

Parents Involvement at University Level Education: Students Perception in Under Developing Country

Mehak Arshad

Erum Shahzadi

Research Scholar, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

Dr. Azhar Mahmood, Associate Professor

Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

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Abstract

The study aimed to explore the students perception about need of parents involvement at University level. Major objective of the study was to find out students views about the importance of parents' involvement at university level and to find out the influence of parents in subject selection for the study. The population of the study composed of all students of Master level studying at National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. 40 male and 40 female students were selected as well as 20 students out of 80 were randomly selected for interview. Data were analyzed according to objectives of the study. After completing data collection, quantitative data were analysed by using SPSS 16.0 for statistical analysis. On the other hand qualitative data were analyzed by coding, describing, classifying and identifying themes and interpretation was done by providing meaning through explanations. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the students' were in the favour of parents' involvement at university level but not much influence of parents' in subject selection of students. The present study was an attempt to catch the attention of educational institutions towards the importance of parent's involvement at university level.

Keywords: Students' perception, Parents' Involvement, Subject Selection, University Level

Introduction

The phenomenon of parental involvement, its intensity at different stages of their child academic career and its effects on child educational success has been the subject of various researches, discussions and studies for many years. Education is very much important for a society to be a developed and successful one. A well organized and civilized society is

result of educated people. Family has an enormous accountability to socialize their children for making them an educated, groomed and productive member of society. The more the parents engage in the procedure of imparting education, the more the child might excel in academic career and to become the responsible member of society. Parents today see themselves accountable for guiding and counselling their children to make better choices of subjects for their career by keeping in mind their interest and market future demands. Parents also acknowledge that they may feature their own self-worth to the accomplishment that their child experience (Hunt, 2008). Epstein (1995) sets the stage by defining parent involvement as families and communities who take an active role in creating a caring educational environment by imparting education to their children's. She additionally assert that those parents involved with their children's education are those who constantly communicate with the teachers, regularly collaborate with the educational community demonstrate good parenting skills volunteer their time to educational institutes and take active role in decision making.

Redding (1992) defines parental involvement as, 'parent engagement in learning activities, mostly although not exclusively in the home. Involvement is not restricted to actual learning tasks, it includes the idea of the 'curriculum of the home' – 'patterns of habit and attitude development that set up a child for academic learning which will sustain the child through the years of education' (Redding, 1992 as cited in Coleman, 1998, p.2). Parental involvement is the degree to which parents are interested in their child learning, knowledgeable about the interest of child, and enthusiastic to take an dynamic role in the day-to-day activities of their children at educational institutes and at home about their studies (Wong, 2008). According to Burke (2010) parental involvement involves: reading together with children's, asking the children about their routine at university, there interest and performance in each subject of study, problems and issues they are facing regarding their studies and institution, assisting with projects and assignments, regular communication with their teachers for feedback on the progress and being enthusiastically involved in academic activities through attending seminars, conferences, functions and meetings at their institute'. The problem under examination was to explore students' views about the need of parents' involvement at university level. The major objectives of the study were to find out students views about the importance of parents' involvement at university level and the influence of parents in subject selection for the study

Review Literature

Parental involvement in their children's learning improves a learner's morals, attitude and academic achievement across all subject areas and promotes improved behaviour and social adjustment in different cultures and societies. In all these ways family involvement in educational setup helps learner to grow up to be a productive and responsible members of the society. Henderson and Berla (1994) suggested that the most particular predictor of student's achievement is not economic or social status but the extent to which that student's family is able to get involved, take interest, create a home environment that encourages learning among learners and turn into involved in their child's learning at learning institution and community. Parent play an integral role in supporting their child's learning, parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at university. Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child in different institutions. A growing body of facts suggests that family engagement matters for student's engagement and development which will result in a well groomed strong and productive personality (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). Research shows that family engagement improves institutes readiness, confidence of learner and student's accomplishment and social skills. Research demonstrates that family engagement is a self-motivated, interactive process that provides a path to student success. In particular we can say that family engagement is:

- Continuous all the way through a child's life from school to university level and even after that
- A communal responsibility among families, community, organizations, schools, colleges and universities
- Occurring across the numerous settings and contexts in which children grow and learn

Family engagement does not happen in emptiness, it takes the dedicated actions of both families and educational institutes working together through parent - teacher conferences as well as other forms of engagement to support student success and solve issues. Through this shared accountability educational institutes reach out to and connect families in meaningful ways and in the same way families do their part to actively carry their children's learning and growth in collaboration (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). Unfortunately there are many parents and teachers find meetings and conferences to be stressful because parents worry that they will hear wrong reports about their children progress and on the other hand teachers worry that they may not be able to help parents understand what is going on with their child in class. Both parents and teachers fear that they will be responsible for any problems that exist. It can be easily seen that

miscommunication and misunderstandings can happen between parents and teachers (<http://www.nasponline.org>). Research has indicated that there are positive academic outcomes stemming from parent involvement ranging from benefits in early childhood to adolescence and beyond. Specifically those parents who hold high expectations from their children's, take interest, communicate their prospect clearly and encourage their adolescents to work hard in order to attain success. Beyond educational achievement, parental engagement is allied with various indicators of student's development which includes: better social skills, improved behaviour, confidence, increased social capital, a great sense of personal competence, increased trust level, sense of responsibility and efficacy for learning and a stronger belief in the importance of education (Drake, 2000).

Higher study institutions not only provide new experiences for learners to explore, but it also provides students exposure to new ways of being critical, thinking and understanding the world and adjusting in different situations. Classroom and co curricular experiences provided at universities expose students to varied perspectives and issues have been shown to influence student's social and cultural attentiveness (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002). However, research has yet to address parents' role in promoting student's experiences in personal and socio-political understanding. Parental involvement is not necessarily unhealthy or unacceptable. There are many benefits in including parents and families in the university experience. Having parents feel like rightful partners in their children's education can be a great advantage to both the student and the institution. Training parents on satisfactory and appropriate ways to be involved should be encouraged. In fact, years ago many higher education professionals were looking for ways to get more parents involved in the education of their children. Parental involvement in their children's education tends to dwindle as these children leave the walls of college and move to university. For some of these parents, it may be the thinking that the transition has been completed so their deep involvement is no longer necessary but this is not the case, their involvement is necessary at each and every phase of their child life (Drake, 2000). Switch into higher educational institute from school and college presents students with a variety of sudden novel challenges that extent beyond academic demands, greater autonomy and lower level of academic structure that is central to life in a higher education environment (Crede & Niehorster, 2011). Mattanah, Lopez, and Govern (2011) reported an analysis of 156 studies conducted between 1987 to 2009 that explore the relationship between parental attachment and developmental advances that students experienced during their college years. The pursuit of a higher studies degree marks the foundation of a critical developmental period as students experience life away from home and

increased legal and social freedoms along with diminished parental supervision. These developmental pressures of situation invite's a diversity of demands, distractions and possibilities which may test students capacities for self-reflection, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, building relationships and decision making. This may also cause stress among students, however if parental relationships remain a main concern student would go on to seek them out in situations of stress and would view them as still available as source of guidance and support whenever needed in a way that does not threaten but support them (Kenny, 1987, pp. 18 -19, as cited in Mattanah et al., 2011, p. 568).

Different researches show that most of the college students are not overly concerned by the level of involvement they have with their parents in their studies at higher level. According to the data released by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California most college students observe that their parent's involvement is just right. In addition many of the conversations that students have with their parents are linked to topics about which parents should possibly have some input, such as finances, health and well-being. The topics of conversation often change a student's progress through college. Parents of adult students are asked most frequently questioned about career goals and planning (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

Methodology

Study was descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is measured as a suitable method keeping in sight the nature of the problem and demand of the study. The main purpose of the descriptive study is to present to the researcher a profile or to explain associated aspects of the phenomena of interest from an individual, organization, industry or any other perspective (Sekaran, 2003). In the present study a questionnaire was developed to find out the opinions of students as well as interview was conducted to know the views of students. All the Master level students of NUML Islamabad comprised the population of the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. 40 male and 40 female students were selected as well as 20 students out of 80 were randomly selected for interview. Data were analyzed according to objectives of the study. After completing data collection quantitative data were analysed by using SPSS 16.0 for statistical analysis by applying percentage analysis. On the other hand qualitative data was analyzed by coding, describing, classifying and identifying themes and interpretation was done by providing meaning through explanations.

Quantitative Analysis of Data

Table No. 1: Gender – wise distribution of Students

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	50%
Female	40	50%
Total	80	100%

Table No. 1 shows the gender of the respondent's of the study. 50% (n=40) respondents were male whereas 50% (n=40) were female.

Table No. 2: Course – wise distribution of Students

	Frequency	Percentage
ELT	08	10%
Engineering	04	5%
Mass.Com	12	15%
CS	04	5%
BS English	12	15%
Economics	10	12.5%
MBA	12	15%
BBA	04	5%
Education	06	7.5%
Total	80	100%

Table No. 2 shows the courses of the respondent's of the study. 10% (n=08) were students of ELT course whereas 5% (n=04) were students of Engineering, 15% (n=12) were students of Mass. Communication whereas 5% (n=04) were students of CS. 15% (n=12) were students of BS English. 12.5% (n=10) were students of Economics whereas 15% (n=12) were students of MBA. 5% (n=04) were students of BBA whereas 7.5% (n=06) were students of Education.

Table No. 3: Age – wise distribution of Students

	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 22	22	27.5%
23 – 25	50	62.5%
26 – 28	08	10%
Total	80	100%

Table No.3 presents three age groups and the percentage of the respondents. 27.5% (n=22) students fall into age limit of 20 – 22, 62.5%

(n=50) students fall into age limit of 23 – 25 whereas 10% (n=20) fall into age limit of 26 – 28.

Table No. 4: Do you think your parents' involvement in university is essential?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	82.5%
Neutral	04	5%
No	10	12.5%
Total	80	100%

Table No. 4 describes the opinion of students about the importance of parent's involvement at university level. 82.5% (n=66) students agreed that parent's involvement is essential at university level, 5% (n=04) student's remained neutral whereas 12.5% (n=10) students were of the opinion that parents involvement at university level not essential.

Table No. 5: If your parents come to university then what kind of issues you want them to discuss with your teachers?

	Frequency	Percentage
Involve Parents	20	25%
No Issues	38	47.5%
Don't Involve parents	22	27.5%
Total	80	100%

Table No 5. describes the opinion of students about the involvement of parents to discuss issues university level. 25% (n=20) students respondent that they will involve parents to solve issues they are facing at university level, whereas 47.5% (n=38) respondent that they don't have any issues and 27.5% (n=22) respondent that they will not involve their parents to come and discuss their issues at university level.

Table No. 6: In your opinion your parents should visit university for some specific occasion to get information about your performance at university.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	58	72.5%
Neutral	06	7.5%
No	16	20%
Total	80	100%

Table No 6 describes the opinion of students about the importance of parent's visit at university on occasions. 72.5% (n=58) students agreed that parents should visit university on different occasions, 7.5% (n=06) student's

remained neutral whereas 20% (n=16) students were of the opinion that parents involvement should not visit university.

Table No. 7: Is there any role of parents for study in selecting your subject?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	27.5%
No	58	72.5%
Total	80	100%

Table No 7 describes the opinion of students about the role of parent's for study in subject selection. 27.5% (n=22) students agreed that there is role of parent's in their subject selection whereas 72.5% (n=58) student's said that there is no role of parents in their subject selection.

Table No. 8: How often do you have conversation with your parents about your activities at university?

	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	30	37.5%
Weekly	06	7.5%
Sometimes	40	50%
Never	04	5%
Total	80	100%

Table No 8 describes the opinion of students about their conversation with parents about their university activities. 37.5% (n=30) students respondent that they discuss daily about their university activities with their parents whereas 7.5% (n=06) student's said that they weekly have conversation with their parents about university. 50% (n=40) respondents sometimes have conversation with their parents about university whereas 5% (n=04) students never discuss anything about their university with parents.

Theme 1: Importance of Parents' Involvement. One of the student said that parent's involvement is not essential at university level because 'we are mature enough to take our decisions'. Many students are on the view that parent's involvement is very much essential at this level to keep check and balance on their children's. One of the respondent said that 'our adults are not much mature'. A student of IR responded to this question that 'parent spend their money on us and we are answerable to them'. A female respondent said that 'involvement of especially female student's parents is needed'. An MBA student's view point was that 'now day's parents gave freedom to university students which are totally wrong' so there involvement is very much essential. Another student responded that 'students go to the wrong side due extra freedom'. Overall responses show that most of the students are in favour of parent's involvement at university level.

Theme 2: Involvement of Parents in University Issues of Students. A student responded that ‘at university level we should solve our issues at our own’, another students responded in the same way that ‘I will solve my issues without involving my parents’. Student of BS English responded that behaviour of female teachers is not good and he wants his parents to come and discuss this issue. Few students said that they are facing issues from administration. A female student said that ‘thinking of fellow students and teacher is negative’. Many of the students responded that they don’t have any type of serious issue to discuss with their parents.

Theme 3: Parents’ visit to university is essential or not. Majority off the students were of the opinion that parents should visit university on different occasions to check the progress of their child and it will bridge the gap between teachers and parents. One of the respondent said that university should conduct such functions where parents and teachers with diverse backgrounds interact with each other and can understand the environment of university which will build parents trust among their students and university. Some of the students were of the view that parents should not visit university because they feel uncomfortable in the presence of their parents at university.

Theme 4: Parents role in subject selection. Many of the students’ responded that there is no role of their parents in their subject selection and they choose what looks better for them independently. One of the student said that his parents are not that much educated to differentiate between subjects so he choose independently. Some students were of the opinion that their parents choose their subject of study for them and they are satisfied with this selection. Overall results show that majority of the student’s subject selection were not influenced by their parents and their parents gave them free choice.

Theme 5: Conversation with parents about university. Students responded differently, many students have conversation with their parents about their university on daily basis whereas a few students even don’t share anything. Majority of the students said that sometimes they discuss their activities, results and university life with their parents if there is any important thing to share such as result.

Conclusion

Keeping the view of students, it is concluded that students were strongly in favour of the importance of parents’ involvement at university level. Most of the students were not facing such type of serious issues in which they involve their parents. Majority of students were positive about their parents visit to their universities. Parents don’t have much influence on the subject selection of majority of students. Majority of students have conversation with their parents about their university activities. When we

talk about parents involvement in their children’s academic area, we refer towards the degree to which parents play dynamic role in daily activities of their children by asking about their day at university, their interest and performance in different subjects, assisting them with their assignments and projects, regular communicating with teachers, being involved in academic activities through attending functions, conferences and meetings at educational institutes. Parent’s involvement at university level is very essential, adult learners also need guidance and counselling from their parents even at this level. When a learner suddenly moves from the college or school to university, there is a huge change regarding learning styles, environment, freedom, teachers and subjects. Most of the students feel uncomfortable with this sudden change, some become independent in their choices and decisions and some choose wrong activities. There must be interaction between parents, teachers and students to avoid such issues. The present study was of survey type and its results revealed that university level students feel that there is a need of parents’ involvement at university to remain up to date about their progress. Parents should visit university and university should arrange such events where parents and teachers interact with each other. It is recommended that university should arrange such occasions such as result day where parents can visit university, know about their children performance and meet with teachers. Parents’ role is very much important event at university level so special attention should be given towards parent- teacher’s meetings and interactions.

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