy and secured. There are certain factors which may push a child to outburst his/ her temper in the form of annoyance, tantrums and mood swings. These factors are generally regarded as bad or unpredicted behavior. The reasons might depend upon the nature (biology) or nurture (environment). The role of family in this regard is of utmost importance in the upbringing of the child. Behavior, values and norms are practiced under the supervision of family at home (Semke *et al.*, 2010). When children are admitted to school they go through a different phase of their lives which is quite unfamiliar for many of them (Fabian, 2000). This transition comes with various indicators observed in the form of maladjustment and problematic behavior. If these problems continue for long, they might alter the process of skill development like reading, writing, enthusiasm and building social relationships (Hart and Risley, 2003). The children in play groups or Kinder Gardens system have lesser stress modules as compare to the primary school where the child starts getting into a practical cycle of learning. Children learn to develop self-reliance and become conscious of people and happenings around them. They may face problems in adjusting a new environment where they encounter different personal and societal attitudes. Children who are able to make an adequate initial adjustment are thought to be more productive than those who find it difficult to adjust.

The results of recent research studies show that good communication between parents and teachers affects the progress of student in school (Hornby *et al.*, 2010). This established link in the form of communication helps the teacher to recognize and understand a child more efficiently and give instructions accordingly. In Pakistan, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also provided a platform to parents by the empowerment of Parent Teacher Association (PTA). They can involve themselves in the school related matters concerning their child's progress. This will help the students to boost their confidence and energize them to actively participate in curricular and co-curricular activities. Besides this, parents also get updated feedback and can take timely steps to eliminate any suspicious flaw which might affect their child's behavior and conduct at school (Alemu, 2018). Continued liaison with the school ensures the student's punctuality and regular attendance. Thus for all-round development of a child, parental involvement in school activities is of paramount importance.

As far as parental involvement is concerned, there were many observable shortcomings. To overcome these shortcomings Epstein presented a practical model for present-day parental involvement needs. According to him, there are six steps of parental involvement that foster the child's academic performance (Epstein *et al.*, 2009). These involve effective parenting skills, efficient communication, volunteering at school, better means for learning, decision making and collaborating with the community and society. Bakker & Denessen, (2007) believed that parents make the settlement process much easier for their kids. Parents show their involvement by attending school meetings, visiting their child's classroom and inquiring about their child's behavior and academic progress at school (Herold & O'Donnel, 2008). Besides this, they also might be interested in the curriculum taught at school, teachers' expertise and style of teaching and the facilities provided by the school (Benner *et al.*, 2016). Brown *et al.*, (2011) stated that the behavior of parents with their children at home is responsible for their better learning at school.

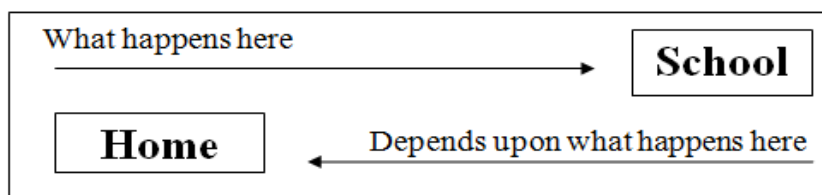


Fig 1 Effect of Parental Involvement Adapted from [www.google.com]

During the initial yeas of life children experience both physical and emotional changes within themselves (Jablon *et al.*, 2007). They aren't prepared to face emotional complexities (Margetts,

2005). They are unable to cope up with their emotions even a slight change can flare up monumental proportions. They are in dire need of adult attention and affection. Since the children aged 6 to 7 years aren't familiar with regularizing their adaptive phase therefore, school and home altogether play a significant role in the adjustment process. The adjustment isn't a fast but a gradual process which takes time therefore, both teacher and parent has to be patient with the child.

There are many skills that support child's adjustment at school which include interpersonal skills, their ability to solve problems, discipline, self-efficacy, will power, behavioral management and educational proficiency (Fabian, 2000; Margetts, 2002). Margetts, (2004) views that children may find it uneasy to adjust in school when there is a difference in skills that they learnt at home and that presented in school. This stress faced by them can manifest in maladaptive behavior.

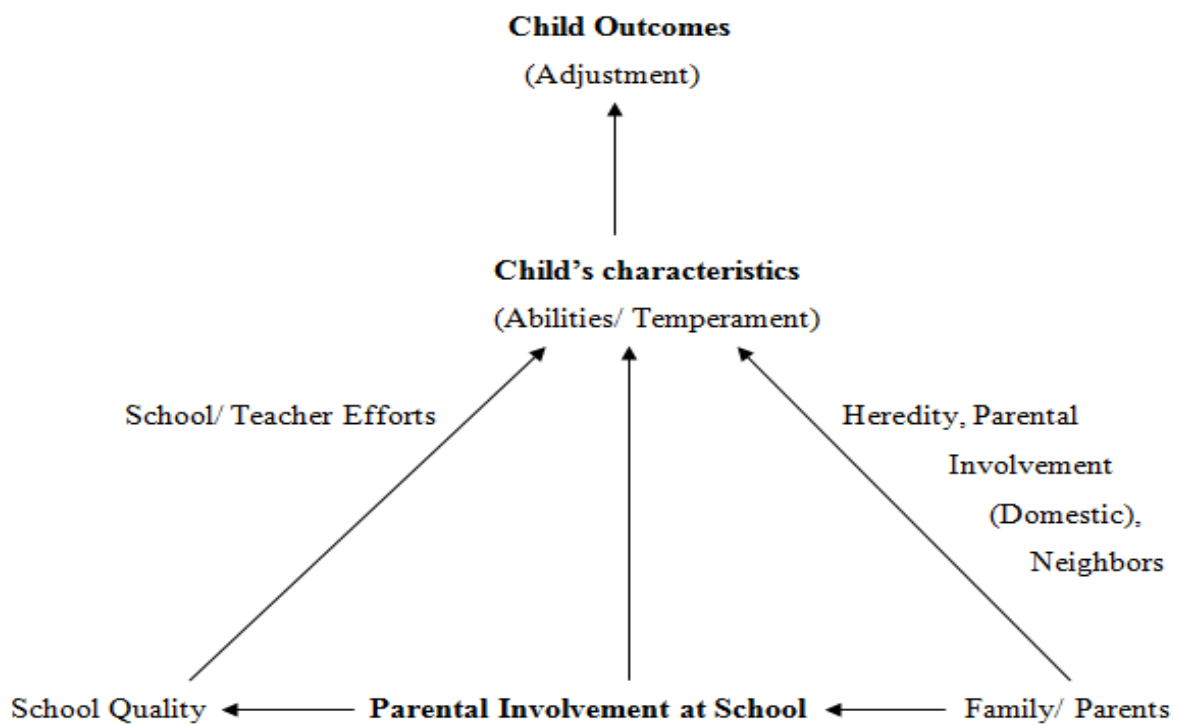


Fig 2 Forces shaping educational outcomes (Adjustment) Adapted from Nechyba et al (1999)

Children who are resistive, disorganized, easily distractible and socially isolated are more likely to encounter maladjustment than the rest of the children (Margetts, 2002). Children who showed an extreme level of over-activity and impulsive behavior in Grade I had a significant decline in the level of academic achievement and progress three years later (Merrell & Tymms, 2001), and similar results were observed by McLelland & Morrison (2003) for children in grade II and later in grade VI.

Measure of Adjustment in terms of Behavior

The behavioral adjustment can be measured by domains associated with it i.e. externalizing, internalizing (Sciberras *et al.*, 2014) and hyper active behavior. The characteristics of externalizing behavior include the outburst of emotions in the form of violence, physical abuse and aggression, disobeying rules and regulations (Kienig, 2000). Evidences show that the problematic behavior emerges when a child's attributes are greatly influenced by the family environment (Van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2004). It was observed that unsupportive family consistently relate to increased externalizing symptoms (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). Research studies show that one out of every six children show the symptoms of externalizing behavior and these problems often start during their pre-school period (Stemmler *et al.*, 2005). About half of the children diagnosed with such behavior persistently show problems in their elementary school period as well (Liu, 2004).

Internalizing behavior is followed by anxiety, depression, irritability, social isolation, phobias and somatic complaints (Davis *et al.*, 2011). Besides these, there are numerous other complex symptoms of internalizing behavior as well (Merrell *et al.*, 2006). Usually the evaluation of such

behavior is done by conducting structured and semi-structured interviews, with the help of observational measures and rating scales (Klein *et al.*, 2005). About 23% to 61% pre-school children continue to show the symptoms of internalizing behavior during their childhood (Fuchs *et al.*, 2013) and adolescence (Bosquet & Egeland, 2006). It has unseen effects on the academic progress, physical health and psychological adjustment of the child (Walker, 2016). Biological and environmental both factors contribute towards internalizing behavior (Raposa *et al.*, 2014). Through a variety of pathways internalizing behavior is developed and progressed (APA2015). Hostile childhood experiences are likely to develop the risk of anxiety and depression (APA 2015).

The features that characterize hyperactive behavior are fidgeting, attention deficiency, inability to focus upon certain task, mood disorders and disruptive behavior (Newcorn *et al.*, 2001). These features affect child's academic as well as social life. Parents report the symptoms at school moderately in correlation with the teachers' rating (Sayal and Goodman 2009). Effects of hyper activity continue to show in adulthood as well (Neale *et al.*, 2010). About 40-60% of children with hyper activity have a co-existing disability (Jensen *et al.*, 2001).

The study revolved around John B Watson's theory of Behaviorism (1913). According to him, certain interventions (stimuli) by the environment can bring behavioral change (response). Therefore, conditioning a child can bring desirable changes in behavior. In the context of this theory, the researcher developed conceptual framework characterized by behavioral problems (externalizing, internalizing and hyper activity) and parental participation in behavioral adjustment.

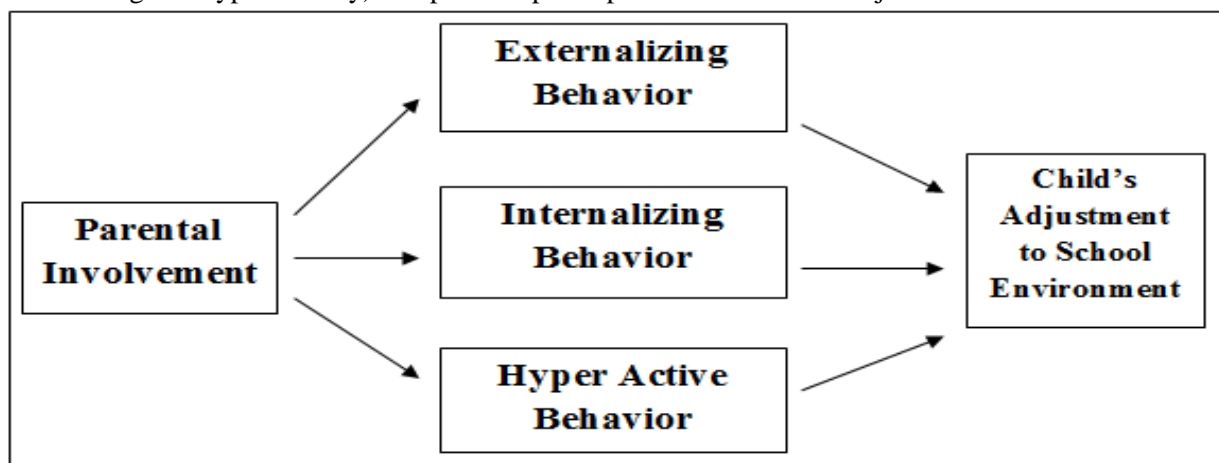


Figure 3 Conceptual Frame-work

Significance of the Study

The researcher found dire need to highlight the influence of parental involvement on students' behavioral adjustment. The positive influence of parents in a child's schooling may prove beneficial in his/ her academic achievement and social adjustment. Teachers may become aware of the behavioral issues that could be significantly reasons for of learners' maladjustment and low level of achievement in school. Awareness of these factors may help educators assess means and techniques required to involve parents towards their ward's school activities helping in eliminating behavioral issues while adjusting to school.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to only three indicators of behavioral adjustment i.e. Externalizing, Internalizing and Hyper-active Behavior. Due to logistic and financial constraints, the researcher only selected district Peshawar. Since it was easier to manipulate the behavior of the students of class I therefore, the researcher chose the teachers and students of class I for data collection and behavioral study.

Research Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive- quantitative. For descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation were calculated while for inferential statistics; independent sample t-test and linear regression were carried out. All primary schools of Province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were selected as the population. The technique used for sampling from the population was multi-stage sampling technique. 20 primary schools from each sector (Government and Private) were taken conveniently for the study, from which 05 teachers were chosen randomly to make a proportionate sample of 200

teachers. 20 respondents other than the sample were also selected for the purpose of pilot study in order to check the reliability of the research instrument.

The research instrument used was Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliott 1990) adapted and designed in such a way to identify the adaptive behavior in children and measure the variables. For measuring each variable, six observable test items were developed. The instrument's reliability and validity was checked by the supervisor and experts. The original scale showed the reliability value 0.87 (Margetts, 2005). A 05 point Likertscale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used. The items of the questionnaire were also translated into national language Urdu for better understanding. However, due the pandemic of COVID-19 the data collection was done online through Google form and was shared on social media platforms. The expressed perceptions of the teachers were solicited as the parent's rating are considered to be negatively biased as they have emotional involvement with their child's disruptive behavior as compared to an external observer (Meunier &Roskam, 2009).

The responses obtained by the teachers were manipulated and saved automatically in MS Excel. The collected data was extracted and coded on SPSS for analysis and interpretation. Statistical tools were applied and the data was processed. For descriptive statistics, mean of all the variables were calculated. The means of EB, IB and HAB were summed up to find the mean of SBA (Students' Behavioral Adjustment). For inferential statistics, Independent sample t-test and Regression Analysis were carried out.

Data Analysis and Results

The reliability of the instrument was also checked for which 20 respondents were chosen other than the sample. The results of the pilot study were also in good range i.e. all in the range 0.80. According to Uma Sekaran (2003), the results of reliability test for the sample size 200 were also in good range.

Table 1 Reliability test

Variables	Pilot Study (20) Cronbach's Alpha	Sample (200)
PI	0.817	0.847
EB	0.819	0.836
IB	0.885	0.878
HAB	0.810	0.897

After checking the reliability of the variables, mean and standard deviation were calculated. The results of the descriptive statistics indicated that the majority of the respondents agreed to the variables considering the test value as 3.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. D
PI	200	3.2183	0.92809
EB	200	3.5600	0.78388
IB	200	3.2625	0.86198
HAB	200	3.9067	0.79126

Furthermore, independent sample t-test was carried out to check the statistical significance of the mean of each variable across the organization.

Table 3 Independent Sample t test

Variables	Organization	N	Mean	St. D	F	P- Value
PI	Government	100	3.0533	0.95959	3.477	0.064
	Private		3.3833	0.86926		
EB	Government	100	3.5317	0.84011	2.326	0.129
	Private		3.5883	0.72647		
IB	Government	100	3.1283	0.92170	6.484	0.012
	Private		3.3967	0.77950		
HAB	Government	100	3.7967	0.76011	0.065	0.799
	Private		4.0167	0.81011		

The group statistics for the independent sample t-test showed mean greater than the mid value for all the variables with respect to government and private sector. The Levene's test results indicated the insignificant F value. This means that the variances were equal and Independent Sample t-test could be used given in the first row. The p values obtained were greater than 0.01 which suggested that there exist no significant difference of opinion among public and private sector teachers for all the variables. Thus the results of test applied on all the variables showed both government and private

sectors had the same views that involvement of parents affects the indicators of Students' Behavioral Adjustment (Externalizing, Internalizing and Hyper Activity Behavior).

Table 4 Hypotheses testing (Regression Model)

Explanatory Constructs	R	R²	F	β	P-Value
H₀1. There is no impact of parental involvement on students' behavioral adjustment in school.	0.315	0.099	21.800	-0.237	0.000
H₀2. There is no effect of parental involvement on students' externalizing behavior with regard to their adjustment in school.	0.219	0.048	9.936	-0.219	0.002
H₀3. There is no effect of parental involvement on students' internalizing behavior with regard to their adjustment in school.	0.368	0.135	31.034	-0.368	0.000
H₀4. There is no contribution of parental involvement on students' hyper active behavior with regard to their adjustment in school.	0.217	0.047	9.814	-0.217	0.002

The above table showed F value 21.800 and p value less than 0.01 which means that the independent variable PI was statistically significant towards the dependent variable SBA i.e. it was significantly contributing towards the three sub variables of behavioral adjustment (EB, IB and HAB) taken into consideration. It was also evident from the negative t-value that the relationship between the two variables is negative/ inverse. The analysis showed that decreased parental involvement would cause an increase in indicators of students' behavioral adjustment i.e. externalizing, internalizing and hyperactive behavior and vice versa. It was evident from the results that decrease in parental involvement by 0.237 units would cause an increase in indicators of students' behavioral adjustment i.e. externalizing, internalizing and hyper activity behavior and vice versa.

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Explanatory Constructs	P-Value	Decision
H₀1. There is no impact of parental involvement on students' behavioral adjustment in school.	0.000	H₀1 Rejected
H₀2. There is no effect of parental involvement on students' externalizing behavior with regard to their adjustment in school.	0.002	H₀2 Rejected
H₀3. There is no effect of parental involvement on students' internalizing behavior with regard to their adjustment in school.	0.000	H₀3 Rejected
H₀4. There is no contribution of parental involvement on students' hyper active behavior with regard to their adjustment in school.	0.002	H₀4 Rejected

Conclusion

The study concluded that the initial years of schooling are indeed the most crucial and stressful phase in a child's life. They are in need of continuous support and guidance which a parent can provide efficiently. Parents need to focus upon the behavioral changes occurring in a child's life and take effective and timely measures to overcome these issues. Recent researches demonstrate that persistent negative outcomes in childhood may continue to show antisocial and aggressive behavior in adolescence (Lycett *et al.*, 2014). Parents should try to find a developmentally appropriate class according to the age and intellectual abilities of their child so that he/ she are more likely to get along with their peer group. This practice can be done by visiting classrooms and observing different levels of classes and having a discussion with the educational experts about the different teaching strategies and educational philosophies. The present studies also places stress upon the use of reliable tools for identifying children facing difficulties in adjustment and the ongoing behavioral issues as a result of maladjustment. These tools can aid the teachers in minimizing the difficulties and adapt their own practices according to the needs of the child. Identifying and making parents and teachers understand their role in helping children in the adjustment process is of great importance (Margetts, 2002). The results can be generalized for the whole population as majority of the respondents were of the agreement that parents play a major part in the intellectual, moral, social and emotional development of children which help them in adjusting to unfamiliar situations in life. The support that parent provides to a child in his/ her early years of life have an impact in adulthood as well. This support

enables him to tackle hardships and difficulties in life, how to cope up with his emotions; deal with people having individual differences and make suitable adjustment to a changing environment.

The study at hand revealed that reasonable adaptation and adjustment is necessary for smooth learning. Without proper adjustment, the progress of student isn't possible. This could only be done by the effective involvement of parents. In this regard, educational institutions need to work with parents and encourage them to take active part in their child's education. It is the need of the hour to make parents aware of their role in a child's life at home and school as well. Sadly, most of the parents aren't familiar with the constructs of behavioral adjustment. They are unable to understand the reason behind the behavioral issues of their child. These behavioral issues surge with lack of communication and misunderstanding. To assist parents, schools should make such arrangement to encourage parent-teacher meetings. The Parent- Teacher Association (PTA) should be empowered to play its efficient role in establishing a link between parent and school for the progress of their students. Besides this, the stake holders should also train teachers to help them understand the dimensions of child's psychology. They should organize an open day at school so the students can come along with their parents to get themselves familiar with the schools' setting.

Recommendations

The study recommends the policy makers to include religious and social teachings in the national curriculum to enable the child to cope up with behavioral issues and align his/her behavior according to the needs. The study's findings could have revealed far more better results if the perception of both parents and teachers would have been taken. The strong predictors of parental involvement such as socio economic background, number of children, parental education and marital status should also be considered as an addition to the future researches. The study could also be elaborated to other levels of education as well. The students at each level of educational transition face acute issues in behavioral adjustment i.e. from primary to middle, middle to high, high to higher secondary and graduation. The study can further be extended to institutions offering mix gender education (co-education) i.e. students may face adjustment problems when they come from a segregated to unsegregated institution. Parent and teacher collaboration help the students and provide with such a favorable environment to overcome with these issues and enhance their skills and potentials.

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