

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIAN PARENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

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This study was designed to identify the relationship between Indian parents' education level and their involvement in their children's education. In total, 150 Indian students studying in National Schools in the district of Kerian, Perak Darul Ridzuan, were randomly chosen using stratified random sampling. The sample comprised 50 students from Year Three, 50 students from Year Four and 50 students from Year Five. Structured interviews were conducted with the respondents. Questionnaires were used by the researcher to obtain quantitative data related to the parents' socioeconomic background, the parents' involvement and the strategies the parents implemented for involvement in their children's education. The findings of the study indicate a moderate relationship between the parents' education level and the strategies the parents implemented. The higher the standard of parents' education, the higher the educational aspirations held by the parents regarding the academic achievement of their children. In addition, parents with a higher level of education tend to utilise various strategies of involvement at home and at school to foster academic excellence in their children.

Keywords: parental involvement, education, achievement, National School

INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the field of sociology of education with regard to parents' involvement in their children's education. Because a child has the same needs and rights as any other child in the process of development (Gordon and Browne, 1989), parents' involvement in their children's education is an important concern. Parental involvement is a form of investment made by parents for the future benefit of their children (Smits and Hosgor, 2006). The more confidence parents instil in their children regarding success in school, the greater their involvement in their children's education (Eliason and Jenkins, 2003). Parental involvement practices, regardless of other practices applied at home or at school, have been found to influence children's academic performance

in school (Sanders and Lewis, 2004). Considering the vast development in the field of education, it is not surprising that parental involvement plays a major role in developing patterns of higher academic achievement in children. It is important to note that through their parents' participation, children not only gain cognitive and social development (Weis, Caspe and Lopez, 2006) but also develop positive attitudes and behaviours, talent, personality and potential skill development (Manja, 1990).

Theories of parental involvement in their children's education have grown in importance in recent decades, and it is interesting to analyse the impact of family background on parents' involvement in their children's educational achievements. The researcher's interest in examining the relationship between parents' education level and their involvement in their children's education arose from the theory that when parents have a higher level of education, they tend to have greater involvement in their children's education. The question is why parents with a higher level of education enjoy greater success in developing better patterns in their children's education?

The present study attempted to trace Indian parents' education level and their involvement in their children's education in the district of Kerian, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia. The study also attempted to determine the strategies used by Indian parents to become involved in their children's education. Moreover, the study aimed to explain the advantages gained by parents with a higher level of education in developing better patterns of involvement for the academic success of their children. Thus, by examining the relationship between Indian parents' education level and the parents' involvement in their children's education, we may have a better understanding of the phenomenon of social reproduction, in terms of education, in Indian families.

In the context of Malaysia, very few studies have been done on minority groups, especially the Indian ethnicity. Most studies done on Indians have focused on poverty among Indians on estates (Selvakumaran, 1994; Colleta, 1975; Jain, 1970; Jomo, 1986; Selvaratnam, 1971), although more general studies on Indian estate workers exist as well (Navamukundan, 1988; Selvaratnam, 1971; Nayagam, 1988). Issues of the performance of Indian students were neglected long ago. The few studies done of this issue focused mainly on the status and the role of Tamil schools on estates (Colleta, 1975; Ponniah, 1970), and many were carried out a few decades ago. A prominent study of the education of Indian students was done by Santhiram (1999), who found that overall, the performance of Indian students in Malaysia was not satisfactory. Thus, researchers in the past did not give much attention to Indians' educational issues. There is still a need for more research, especially on parental involvement and its implication for children's academic success among Indians in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A large and growing body of literature has investigated parental involvement in children's education. Most of the educational research cites either parents' social class or socioeconomic factors associated with parents as the biggest constraints on parental involvement in their children's education. Sewell and Hauser (1980), in their longitudinal study in Wisconsin, found that most working class students have low cognitive skills. Sewell and Hauser believed that the failure of these students to have high educational aspirations was caused by the absence of motivation from their parents and teachers due to poor financial resources. Lareau's (1987) study of parental involvement in two first-grade classrooms in two communities, a white working class community and a professional middle class community, reported a significant positive influence of parents' social class on their children's education. She found that working class status resulted in a parental lack of skills, occupational status, time and income, and thus had a negative effect on parents' ability to help their children. Her study also revealed that working class parents were not exposed to the school curriculum.

Data from several other studies have also shown that the degree of parental involvement is associated with parental social class. For example, a study by Ramsay et al. (1992), which identifies parents' participation in curriculum decision making at schools in New Zealand, found that working class parents have difficulties participating in various activities at their children's school due to problems related to child care. In addition, working class parents' feelings of inferiority and their belief that their involvement at school would not be appreciated by the school has a negative impact on the relationship between their children's home and school. Reay (1999), in her study of two urban primary schools in London, one predominantly working class and the other middle class, found that working class parents bring into the *field* of education the *habitus* of their academic failure. She also found that working class parents lack experience in their relationships with professionals (Reay, 1999). The findings of Ramsay et al. (1992) and Reay (1999) support the previous research of Sewell and Hauser (1980) and Lareau (1987) in their linkage of parental involvement and social class.

A number of studies have indicated a significant positive relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and their involvement in their children's education. For example, Lueptow's (1975) study on high school seniors in 20 Wisconsin public high schools found that students who come from urban areas and have educated parents with a higher occupation status and a higher income seem to be high achievers in education. Consistent with Lueptow's study, Katsilis and Rubinson (1990), in their study of 395 seniors from Greek public high schools, found that the socioeconomic status of parents influences the academic success of

their children. A study conducted by Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) on eighth grade students, their parents and their teachers at public and private schools in the United States found that even though the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and their involvement in their children's education was not strong, it was significant and positive. These researchers supported the idea that a child from a low socioeconomic background can be expected to experience lower parental involvement in his or her education.

Though these studies focus on the importance of parental social class and socioeconomic status to parental involvement in children's education, there is a gap in research on the relationship between parents' education level and their involvement in their children's education. The level of education gained by parents has a great impact on the involvement of parents in their children's education, both at home and at school. Baker and Stevenson (1986), who interviewed 41 mothers of eighth graders, have referred to many ways in which educated parents become involved in their children's education. According to their study, well-educated mothers have more knowledge of their child's schooling. They often contact their children's school. They also have a greater awareness of their children's education and achievement. In addition, these parents monitor their children's educational progress. Along with this, these parents show support for their children's pursuit of higher education.

A study carried out by Lockheed, Fuller and Nyirogo (1989) on eighth grade students in Thailand also revealed the relationship between parents' education level and their involvement in their children's education. Their study proved that a child whose father is a professional and mother is highly educated can obtain high scores in Mathematics. In addition, Poston and Falbo's (1990) study on 1460 school children, their parents and their teachers in Changchun, China found that parents who are highly educated often communicate and interact with their children. A high parental intellectual level and the instillation of parents' values in their children appear to generate positive learning attitudes and behaviours in the minds of children towards educational achievement.

In addition to the studies discussed above, Kaplan, Liu and Kaplan (2001), in their study of an ethnically diverse (i.e., Caucasian, African American and Mexican American) sample of 1864 parents and their adolescent and preadolescent children, indicated that parents with a low level of education and a high negative self-perception may not have high expectations of their children. The higher the standard of parents' education, the higher their academic aspirations for their children are (Lockheed, Fuller and Nyirogo, 1989). Parents must have high expectations of their children in order for their children to achieve high scores on their school examinations. Reay (2004) described class differences and the advantages of middle class families as compared with

working class families. She explained that mothers from the middle class have a good educational background, and that these mothers inculcated academic values in their children, thereby promoting self-confidence and participation. The self-confidence and participation gained by the child are transformed into a more positive attitude towards educational success and more positive learning behaviours. Thus, the higher the parental level of education, the greater the opportunities gained by the child to develop motivation and educational aspirations that enable him or her to be involved in various educational activities (Sewell and Hauser, 1980; Tudge et al., 2006). A study by Raty (2006) of a group of university and vocationally educated parents and these parents' expectations towards their children's future education and their perception of their children's abilities found that highly educated parents are able to meet the expectations of their children's school.

To date, many researchers in this area have focused on one of these three major approaches used to understand parental involvement in their children's education: Cultural Deprivation, Cultural Capital and Culture of Poverty. According to the cultural deprivation theory, the failure of a child from the working class is caused by the poverty and the low education level of their parents (Krieken et al., 2000; Marsh, 2000; Eitzen dan Zinn, 2001). Moreover, in addition to the lack of value given to and the lack of belief placed in education by the parents (Marsh, 2000; Fulcher and Scott, 2007), a lack of academic resources in the family (Marsh, 2000) also leads to children's academic failure. A lack in education level, employment status and cultural values among working class parents causes their children to experience deprivation (Pringle, 1971). In contrast to a child of working class parents, a child from the middle class has a stronger economic background and thus the ability to acquire necessary skills and knowledge at home (Haralambos and Holborn, 1990). Hence, parents' socioeconomic background has an impact on whether the child gains educational opportunities and achieves academic success (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). In short, a child who lives in cultural deprivation lacks the skills, behaviour and values which are extremely important to his or her academic success. In this paper, the researcher argues that parents' education level influences their involvement in their children's education. Parental involvement enables the child to acquire the skills, behaviour and values that are needed for his or her academic success.

METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study was drawn from National Schools in the Kerian district located in the state of Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia. From a total of 194 Indian students studying in national schools, 150 were randomly chosen using stratified random sampling. The sample comprised 50 students from Year Three, 50

students from Year Four and 50 students from Year Five. Students in Year One and Year Two were not selected for this study, as this group was at an early stage of schooling, and it would have been too early to monitor the involvement of their parents in their education. Year Six students were not chosen because the Ministry of Education does not permit studies of students sitting for the Year Six examination (*Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah*). The students selected for this study were of Indian ethnicity.

For each of the 150 students who were chosen using stratified random sampling, the parent who, according to the student, spent the most time involving himself or herself in the child's education, was selected to be the respondent for this study. About 80.7% of the respondents were female ($n = 121$), and 19.3% were male ($n = 29$). This selection provided a comprehensive picture of Indian parents' involvement in their children's education among national school students in the district of Kerian, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia. This comprehensive picture provides an explanation for the influence of parents' education level on their involvement in their children's education among national school students in the district of Kerian.

Structured interviews were conducted with each of the respondents. Questionnaires were used by the researcher to obtain quantitative data from the parents during the interviews. The questionnaire was adapted from Walker et al. (2005). However, the researcher modified the questionnaire by adding relevant questions and omitting several questions that were not necessary for supporting the framework of this study. All of the questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended. Thus, the new version of the questionnaire contained a combination of questions adapted from Walker et al. (2005) and questions formulated after completion of the literature review.

The new version of the questionnaire dealt with the parents' socioeconomic background, their involvement and the strategies they implemented for advancing their children's education. The analysis for this paper focused only on the parents' education level and the strategies of involvement that were implemented in their children's education. In accordance with this focus, the parents' education level was classified into seven categories in the questionnaire: (1) Have no formal education; (2) Completed primary education; (3) Did not complete secondary education; (4) Completed secondary education; (5) Hold Certificate/Diploma; (6) Hold First Degree and (7) Hold Masters/PhD holders.

In defining parental involvement, parents' behaviour in helping their children with their education entails the ability to implement a variety of strategies to ensure the educational success of their children (Walker et al., 2005). Thus, Table 1 provides items, as they were presented in the new version of the questionnaire,

related to the strategies implemented by Indian parents in their children's education. For each question, the respondents were asked to state whether they "strongly agree", "agree", "agree/disagree", "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with a strategy for involvement in their children's education. The 14-item scale was internally consistent. The Cronbach's alpha measure was more than 0.80, which indicates that the measure of these items was reliable.

Table 1: Details on the variables used in the analysis

Variables	Details
Discussion of future planning	Effort made by the parent to discuss the future with his/her child.
Discussion of school activities	Effort made by the parent to discuss the activities done by his/her child at school.
Identifying learning patterns	Effort made by the parent to identify the learning patterns applied by his/her child at school.
Identifying academic problems at school	Effort made by the parent to identify academic problems faced by his/her child at school in education.
Identifying academic problems at home	Effort made by the parent to identify academic problems faced by his/her child at home in education.
Assisting with homework	Effort made by the parent to help his/her child with the homework assigned at school.
Identifying homework	Effort made by the parent to identify the homework given by the school.
Guidance for examination	Effort made by the parent to guide his/her child in preparing for school examinations.
Monitoring academic performance at school	Effort made by the parent to monitor his/her child's academic performance at school from time to time.
Motivation	Effort made by the parent to motivate his/her child to study hard.
Time limits	Effort made by the parent to provide time limits for his/her child on studying, watching television and personal activities.
Getting reading materials	Effort made by the parent to provide additional reading materials (e.g., newspapers and magazines) for his/her child.
Tuition	Effort made by the parent to provide tuition for his/her child.
Monitoring activities	Effort made by the parent to monitor his/her child's activities in places (e.g., shopping centres, playground etc.) other than home and school.

Each structured interview using the questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes. The questions and the response format were translated verbally to Tamil during the interview because it was easier for the respondents to answer the questions in

their mother tongue. The structured interview was conducted by the researcher himself. Each respondent was informed that the information he or she provided during the interview session would be kept confidential. All of the information gathered was analysed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the education level of the parents in this study. Analysis shows that 90.0% of the parents only attained secondary education or less. Almost half of the parents (45.3%) completed secondary education, and 26.0% of the parents managed to go to secondary school but did not complete their secondary education. Approximately 14.0% of the parents only completed primary education, and 4.7% of the parents never went to school. Only 10.0% of the parents in this study completed their tertiary education. As can be seen from Table 2, 90.0% of the parents had no professional qualifications. It is apparent from this table that 4.7% of the parents had no formal education. Moreover, even though 45.3% parents completed their secondary education, there was no evidence that they passed their examinations.

Table 2: Parents' education level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	7	4.7
Completed primary	21	14.0
Did not complete secondary	39	26.0
Completed secondary	68	45.3
Cert/Diploma	8	5.3
First Degree	6	4.0
Masters/PhD	1	0.7
Total	150	100.0

One of the major goals of this study was to determine the strategies used by parents for involvement in their children's education. Table 3 presents the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of the involvement strategies the parents used. The data indicate that the parents were highly involved and used many strategies of involvement.

As shown in Table 3, seven strategies had mean values above 4.0. The strategy of motivation recorded the highest mean value at 4.28, indicating that parents show high involvement in motivating their children. The results also indicate that parents showed high involvement in discussing with their child their child's future plans (4.26), identifying academic problems faced by their child at home

(4.22) and discussing their child's activities at school (4.19). In addition, the results indicate that parents showed high involvement in monitoring their children's activities in places other than home and school (4.08), identifying their children's homework assigned at school (4.06) and monitoring their children's academic performance at school from time to time (4.03).

The other seven strategies recorded mean values below 4.00. The results indicate that parents showed high involvement in providing additional reading materials for their child to upgrade his or her academic performance (3.99). The results also indicate that parents showed high involvement in identifying academic problems faced by their child at school (3.97) and in providing time limits for their child on studying, watching television and other personal activities (3.97).

The results also indicate that parents showed high involvement in identifying, through communication with their child's teachers, the learning patterns of their child at school (3.91) and in guiding their child in his or her preparation for school examinations (3.91). The results also indicate that parents showed high involvement in assisting their children with homework (3.85) and in providing their children with tuition classes (3.75).

When coding responses of "strongly agree" and "agree" as high parental involvement and responses of "strongly disagree", "disagree" and "disagree/agree" as low parental involvement, the results show that over 80.0% of the parents made significant use of five strategies. They showed high involvement in motivating their child, discussing with their child the child's future plans, discussing their child's school activities, identifying academic problems their child faced at home and monitoring their child's activities outside home and outside school. Eight other strategies of involvement show 70.0%–80.0% of high parental usage. The parents in this category showed a high degree of involvement in identifying the learning patterns of their child and the academic problems faced by their child at school. These parents also identified their child's homework, assisted in the completion of the homework, guided their child in preparing for exams and provided additional reading materials for their child. The parents in this category also monitored their child's academic performance at school and limited the time available to their child for home activities. However, only 66.7% of the parents showed high involvement in providing their child with tuition classes.

Based on the description given earlier, parents' involvement in shaping their children's education can be discussed in terms of three important parental roles: involvement at home, involvement at school and involvement in activities outside home and school.

Table 3: Strategies of parental involvement in children's education

Strategies	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Disagree /Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean	Sd.
Discussion of future planning	1.3	7.3	5.3	36.0	50.0	4.26	0.95
Discussion of school activities	0.7	7.3	5.3	46.0	40.7	4.19	0.89
Identifying learning patterns	1.3	10.0	16.0	42.0	30.7	3.91	0.99
Identifying academic problems at school	3.3	10.0	9.3	40.7	36.7	3.97	1.08
Identifying academic problems at home	0.7	6.7	10.0	35.3	47.3	4.22	0.93
Assisting with homework	4.0	15.3	9.3	34.0	37.3	3.85	1.19
Identifying homework	1.3	6.7	15.3	38.0	38.7	4.06	0.96
Guidance in examination preparation	1.3	10.0	18.7	36.7	33.3	3.91	1.02
Monitoring academic performance at school	1.3	8.0	15.3	36.7	38.7	4.03	0.99
Motivation	0.7	6.0	9.3	32.7	51.3	4.28	0.91
Time limits	1.3	9.3	12.0	46.0	31.3	3.97	0.97
Getting reading materials	3.3	8.0	16.0	32.0	40.7	3.99	1.09
Tuition	8.7	15.3	9.3	26.0	40.7	3.75	1.36
Monitoring activities	2.0	10.7	6.7	38.7	42.0	4.08	1.05

n = 150

As can be seen in Table 3, there are 10 strategies with which parents show involvement in their child's education at home. About 86.7% of the parents discussed their child's activities in school in order to get an overview of the things done by their child in school. Information about activities organised by the school

was gathered by the parents from their children. About 86.0% of the parents also discussed their child's future with their child. In addition, 84.0% of the parents showed high involvement in motivating their child to achieve academic success. A total of 82.6% of the parents also showed high involvement in identifying problems faced by their child in the learning process at home.

In addition, 77.3% of the parents provided time limits for their children on studying activities, watching television and other personal activities. About 76.7% of the parents identified the homework given to their child by the school. About 72.7% of parents often provided additional reading materials (such as newspapers and magazines) for their child in order to allow their child to gain access to additional information that could help them in their learning and increase their academic achievement. 71.3% of the parents also helped their child with school homework if the child experienced difficulty in completing it. They helped the child to complete all the homework assigned by the school. 70.0% of the parents showed high involvement in guiding their children in their preparation for school examinations. Finally, 66.7% of the parents provided tuition so that their child could increase their educational achievement. Most of the parents preferred classes that were operated by trained teachers and conducted at the teachers' homes.

According to Table 3, the usage of three other strategies show parents' involvements at school. About 77.4% of the parents identified academic problems faced by their child in school. Many parents met their child's class teachers regularly. They obtained feedback from the teachers and discussed the educational problems faced by their child. 75.3% of the parents monitored their child's academic performance at school from time to time by making note of their child's examination scores. In addition, 72.7% of the parents identified the learning patterns of their child at school by communicating with their child's teachers.

In addition to involvement at home and at school, the parents showed involvement in their child's education outside home and outside school. About 80.7% of the parents monitored their child's behaviour in activities other than regular activities at home and at school (Table 3). Monitoring the child's activities was intended to ensure the discipline of the child outside home and school. Monitoring was also done to prevent children from developing social problems.

The following section examines the correlation between parents' education and the 14 strategies of parental involvement observed. Although the strength of the relationship is not very strong, it is significant for all 14 strategies of parental

involvement. Table 4 provides the correlations between the parents' education and the 14 strategies of parental involvement.

Table 4: Correlation between parents' education level and strategies of parental involvement

Strategies	Correlation coefficient (<i>r</i>)
Parents' education	1.00
Discussion of future planning	0.33**
Discussion of school activities	0.27**
Identifying learning patterns	0.35**
Identifying academic problems at school	0.33**
Identifying academic problems at home	0.35**
Assisting with homework	0.27**
Identifying homework	0.27**
Guidance in examination preparation	0.25**
Monitoring academic performance at school	0.19*
Motivation	0.38**
Time limits	0.20*
Getting reading materials	0.30**
Tuition	0.18*
Monitoring activities	0.37**

n = 150

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

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

As shown in Table 4, the bivariate relationship between parents' education and involvement strategies shows that the relationship is moderate for seven of the 14 strategies implemented. All seven strategies implemented are significant at the $p = 0.01$ level. Hence, there is evidence that parents with more education are more involved in their children's education. As can be seen in Table 4, parents with more education were more involved in motivating their child ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$) and monitoring the activities, in addition to regular home and school activities, in which their child took part ($r = 0.37, p < 0.01$). They were also more likely to be involved in identifying their children's learning patterns ($r = 0.35, p < 0.01$) and their academic problems at home ($r = 0.35, p < 0.01$). Moreover, they were more likely to be involved in identifying the academic problems faced by their child at school ($r = 0.33, p < 0.01$) and discussing their child's future plans with their child ($r = 0.33, p < 0.01$). The parents with more education were more involved in obtaining reading materials for their child ($r = 0.30, p < 0.01$).

The bivariate relationship between parents' education and their strategies of involvement is generally weak for four of the 14 strategies implemented. However, all four strategies implemented are significant at the $p = 0.01$ level. The findings show that parents with more education often talked about the activities engaged in by their child in school ($r = 0.27, p < 0.01$). They were also more involved in identifying the homework given to their children ($r = 0.27, p < 0.01$), in assisting their children with completing their homework ($r = 0.27, p < 0.01$) and in guiding their children in their preparation for school examinations ($r = 0.25, p < 0.01$).

In addition to the 11 strategies discussed above, another three of the 14 strategies implemented show that the relationship between parents' education and their strategies of involvement is generally weak. The study found little evidence to show that parents with more education have high involvement in these three strategies. These results are significant at the $p = 0.05$ level. The results show a positive and weak correlation between parents' education and the time limits on home activities they set for their child ($r = 0.20, p < 0.05$). The results also show that parents with more education are not likely to monitor their children's academic performance at school from time to time ($r = 0.19$). A positive and weak correlation can also be seen between parents' education and their involvement in providing tuition classes for their children ($r = 0.18, p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although there has been little research done on parents' education level and their involvement in their children's education, the few studies done validated the fact that parents' education is an important factor in encouraging parental involvement in children's education. The higher the standard of parents' education, the higher the involvement they have in their children's education. It can be said that parents with more education have greater confidence in helping their children to perform well in school. As they have a higher educational background, they seem to project the strength of their confidence onto various strategies of involvement at home and at school.

Even though the current study did not reveal a strong relationship between parents' education and their involvement in their children's education, it indicates a moderate relationship for most of the strategies implemented by the parents. Although the relationship between parents' education level and parental involvement is not strong, the extent to which parents were involved in their child's education accounts for some of the advantages associated with the parents' education level. It is interesting to note that for all fourteen strategies focused on in this study, parents' education and their involvement in their child's education

was significant. However, it can be seen that, regardless of the level of education, most of the parents showed a high involvement in their child's education.

These findings are consistent with those of Baker and Stevenson (1986), who found well educated mothers to have a higher knowledge of their children's schooling, more contact with their children's school and more awareness of their children's achievement and to take more monitoring of their children's progress, all of which cause children to pursue higher education. The findings support the previous finding of Lockheed, Fuller and Nyirogo (1989) that the higher the standard of parents' education, the higher the educational aspirations held by parents for their children.

The findings of the current study are also in agreement with Poston and Falbo's (1990) findings, which support the idea that educated parents tend to communicate and interact with their children to encourage them to achieve academic success. These findings also seem to be consistent with a study conducted by Reay (2004), which found that middle class mothers with a good educational background invest their knowledge in their children's educational success in the form of nurturing self-confidence and participation. Moreover, the current research corroborates the theories of Tudge et al. (2006) and Sewell and Hauser (1980), which hold that the higher the level of parents' education, the greater the opportunities for their children to develop motivation and aspirations for educational success.

To a certain extent, the findings of this study retrace the roots of cultural deprivation theory. According to this theory, parents' socioeconomic background can have a positive impact on the child in terms of gaining educational opportunities and achieving academic success. The current study observed such opportunities gained by children due to their parents' education level. It has been proven that parents with a better educational background invest the values that they have gained from their education in their child in the form of confidence and participation, which allow for the development of aspirations and the achievement of academic success. The more knowledge parents have, the higher their involvement in their children's education through various strategies. The education level of the parents determines the ability of the child to acquire the skills and knowledge from home that are required for academic success.

There are two possible explanations for these results. One is that parents with higher education have a higher intellectual development, which fosters in them a need to be involved in their children's education at home and at school as well as outside home and school. Parents with more education are generally exposed to the outside world. They gain better information about the importance of education and ways to help their children. This information encourages them to

assist their children using various practices, including communicating with their children, assisting their children with their homework, monitoring their children's learning and identifying their children's academic problems at home. Parents with a higher education level also emphasise the importance of their involvement at school. They make more effort to identify their children's learning patterns at school and the academic problems they face, and they often monitor their children's academic performance. Being at a higher intellectual level enables parents to deal confidently with their children's school regarding their children's education. The parents in this category also monitor their children's behaviour in activities other than regular activities at home and at school. These parents are more aware of the need to monitor their children to ensure they are on the right path in their education by making certain that their children are not dealing with any social problems.

Another possible explanation is that parents with more education have better skills for managing their children's education. These parents might be prompt to read and gather information about strategies to be practised at home and at school. Using these strategies, these parents try to fulfil their expectations by properly managing their children's educational needs. They utilise their skills in various forms of involvement strategies to increase the academic excellence of their children. Having more education, these parents have greater access to an environment where they can rationally sharpen their management skills to heavily and effectively involve themselves in their children's education and thus increase the success of their children's education.

Overall, this study investigated the importance of the influence of parents' education level on their involvement in their children's education. Although most parents in this study only had a secondary education or less, they showed a high level of involvement in their child's education. All of the parents in this study, regardless of their education status, made use of various strategies to help their children achieve success in school. However, the correlation analysis shows that the parents' education level has an influence on their involvement in their children's education. The evidence from this analysis suggests that the education level of the parents of National School Indian students plays a major role in influencing these parents to utilise various strategies of involvement in their children's education at home and at school.

In three respects, the present study provides additional evidence of the importance of parents' education and their involvement in their children's education. Firstly, parents' education level has a strong influence on their children's academic success in school. Secondly, parents' education level has a significant and positive relationship with the parents' aspiration to utilise various types of strategies to ensure their children's excellence in education. Thirdly,

parents' education level adds to our understanding of their level of social and intellectual development and its role in enhancing their children's academic excellence through various strategies of involvement in their child's education.

However, the present study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, this data applies only to parents of Indian origin. The sample of this study did not include Malay and Chinese parents. Second, the study focused only on National Schools. The vernacular schools (i.e., The National Type Tamil school and National Type Chinese school) were not studied. Third, the study was done in the district of Kerian, which is located in the state of Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia. There are other states and many other districts in each state which were not taken into consideration. Fourth, the study focused only on primary schools. The secondary schools in Kerian, Perak Darul Ridzuan were not considered in this study. The findings of this study suggest a need for further investigation which addresses the above-mentioned limitations. Finally, the findings of the study are reflective of the strategies of involvement of largely parents who have completed secondary education or less. Parents with tertiary education (graduate and postgraduate) may show differences in their use of strategies of involvement in their children's education. Thus, further research with these groups of parents is recommended.

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