

Parental involvement and educational outcomes for Aeta indigenous peoples in Botolan, Zambales Philippines: A descriptive study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines parental involvement and its impact on the educational outcomes of the Aeta community in Botolan, Zambales, focusing on parental management, financial support, and parent-teacher collaboration. Using researcher-designed questionnaires and a 5-point Likert scale, data were collected from randomly selected participants to assess engagement levels. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to explore variations in parental involvement based on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and educational attainment.

Results indicate that age, gender, occupation, family size, and recreational activities do not significantly affect parental engagement, reflecting consistent commitment across demographic groups. However, monthly income and educational attainment significantly influence overall involvement, with higher levels linked to greater engagement. Despite these disparities, financial support and parent-teacher collaboration emerged as universal priorities among parents.

The findings highlight the importance of strengthening parent-school partnerships to enhance parental involvement. Schools are encouraged to provide workshops, regular updates, and literacy programs alongside fostering effective communication through newsletters, meetings, and digital platforms. Addressing socioeconomic and educational disparities through targeted programs and flexible participation options can empower parents to support their children's academic and holistic development effectively.

1. Introduction

Access to education remains a significant challenge for many individuals worldwide, particularly for marginalized communities. Indigenous groups like the Aeta community face substantial hurdles in obtaining education in the Philippines, as highlighted by a World Bank report in 2024 (World Bank, 2024). Despite their belief in education as a vital tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, Aeta families encounter systemic barriers, including cultural exclusion, uncertainty, and insufficient educational facilities. These challenges, rooted in social, cultural, and economic inequalities, impede their progress toward equal educational opportunities.

Education plays a crucial role in personal and societal growth, beginning with informal learning at home. Parents and families are children's first educators, shaping their values and understanding of the world. However, formal education, which occurs in schools and

institutions, is essential for developing the skills to navigate an increasingly complex world. For children to succeed academically and socially, parental involvement is key. The way parents support, discipline, and communicate with their children greatly influences their educational performance.

As one of the most socio-economically marginalized groups in the Philippines, the Aeta community faces unique challenges in education. Despite government efforts through initiatives like the Department of Education's (DepEd) contextualized K-12 curriculum and culture-based education programs, access to quality education for Indigenous Peoples (IPs) remains limited. The Aeta people have political rights about their culture, language, and education, as recognized in Article 14 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007). However, advancing Indigenous education requires collaboration from governments, schools, and parents, who play a critical role in reinforcing learning beyond the classroom.

This study addresses the gap in understanding parental involvement among Indigenous families, specifically the Aeta community, in the context of the Philippines. While previous research has highlighted the challenges Indigenous Peoples face in accessing education, little is known about how Aeta parents engage with their children's learning despite their hardships and cultural heritage. This research aims to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and community leaders to improve support for Indigenous families.

The primary goal of this study is to examine the parenting practices and management strategies of Aeta's parents and their impact on their children's educational success. By exploring this topic, the study seeks to promote a deeper understanding of how parental involvement can enhance the academic and social achievements of Aeta students and contribute to bridging the gap in education for Indigenous communities.

2. Theoretical basis

This research is based on frameworks that stress the significance of parental engagement in education. The Epsteins Framework of Six Types of Involvement is a framework that underscores the involvement of families in bolstering their children's education through forms of participation like parenting guidance, communicated volunteer work, home learning decision-making, and community collaboration. This framework offers a view of how parental involvement can improve achievements for kids. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides an understanding of environmental settings, such as family unit educational institutions and the surrounding community. Work together to shape a child's growth and progress. This theory emphasizes the significance of considering the environment in which Aeta youngsters are taught and how parental involvement can help navigate these impacts.

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the educational outcomes of indigenous students, including the Aeta community in the Philippines. Studies have shown that despite socioeconomic challenges, Indigenous parents actively support their children's education through communication, learning at home, and financial assistance (Enteria & Tagyam, 2020). However, barriers such as limited infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, and socioeconomic factors hinder access to quality education for Indigenous students (Gonowon, 2024). Parental involvement becomes even more challenging for students attending boarding schools away from their communities, potentially impacting academic achievement (Benveniste et al., 2014). Factors influencing students' educational decisions include practical utility, economic potential, parental influence, and personal interests (Gonowon, 2024). To improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students, these barriers must be addressed, and strategies must be developed that

enhance parental involvement and communication between schools and families (Benveniste et al., 2014; Enteria & Tagyam, 2020).

Recent studies have explored educational challenges and parental involvement among Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the Philippines, particularly the Aeta community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Aeta families faced difficulties accessing educational opportunities due to technological and financial constraints (Echaure & Dela Rosa, 2022). At St. Francis Learning Center, Aeta students reported mixed experiences with course descriptions and teaching methods, highlighting areas for improvement in educational delivery (Gonowon, 2024). Parental involvement plays a crucial role in IP children's education, with communication, learning at home, and financial support identified as key aspects requiring enhancement (Enteria & Tagyam, 2020). Despite socioeconomic challenges, IP parents are committed to supporting their children's education, similar to non-IP parents. However, limited educational backgrounds and low income levels among IP parents present ongoing obstacles to their involvement in their children's academic pursuits (Enteria & Tagyam, 2020).

Statement of the problem

This study aims to assess the levels of parental involvement of Aeta's Parents in their children's education in Botolan, Zambales. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Aeta's parents regarding their involvement in their children's education in terms of:
 - a. Parent management
 - b. Financial Involvement
 - c. Parent-Teacher Involvement
2. Is there a significant difference in Aeta parents' perceptions when grouped according to profile variables such as age, sex, occupation, monthly income, number of children, highest educational attainment, and recreational activities?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in parental involvement based on age, sex, monthly income, or educational attainment.
2. Parental involvement does not significantly influence the academic performance of Aeta children.

3. Methodology

This study explored parental involvement in the education of Aeta communities in Botolan, Zambales, focusing on three barangays with significant Aeta populations. A descriptive quantitative design was employed, and permissions were obtained from local authorities to ensure ethical compliance and cultural sensitivity.

A total of 99 respondents were selected using random sampling to ensure representation across Sitio Masikap Village in Mambog and Villar (40 respondents each, 40.40%) and Palis in the Loob-Bunga Resettlement Area (19 respondents, 19.19%). Data were collected using a validated questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale to measure parental involvement in parental management, financial support, and parent-teacher collaboration.

The questionnaires were administered in person by familiar persons with local dialects to ensure accuracy. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the findings. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to identify significant differences in parental involvement based on socioeconomic and demographic factors, such as age, gender, educational attainment, and income (Field, 2018).

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Results

Parents are particularly proactive in attending school meetings and activities, emphasizing collaboration with educators. They also actively engage in their children's learning by asking about school lessons, fostering communication and understanding of academic progress. Table 1 shows a high level of parental involvement in their children's education, with an overall weighted mean of 4.24. However, support for literacy skills, such as reading and writing, ranked slightly lower, suggesting some parents view these tasks as the teacher's role or lack confidence in assisting. Despite this, parents consistently monitor study habits and school progress, reflecting their commitment to academic success.

Table 1

Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Terms of Parental Management

A. Parent Management	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1. I help my child in doing his/her assignments.	4.05	High Level of Parental Management	7
2. I help my child in reading and writing.	4.04	High Level of Parental Management	5.5
3. I ask my child about what he/she learns from school.	4.45	High Level of Parental Management	2
4. I keep watch on my child's study habits.	4.21	High Level of Parental Management	4
5. I help my child to understand what he/she reads.	4.04	High Level of Parental Management	5.5
6. I keep an eye on my child's school progress.	4.35	High Level of Parental Management	3
7. I attend school meetings and other activities in school.	4.49	High Level of Parental Management	1
Overall Weighted Mean	4.24	High Level of Parental Management	

Source. Data analysis result of the research

Parents are particularly proactive in attending school meetings and activities, emphasizing collaboration with educators. They also actively engage in their children's learning by asking about school lessons, fostering communication and understanding of academic progress. Table 1 shows a high level of parental involvement in their children's education, with

an overall weighted mean of 4.24. However, support for literacy skills, such as reading and writing, ranked slightly lower, suggesting some parents view these tasks as the teacher's role or lack confidence in assisting. Despite this, parents consistently monitor study habits and school progress, reflecting their commitment to academic success.

Table 2 reveals a high level of parent involvement in financial support, with an overall weighted mean of 4.33. The highest ranked item, "I find ways to support the financial need of my child in school," reflects a strong commitment to meeting their children's educational expenses despite socio-economic challenges. Likewise, highlighting parents' diligence in fulfilling financial responsibilities essential for academic success through paying the financial obligations of their children in school and paying the PTCA contributions as well is evident. However, they have slightly lower ratings in purchasing books and other reading materials their children need in school. Overall, the findings emphasize Aeta's parents' unwavering commitment to financially support their children's education, particularly in meeting school-related obligations. However, additional resources and support are necessary to enhance their capacity to provide broader academic assistance.

Table 2

Perception of Parental Involvement in Terms of Financial Support

B. Financial Support	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1. I find ways to support the financial needs of my child in school.	4.79	Very High Level on Financial Support	1
2. I buy books and other reading materials as support references to his/her studies.	3.75	High Level on Financial Support	5
3. I pay the PTCA contributions of my child on time.	4.55	Very High Level on Financial Support	3
4. I give my child extra money for emergency school.	3.81	High Level on Financial Support	4
5. I make sure that I pay the financial obligations of my child.	4.78	Very High Level on Financial Support	2
Overall Weighted Mean	4.33	High Level on Financial Support	

Source. Data analysis result of the research

Table 3 results reflect a high level of parent-teacher involvement, with an overall weighted mean of 4.24. The highest-ranked item, "I get involved in my child's education to ensure they succeed in school," demonstrates parents' strong commitment to actively supporting their children's academic journey. Similarly, parents frequently engage with teachers on issues related to their children's studies, highlighting their interest in maintaining open communication to address concerns. However, slightly lower ratings were observed for constant communication with teachers and supporting school programs. These results suggest that while parents actively participate in their children's education, some may face challenges sustaining consistent communication or contributing to broader school initiatives.

Table 3*Perception of Parental Involvement in terms of Parent - Teacher Involvement*

C. Parent-Teacher Involvement	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1. I ask my child's teacher about things that concern my child's studies.	4.25	High Level on Parent - Teacher Involvement	2
2. I have constant communication with my child's teacher.	3.81	High Level on Parent - Teacher Involvement	5
3. I get involved in all PTCA activities.	4.20	High Level on Parent - Teacher Involvement	3
4. I support all the programs of the schools.	4.00	High Level on Parent - Teacher Involvement	4
5. I get involved in my child's education to ensure they succeed in school.	4.95	Very High Level on Parent - Teacher Involvement	1
Overall Weighted Mean	4.24	High Level on Parent - Teacher Involvement	

Source. Data analysis result of the research

Table 4 reveals that age does not significantly influence perceptions of parental involvement, financial support, or parent-teacher involvement. Similarly, perceptions of these factors do not differ significantly based on gender. Furthermore, male and female parents display comparable levels of engagement in all aspects of their children's education, underscoring that gender does not shape parental attitudes or practices.

In addition, occupation does not significantly affect parental perceptions. Regardless of job type or working conditions, parents consistently exhibit similar levels of commitment and engagement in their children's education. However, monthly income emerges as a significant factor, influencing perceptions of parental involvement while not impacting financial support or parent-teacher involvement.

Likewise, the number of children in a family does not significantly affect parental involvement, financial support, or parent-teacher involvement perceptions. Educational attainment, on the other hand, substantially influences perceptions of parental involvement but has no significant impact on financial support or parent-teacher collaboration.

Finally, recreational activities do not significantly impact parental perceptions. Regardless of their leisure activities, parents consistently support their children's education, highlighting a shared commitment across all groups.

Table 4*Significant Differences in Perception When Grouped According to Profile Variables*

Variable	Perception	F computed; F critical	Decision/Analysis
Age	Parent Involvement	0.83; 2.04	Not Significant
	Financial Support	1.57; 2.04	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	1.64; 2.04	Not Significant

Variable	Perception	F computed; F critical	Decision/Analysis
Sex	Parent Involvement	1.90; 3.90	Not Significant
	Financial Support	1.50; 3.94	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	1.47; 3.94	Not Significant
Occupation	Parent Involvement	1.80; 1.90	Not Significant
	Financial Support	0.44; 1.87	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	1.39; 1.87	Not Significant
Monthly Income	Parent Involvement	2.60; 2.50	Significant
	Financial Support	0.78; 2.47	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	0.12; 2.47	Not Significant
Number of Children	Parent Involvement	0.30; 3.10	Not Significant
	Financial Support	0.28; 3.09	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	0.80; 3.09	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	Parent Involvement	2.30; 2.20	Significant
	Financial Support	1.03; 2.20	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	1.85; 2.20	Not Significant
Recreational Activities	Parent Involvement	0.50; 1.90	Not Significant
	Financial Support	0.64; 1.90	Not Significant
	Parent-Teacher Involvement	0.78; 1.90	Not Significant

Source. Data analysis result of the research

4.2. Discussion

One significant finding is that age does not influence perceptions of parental involvement, with parents across all age groups demonstrating similar levels of engagement. This aligns with the study by Erdener and Knoepfel (2018), which found no significant differences in parental involvement based on age or educational level in rural Turkey, emphasizing that parental commitment transcends generational boundaries.

Gender also does not significantly impact parental involvement, as both male and female parents exhibit comparable engagement levels in their children's education. This supports the findings of Yosef and Rozzqyah (2024), who observed no gender-based differences in parental involvement. Such findings highlight that cultural norms in the Aeta community promote shared responsibility between mothers and fathers in supporting their children's education.

While occupation does not significantly affect overall parental involvement, Haley-Lock and Posey-Maddox (2016) observed that occupational status and job conditions can influence

how parents, particularly mothers, engage with schools. Regardless of these challenges, parents consistently commit to their children's education. This underscores the importance of schools offering flexible engagement options to accommodate diverse working conditions.

As measured by monthly income, socioeconomic status significantly influences parental involvement but does not affect financial support or parent-teacher collaboration. These findings suggest that while limited income may constrain broader participation, essential priorities such as financial support for education and cooperation with teachers remain universal. Addressing income disparities through targeted support programs could enable greater engagement and alleviate socioeconomic barriers.

Family size also does not significantly impact parental involvement, financial support, or teacher collaboration, indicating that parents distribute their attention and resources equitably, regardless of the number of children. This finding aligns with Shao et al. (2022) but contrasts with Mashiach and Davidovich (2023), who reported a negative correlation between family size and parental engagement. The variation may be attributed to cultural family dynamics and resource allocation differences.

Educational attainment significantly affects parental involvement, with more educated parents demonstrating higher engagement levels. However, financial support and teacher collaboration are consistent across all academic backgrounds, reflecting a shared prioritization of these aspects. Addressing educational disparities through resources and training programs could further empower less-educated parents to enhance their involvement.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Parental involvement is essential in improving the educational outcomes of children in the Aeta community. However, demographic factors such as age, gender, occupation, and family size do not significantly impact engagement; higher income and educational attainment are linked to greater involvement. Financial support and parent-teacher collaboration remain universal priorities, reflecting parents' dedication to their children's success. Strengthening parent-school partnerships and addressing socioeconomic and educational disparities through targeted programs can further enhance parental involvement, fostering equitable academic and holistic development opportunities.

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