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Relationship Between Parental Involvement and 4th-5th Grade Students' Academic Motivation

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Author

Charla D. Williams, Ph. D

Graduate

School of Social Sciences

charla.williams@waldenu.edu

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/charla-williams-68103853>

Supervisory Committee

Timothy Lionetti -Chair

Megan Baril - Committee Member

Rolande Murray – URR Member

Abstract

Research has addressed the impact of parental involvement among students. However, there is minimal information on how parental involvement affects racially and ethnically diverse students. Findings indicated no significant difference between parents' and students' perceptions of parental involvement in seven of nine domains. Seven of nine domains of parental involvement predicted student academic motivation. Gender was not a significant moderator. Findings may be used by educators to promote certain types of parental involvement to enhance students' academic motivation and parent-child relationships.

Doctoral Dissertation

Problem

Despite efforts to reform education, such as smaller schools, vouchers, charter schools, and 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, these efforts have had little or no effect on African American students (Hucks, 2011).

The achievement gap between African American and White students has been well documented (Graves, 2011).

For African American students, the problem has been decreased standardized assessment scores and course grades received through the public- school system.

Parental involvement continues to be an essential component of education. It is a vital element in the education of children for more than 40 years (Department of Education and Science, 1967).

Parental support has shown to be positively related to academic motivation (Butnaru & Gherasim, 2010).

Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative, between-subject design study was to examine whether **parental involvement** predicts the **academic motivation** of African American students.

Gender as a variable was examined to determine if it was a moderator between parental involvement and academic motivation.

Many factors contribute to a decrease in academic motivation, such as the number of standardized assessments, home life, media, school curriculum, parental involvement, and school staff attitudes (Economides, 2009).

As the independent variable in this study, parental involvement was studied to determine if it was the main contributing factor to decreasing academic motivation.

Significance

Most of the research conducted regarding parental involvement and academic motivation has focused on White students, so this study adds needed perspectives and insights for educators.

This study may potentially help parents understand their children's view of parental involvement, which may help parents know how best to spend their time concerning their children's academic careers.

Theory or Framework

Social development theory (Vygotsky, 1978) claims to contribute to student success by emphasizing social interaction in the development of intellect.

Specifically, the **zone of proximal development** is the area students need more strategic direction to develop skills for higher mental functions. Parental involvement and parents' presence have the most significant influence in increasing academic motivation.

Relevant Scholarship

African American students are more likely to come from families living in poverty, often associated with lower education achievement (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010).

Students of African American descent were less likely to be living with both parents, spent more time watching television, were read to by their parents for fewer hours and had more absences (Barton & Coley, 2007).

Educators' negative perceptions may cause unconscious limitations in their social interaction with African American students, creating an environment where African American students are apprehensive about socially interacting with educators (Hucks, 2011).

Determining the effect of parental involvement on racially and ethnically diverse students' academic motivation could provide vital information needed to minimize and potentially close the achievement gap (Graves, 2011).

Although studies have indicated differences in academic achievement between racially and ethnically diverse students, the reasons for the disparities are unknown (Fischer, Schult, & Hell, 2013).

Theoretical explanations explained why the achievement gap is widening, including academic motivation, parental involvement, or study habits (Gherasim, Butnaru, & Mairean, 2013).

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in African American parent and child perceptions of parental involvement in academics when considering students in Grades 4-5?

RQ2: Does parental involvement in academics predict academic motivation of African American students in Grades 4-5?

RQ3: Does child gender moderate the association between parental involvement in academics to predict academic motivation?

Participants

The convenience sample relied on recruitment flyers posted in a public school in the Southwest region of the United States.

Representing 43 families, 43 students participated in the study, including 27 female and 16 male students.

Procedures

As the researcher, I obtained data for this study using the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI) and Parental Involvement Scale (PIS) in 2018 (Gottfried, 1986; Paulson, 1994).

Parents responded to flyers posted in their child's school if they were interested in participating.

To participate, parents signed informed consent and took the PIS online or by paper format.

Students were given an assent form and took the (CAIMI) and (PIS) online or paper format.

Analysis

A general linear model was used to analyze the data.

Findings

For RQ 1, students had different perceptions of parental involvement in two of nine domains encouraging students to do their best (parents' and child perceptions, $t(84) = 2.30, p = .02$) and parents attending student activities (parents' and child's perceptions, $t(84) = 2.72, p = .01$).

In RQ 2, seven of the nine parental involvement items predicted student academic motivation individually. The results were as follows: high aspirations for their child ($p = .03$), parental effort to help students do their best ($p = .004$), assisting students in getting ahead ($p < .000$), knowing student grades ($p = .02$), attend parent conferences ($p < .001$), attend school activities ($p < .001$), and volunteering ($p < .000$).

With RQ 3, gender was not a significant moderator between parental involvement and academic motivation.

Interpretation

The results indicated no significant difference between the parents' and students' perceptions of parental involvement in academics when considering RQ 1. The fact that there was no significant difference between parents' and students' perceptions of parental involvement showed that parents and students have similar views on parental involvement.

The types of parental involvement that require parents' presence (attending parent conferences, attending school activities, and volunteering) had the most significant influence in increasing academic motivation for RQ 2, consistent with Vygotsky's social development theory.

Students' gender did not moderate the association between parental involvement to predict academic motivation with RQ 3.

Limitations

Data collection did not begin until May of 2018, the last month of the school year before summer vacation. Therefore additional data were collected through November 2018 of the 2018-2019 school year.

Statewide standardized assessments were administered in May. The same month of data collection, which is a hectic time of the school year.

Recommendations

Replicate with students preparing to transition to high school and students preparing to transition to college.

Replicate with more uninvolved parents.

Replicate in other regions of the United States.

Replicate in rural areas.

Replicate with Hispanic American students.

Social Change Implications

Increased parental awareness on which types of parental involvement are most effective in motivating students academically.

Increased academic achievement leading to positive social change within the African American community with more opportunities to advance academically with increased confidence to reach for previously thought unattainable educational dreams.

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