

# Exploring parent's role, involvement and challenges in the most critical stage of their children's development

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## ABSTRACT

The role and involvement of the parents towards their children's education are indispensable, especially in the formative years. Nowadays, these crucial roles and involvement have been confronted by the uprising economic constraints in the Philippines, especially in the rural areas. Furthermore, empirical literature reported decreasing parental involvement. Hence, the study aims to explore parent's role, involvement, and challenges in the education of their children in the formative years. This study used a qualitative method of research employing a phenomenological method of investigation to gather necessary data through an interview guide from 8 informants who were purposively chosen. Three major themes were elicited: Parents' role as Replica, Guide, and Provider; Limited involvement due to educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood; and Parents' involvement as an immense factor in children's success, which implies that parents were fully aware of their respective roles and that poverty, educational attainment, and their livelihood are the key factors affecting their roles. It was further revealed that despite financial challenges, informants were still having a positive attitude towards the value of education in the success of their children. It is concluded that informants are well aware of their respective roles and involvement in the education of their parents leading them to have a positive attitude on the value of education for their children. It is recommended that extension or cause-oriented programs be conceptualized to help parents in performing their respective crucial roles.

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## 1. Introduction

Parents have been and will forever be the first teachers of their children, and their respective roles in their children's scholastic quest are indispensable and inextricable. Likewise, parents' involvement, especially in the formative years of the children, is imperative. Li (2022) stresses that a child's formative years are a crucial time in determining the identity of the child and his future life, which has a lifelong bearing on their brain and healthy development. The most advantages will accrue to children who have positive early experiences and get affection and care at home. Hence, what the parents and the surrounding environment instill to the child's formative

experiences has a direct influence on his future, making this stage of life to be undoubtedly the most critical.

Every academic activity involving teachers and students in a school has always required parental participation as a crucial element. It is important to recognize the level of involvement that parents have in their children's education and school since they are the stakeholders in the school community and have a significant impact on the educational and environmental transformation of the child (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014).

According to the Centre for Child Well-Being (2010), as cited in Sapungan and Sapungan (2014), a child's morale, attitude, and academic performance across all subject areas are all improved by parental involvement, which likewise encourages better behavior and social adjustment. It also states that children who have their families involved in their schooling are more likely to mature into responsible, contributing adults.

Meador (2020) stated that "real school reform will always begin with increased family involvement in their children's education." There are always exceptions, but raising a child to value education has a good impact on their education. It has been demonstrated time and time again that parents who invest time and place importance on their children's education will have children who are more successful in school.

Naite (2021) added that the most essential aspects in the development of the child are the parents, for they have the explicit involvement, the authority, and the skill to mold their children to be motivated, inspired, and lenient people of society. However, the absence of parental involvement in their children's scholastic quest is tantamount to negligence, which leads to demoralizing and demotivating their children, which turns out to have a negative impact on their scholastic performance.

Educational attainment, unemployment, and poverty are the key aspects that impede parental involvement. Wang, Deng, and Zang (2016) found in their study that financial difficulties highly affected parent's involvement in their children's educational activities. It was likewise found that wealthier families were more involved in the learning activities of their children, which implicates that socioeconomic stability allows parents to have more quality time to be involved in school-related activities of their children.

In addition, Dimaala (2019) found that parental involvement is continuously decreasing in school affairs. It was likewise found that there were psychosocial factors that contributed to this continuous decrease, like parent's educational attainment and income level. According to the study, parents consider physiological needs like food and shelter a priority more than the school needs of their children.

Undoubtedly, based on the aforementioned pieces of literature, parental involvement makes a great impact on the child's learning and development, which has a lifelong bearing and, in fact, a determinant of his future. Hence, it cannot just be overlooked and be taken complacently but tremendously. In the municipality of Tuburan, Cebu, there has been no research undertaken pertaining to this matter, which is a bit alarming given that the population has increased coupled with a high unemployment rate in the country, which is likewise an implication of low educational attainment.

To address the emerging gap pertaining to the parental involvement, this paper intends to explore parental involvement and its contributing factors. Specifically, look into the roles and involvement of the parents in their children's scholastic undertakings and discover the factors contributing to their involvement. This study was conducted in Barangay 8, Tuburan, Cebu, where the research proponents' academic institution is located. The findings of this study served as a basis for the proposed sustainable program that would benefit both the parents and the children ages 4 - 12 years old. Moreover, this study would be a great input in developing and upholding responsible citizenship through appropriate guidance of the parents and the community, and this would greatly contribute to one of the seventeen United Nations sustainable development goals, which ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

## **2. Theoretical basis**

This part of the paper reviews conceptual and empirical literature that would serve as a basis of the conduct of this research undertaking.

This research is mainly anchored on Epstein's parental involvement theory, which states that parents or guardians who are informed and engrossed in their children's training can positively impact their children's attitudes and performance (Epstein, 2002).

The definition of parental involvement is varied based on the available literature. Christenson et al. (1992), quoted in Jafarov (2015), defined parental involvement as how parents play a role in their children's education, both home and school-related. LaRocque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011) defined it as parents' investment in the education of their children.

Parental participation has a significant impact on a student's academic progress, as Pinantoan (2013) noted. It is further emphasized how crucial a student's home support system is in helping him achieve his goals in life, just as vital as his intelligence, work ethic, and heredity. The most influential and powerful role model for children is their parents. Children always emulate their parents' values and behavior patterns (Kasapi, 2013, as cited in Ceka & Murati, 2016). Colanoiq (1972, as cited in Ceka & Murati, 2016) stated that the future will be more prosperous if parents have a favorable influence on their children's daily lives, especially when it comes to their schooling.

According to Vellymalay (2012), socioeconomic position is positively connected with greater parental participation and, consequently, greater academic achievement. Parents from better backgrounds tend to be more actively involved than parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Domina, 2005). According to Lee and Bowen (2006), parents with low educational levels may not be as motivated to participate as other parents since they may not feel as comfortable speaking with school personnel.

Shanmugam, Kalimuthu, Pranee, and Yin (2022) studied the variables affecting Penang parents' involvement in directing their children's education using a correlational quantitative design method. 59 of the 100 parents whose children were enrolled in any kindergarten in Penang, who were the intended population for the questionnaires, responded. The results revealed a strong positive association between parental participation and parental expectations, parenting efficacy, communication barriers, and family wealth.

Marsh and Raimbekova (2021) observed the increasing diversity within the United States, which led them to understand and acknowledge varied perceptions of parents towards their roles and responsibilities through research. Utilizing mixed-method research, they explored the

perception of one group of international parents at a university laboratory school towards their roles and responsibilities to the education of their children. Findings revealed that this group of parents invested immensely in their children's education. Furthermore, supporting the teacher, reinforcing the curriculum, and helping their children understand that school practices can differ from those that occur in the home are the things they perceive to be their responsibilities as parents. It was further revealed that the parents looked forward to having more engagement with the teachers and staff in order to build stronger relationships. In fact, they are willing to participate in activities in school but unaware of how and what to do.

Moreover, there are differences in children's academic achievement between parental involvement profiles, according to Lara and Saracosti's (2019) analysis of the associations between parental involvement in school and children's academic achievement, which revealed that children with highly involved parents have higher academic achievement.

Ismail (2018) explored parents' role in improving children's character in terms of discipline in school using a mixed method of research where both questionnaires and interview guides were used to gather data. It was revealed that the most common problem is the dynamics of discipline in school. It was further found that discipline, self-esteem, cognitive development, social interaction skills, and academic performance can be improved through parents imposing discipline on their children. The study concluded that interventions should be designed to harmonize parental and teacher assessment to foster child discipline character education.

According to Alexander, Cox, Behnke, and Larzelere (2017), Latino youth's academic achievement was significantly impacted by their parents' high levels of commitment to their children's education. Due to their work schedules and language challenges, parents' lack of involvement in their children's education was most frequently justified.

Kasowe (2017) investigated the impact that parents play in cultivating their children to do better in school in Zimbabwe's Bindura elementary schools, employing quantitative research. According to the study, there are various obstacles to effective parental involvement in school events, including parents' educational attainment. The study suggests that school administrators should always consult parents before making choices that call for their participation.

Caño et al. (2016) assessed the influences of parental involvement using Eipsten's framework. It further sought the effects of parent's socioeconomic status and educational attainment on parental involvement. It was revealed through a naturalistic paradigm along with varied instruments that socioeconomic status and educational attainment of parents do not have any bearing on the type of parental development. It was revealed further that parenting type has a moderately substantial relationship to the academic performance of the children which leads to a conclusion that that parental involvement has a positive impact on pupils' academic performance.

Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, and Al-Maamari (2016) found in their study that parental involvement is crucial for students' educational progress. According to research, parental involvement not only improved students' social, emotional, psychological, and interactional skills but also their learning outcomes. According to a study by Thornton (2015), students who have parents who are actively interested in their children's academic pursuits perform better academically than students whose parents are not as actively involved.

The significance of linguistic and cultural impacts on parents' involvement in helping their children with their academics has been highlighted in a number of research. Furthermore, parents'

significant input made it abundantly evident that the difficulty of speaking in English prevented them from becoming more involved in their children's education (Jeynes, 2011; Naidoo, 2015; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010).

In the study of Phillipson and Phillipson (2007), one of their study's hypotheses was that parents' degree of involvement at home and school would predict the academic success of the children. Employing a quantitative research method using a questionnaire, findings revealed that parents' involvement was one of the predictors of language achievement in school.

According to Lee and Bowen (2006), parents with a two-year degree or higher in college are significantly more likely to attend school-sponsored events and meetings, discuss academic matters with their kids more frequently, and anticipate their children will perform better academically. In contrast, parents with poor educational levels may be less involved because they lack the confidence to speak with school personnel.

These readings have provided sufficient foundation on how essential parental involvement is not only in the scholastic quest of the children but also in their entirety as human persons. Moreover, these reviewed literature led to the presumption that parent-informants of this study are also confronted with challenges in playing their roles in the development of their children. Hence, giving this subject matter an important consideration through research is deemed necessary.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research design**

This research utilized a qualitative method of research for it involved collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, and experiences of the informants pertaining to parental involvement and its contributing factors, precisely the interpretative phenomenological method of investigation wherein it has an idiographic focus that instead of producing generalization findings, it aims to offer insights into how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a given situation. Phenomenological study is suited to this research for it aims to study people's understanding, beliefs, and interpretation of the informant's role, involvement, and challenges. More importantly, it is centered on the individual processes of perception and awareness (Turner, 2017).

#### **3.2. Research setting and sampling**

The locale of the study is in one of six (6) Puroks of Barangay 8, Tuburan, Cebu. For research ethical considerations, informants were voluntarily asked to participate in this study. Throughout the interview, the researchers kept the best interest of the informants and treated their responses with utmost confidentiality.

This paper utilized an interview guide to collect the necessary non-numerical data from the eight (8) informants who were selected purposively and conveniently according to three criteria which are: 1. Family with low income; 2. High School undergraduate Parents; 3. Family with more than two (2) children. Purposive and convenient sampling were used to clearly select the informants based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The number of eight (8) respondents would suffice in a qualitative phenomenological study since the quality of the responses is more important than the quantity of informants. Ellis (2016) stated that a number of six (6) to 20 individuals is sufficient. Qualitative research methods frequently use a smaller sample size. This is due to the fact that qualitative research methods are frequently focused on meaning (and

heterogeneities in meaning), which are frequently oriented on the how and why of a particular issue, process, scenario, subculture, scene, or collection of social interactions (Charmaz, 1990).

### **3.3. Data collection and analysis**

The researchers performed an in-depth interview to create first-person accounts of a range of human experiences (Kvale, 1996). The researchers prepared semi-structured interview guide questions to obtain data required for investigating parents' roles, involvement, and challenges among selected informants using a systematic collection and analysis of information and insights. The interview guide underwent a review and validation from a qualitative expert before the actual conduct of the interview (Wa-Mbaleka, 2019). Informed consent forms were signed by the informants before the actual conduct of the interview. Hence, utterances were recorded and transcribed with the informants' consent.

The informants' responses were transcribed and coded to come up with the themes. This study adopted the Six-Phase Approach to the Thematic Analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006), which are: 1. Familiarization; 2. Coding; 3. Generating themes; 4. Reviewing themes; 5. Defining and naming themes; 6. Write up.

## **4. Result and discussion**

### **4.1. Result**

After a tedious and rigorous process of transcribing and coding data from the interview responses of the informants, three (3) key themes were elicited. These themes are important inputs that would help explore the parental role and involvement of the informants in their children's basic education. The five themes that were elicited are Parent's role as Replica, Guide, and Providers; Limited involvement due to educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood; and Parents' involvement as an immense factor in children's success.

#### **Parent's role as Replica, Guide, and Provider**

Informants have acknowledged that one of their major roles as parents to their children is to serve as a replica of the real value of education. They further elaborated that their status quo is the consequence of their way of valuing education during their time as children, which they consider as the best example to their children. According to them, they would keep reminding their children of their unfortunate and uncomfortable situation as an outcome of devaluing education, which is not worthy of emulation. Moreover, the situation the informants have become their drive to send their children to school, for they now believe that education can stop the cycle of poverty.

On the other hand, informants do not only consider themselves as a replica of the real value of education, but also as guide and provider of their children's education. In fact, the informants consider it as their primary obligation and responsibility as parents.

Informant's Response in English Translation:

*"My priority is to send them to school so they do not have the same life as me, no education, and suffering from poverty. I always tell them that I am your best example of no education who is now suffering badly from poverty. Thrive hard for education for your own benefit."*

#### **Limited involvement due to educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood**

The awareness of the informants in their roles as parents in their children's education as revealed above, does not guarantee full and quality involvement, especially in their children's

school works. Based on the informants' responses, educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood came out to be the factors limiting their involvement in their children's school work.

*Educational attainment* limits their involvement, especially in helping their children in doing their school assignments. They have a hard time understanding the schoolwork of their children especially as their children move to higher grade levels, making the schoolwork more complex to them as parents with less to no education. In fact, they even ask help from their neighbors who are already in higher grade levels for the school works of their children.

Informant's Response English Translation:

*I can help my kids with their assignments if I can, But I can't understand the school work, I certainly can't help them. There are assignments/schoolwork that I do not really understand. I only completed grade 5, sir.*

Poverty is another factor that limits the informants' involvement in their children's education. According to the informants, poverty has confronted them a lot in sustaining their daily needs, especially on their children's needs in going to school, as they need to feed their children before going to school and give them an allowance for the expenses, they may incur in school such as meals and fare.

Informant's Response in English Translation:

*"Poverty affects children's education; if no money is available to spend, my children hardly go to school."*

*"Poverty affects children's education especially because of the expenses incurred in school."*

*"Poverty certainly hinders our involvement in our children. Since we are only fisherfolks."*

The informants' livelihood or their source of living is another factor they consider that affects their involvement in their children's education. According to them, they are frequently attending to their source of living more than being involved in their children's assignments in school. Moreover, they are attending more of their livelihood for it is the only way they can sustain their daily needs. Not attending on their livelihood would be tantamount to the absence of their children in school for they have nothing to spend for food and other expenses for their daily needs.

Informant's Responses in English Translation:

*"There are oftentimes I cannot attend to the needs of my children, especially if my husband and I will go fishing."*

*"Livelihood is also a factor since I have small livestock and poultry, which makes me busy and no time to attend to the needs of my children. In fact, there were times that I missed to attend them."*

*"My livelihood really affects my time with my children and vice versa."*

### **Parents' involvement is as immense factor in children's success**

The informants firmly acknowledged that their involvement in their children's education is an immense indicator of their children's success. According to them, children will a hard time achieving their dreams without a parent that will guide them along the way. Furthermore, they added that a child with the guidance of parents would have a huge difference compared to those who do not have.

#### Informant's Responses in English Translation:

*"Parents are really important, Sir, because our children do not know where to go without our guidance; parents are the children's foundation and source of their strength to pursue their education."*

#### **4.2. Discussion**

##### **Parent's role as Replica, Guide, and Provider**

Numerous researches have revealed the positive and negative impacts of parent's educational attainment that parents with a high level of education will have a positive impact on children's scholastic achievement, whereas, parents with low levels of education have an adverse impact (Garg, Kauppi, Lewko, & Urjnik, 2002; Garg, Melanson, & Levin, 2007; Sánchez, Reyes, & Singh, 2006). However, as mentioned above, these research results have not hampered the informants' determination to continually play their role as parents as they consider their educational attainment as a replica of devaluing education, which gave them extra motivation to provide their children with education to end the cycle of poverty.

Furthermore, considering themselves as guide and provider implies that they are fully aware of their roles, responsibilities, and obligations as parents to the educational needs of their children which leads them to their active involvement. This is reflected in Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007) when they state that some parents' active involvement in their children's education is prompted by their belief that it is a necessary aspect of raising them to be responsible adults.

Hence, parents as Replica, Guide, and Provider are roles the informants are very much aware of. Furthermore, the awareness of the parents in their roles in providing education to their children is not hindered by the education they have attained but is strengthened by it since they had real-time experiences on difficulties on how not to be attended properly by their parents during their childhood resulting to what they are today. This full awareness of parents on their roles towards their children's success should be sustained for them to continually embody their crucial roles.

##### **Limited involvement due to educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood**

Parents' *educational attainment* is a factor that limits their involvement in the scholastic quest of their children. This is also reflected in the study of Glick, Randrianarisoa, and Sahn (2011), who found out that children whose mothers have at least 10 years of education perform better in school than children whose mothers have little to no education. Lee and Bowen (2006) added that parents with poor educational levels may be less involved because they lack confidence.

Parents' *economic capabilities* affect their involvement in their education. However, as revealed in the previous section, it has compelled and strengthened the informant's desire to provide the necessary education for their children. This finding is reflected in the study of the impact of community poverty on parental involvement, Gordon and Cui (2014) also noted that this problem is typically experienced by poor parents or residents of poor communities who must work multiple jobs throughout the day and night in order to meet the needs of their children. According to Altschul (2011), some parents' attempts to be involved in their children's education are hampered by social and economic reasons. Likewise, parents from better socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be more actively involved than parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Domina, 2005).

On the other hand, informants' positive attitude towards educating their children implies that they, as parents, have given the support they can give, which is a positive indicator of children scholastic journey that will motivate the children to pursue education. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and obstacles to acquiring an education can be caused by parents' negative attitudes regarding education and schooling and their lack of support for their kids' homework. The benefits of parents' good attitudes toward their children can often be seen in increased school performance, children's interest in learning, and higher grades on reading and writing assignments (Samal, 2012, as cited in Popa, 2022).

The informants' *livelihood* is another factor that affects their involvement in their children's education. This is confirmed in the study of LaRocque et al. (2011) and Sheng (2012); according to them, some parents' capacity to actively participate in their children's education is hampered by their hectic schedules and challenging personal circumstances.

Hence, educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood are the factors that limit and affect the informant's involvement in their children. However, these factors do not change their attitude towards the importance of education for their children. This is supported by Caño et al. (2016) study, which revealed that socioeconomic status and educational attainment of parents do not have any bearing on the type of parental development. This further implies that the positive attitude and desire of parents to be involved in their children's success is not influenced but rather challenged by their current situations. In addition, this research finding heeds urgent action like further research and advocacy programs to address these challenges that have confronted the parents in performing their crucial roles.

### **Parents' involvement is an immense factor in children's success**

The responses from the informants imply that they are fully aware of how important their involvement is towards the success of their children, not only in their studies but also in their lives as a whole. This further implies that the parents have a positive attitude towards the value of parents' involvement. This is supported by the study of Rao (1991) quoted in Popa (2022) when it is revealed that every child benefits immensely from a parent's involvement, as school and home are best when they work together to further a student's education and socialization. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) likewise stated that parents must feel that being involved in their children's education is crucial to their duty as parents and will enable them to significantly impact their achievement.

Hence, it implies that informants are aware and have a positive attitude toward the value of parental involvement in the success of the children.

### **5. Conclusions & recommendations**

This study aims to explore parents' role, involvement, and challenges through a phenomenological process of investigation. Three major themes were elicited from the responses of the informants: Parent's role as Replica, Guide, and Provider; Limited involvement due to educational attainment, poverty, and livelihood; Parents' involvement as an immense factor to children's success. Findings revealed that informants are well aware of their respective roles and involvement in the education and success of their children, leading them to have a positive attitude toward the value of education for their children. Moreover, informants are confronted by their educational attainment, economic conditions, and livelihood in performing their roles. These findings heed for future research, policies, or even community extensions to address these challenges confronting the crucial roles of parents not to jeopardize the future of the children who are the next generation of workforce in any country. In addition, these findings would be probably a strong basis in conducting cause-oriented events that would provide opportunities that could

alleviate the situation of parents who are economically and educationally challenged. Moreover, the findings of this study are of immense help in realizing the United Nations' sustainable development goals, which ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by conceptualizing cause-oriented programs that will mitigate these challenges that confront parents. Hence, it is recommended that extension or cause-oriented programs be conceptualized to help parents in performing their respective crucial roles.

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