

The Importance of Parental Involvement in Home-Based Learning to Improve the Academic Achievements of Kindergarten Children

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the importance of parental involvement in children's home-based learning to improve the academic achievements of kindergarten children. The research subjects were 50 respondents who were parents at a government kindergarten in a small district of Kudat, Sabah. The sample of this study was in a form of quantitative using a survey method. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The data was analysed using SPSS Statistics version 2.0. The research findings discovered that the total overall mean for the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning, the level of learning environment provided by parents and parental support for children's excellence was at a high level. This study revealed that parental involvement in children's home-based learning was at a high level and good. In summary, it can be concluded that parents still emphasize their responsibilities to be involved with their children's learning while at home for the excellence of their children in kindergarten.

Keywords: parental involvement, the importance of parental involvement, early childhood education, the learning environment provided by parents, children's excellence, parental involvement with children's home-based learning

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INTRODUCTION

Family is the main institution in the life of a society. Families are also able to influence the growth of harmony in a family. Similarly, the success achieved by a person all starts from a family which complements each other and has an attitude of openness in accepting views of others with the aim to improve one's weaknesses. In family institutions, parents are the closest individuals to their children and they shape their children's personal development starting from birth to adulthood (Rohner, Ronald & Veneziano, 2001).

According to Hidayatul (2014), the constraints faced by parents to be involved with students' learning have caused a rapid increase of students' problems and developed unhealthy symptoms such as disciplinary problems, skipping schools and others.

Problem Statement:

Previous studies showed that problems in students' academic achievements are influenced by several factors including factors from parent (Chong, Juliana, Rosmidah, Samsudin, Nurhana, Subhi and Nor Ba'yah, 2012).

All parents definitely want their children to achieve excellent academic achievements. Yet this goal will be difficult without the involvement of parents themselves in their children's learning. According to Lareau (2000), time constraints are a major factor that causes parents to be less sensitive to their roles in their children's education and leave their children to learn without monitoring.

In addition, the attitudes of some parents today who have their own careers and are too busy with work make them forget their responsibilities to be involved in their children's home-based learning. Parents who give less attention will give an impact on the children's academic performances. When parents strengthen what is learnt at schools, children will achieve better grades, higher attendance rate, complete homework, show positive behaviours, complete school successfully and have better opportunities to further their studies at a higher level (Epstein, 2000; NA Wahab, R Mustapha & JA Talib, 2016).

Research Objective

This study outlines 3 research objectives:

- I. identify the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning,
- II. identify learning environment provided by parents at home,
- III. identify the level of parents' support towards children's excellence.

Literature review

The purpose of literature review is to study the work that others have done. Literature materials can be obtained in various ways through printed materials such as journals, books and newspapers. Additionally, past studies can also be obtained through electronic media like internet websites. This literature review is important for researchers to get some ideas for the study conducted.

A theory is the views or opinions of others that aim to explain something related to the study. There are various theories related to the topic conducted to ensure its accuracy. A theory or a model is written by researchers. Every theory or model written by a researcher has different views and meanings. In the current study, theories related to parental involvement in children's home-based learning were used. Apart from that, different theories were also used to obtain the appropriateness and interconnectedness of the concept conducted on the importance of parental involvement with home-based learning to improve the academic achievements of kindergarten children. Among the theories and model used in this study were the Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory, the Epstein

Model and the Sure Start Model. The Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory (1917) is an explanation related to the influence of the environment on individuals' development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989), children's development is the result of interaction with the surrounding environment. As an example, parents need to spend time with their children while at home. Parents can conduct various activities to develop good interaction with their children. Indirectly, this can assist children's development in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual. Ecology system is divided into 5 parts: microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macro system and chronosystem. In the Epstein Model, parental involvement plays a role in the development of children's academic achievements. This is evident through the parental involvement model by Joyce Epstein (2002) who stated that there are a number of categories in the model. This involvement model was planned by the researchers as a guide to plan activities and encourage parental involvement in children's learning. The Sure Start Program Model assists parents to be involved with their children's development. Parents' involvement in this program is important because parents play important roles in their children's development. This program is implemented to help children who are less affordable. This program provides various activities to children and parents to encourage children's social skills with other communities (Ismail, Abdul and Mohamad, 2019).

In the current study, the researchers discussed about past studies conducted and related to the importance of parental involvement with home-based learning to develop children's academic achievements in kindergartens. According to Fauziah Hanim (2016) in her study entitled '*Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education at PERMATA Negara Children's Centre*', she discovered that parental involvement in early childhood education is a complimentary learning concept to help children improve their academic achievements and success. This is evident through the results of previous studies which revealed that children's academic level is influenced by the involvement of their own parents. The attention and encouragement provided by the parents to the children will have a positive effect on the children's own self and indirectly will influence children's academic achievements. According to Ruzinah (2016), children experience high inner confidence as a result of positive relationship with their mothers knowing the fact that their mothers will always be with them when the needs arise.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A quantitative method was employed in this study. This method refers to a study that uses information or data entirely quantitative.

3.2 Research Sample

This study involved 50 parents from Kemas Kindergarten, Kampung Barambangan Kudat, Sabah. This study used systematic random sampling referring to a sampling process in which members of the population will be given consecutive numbers and the sample will be selected by taking population members with a certain additional interval number. This is easy to conduct if the list of population is obtained.

3.3 Research Instrument

The instrument used to collect the data in this study was a questionnaire. In this study, the researchers chose the questionnaire method that aimed to identify the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning. Questionnaires are a better method than other instruments because according to Gillham (2000), there are several reasons why questionnaires are the choice of most researchers: the cost of developing a questionnaire is cheap and the time allocated is short. Researchers can obtain data or information from a larger number of respondents and faster too. The items in the questionnaire were developed by the researchers to obtain information related to the study; furthermore, the content of the items was obtained through various reading materials such as newspapers, journals, articles, reference books and interviews with teachers in kindergartens.

This questionnaire consisted of the first two parts: Part A on the respondents' demographic information and part B on the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning. Next,

after the questionnaire was answered, the reliability of the information obtained was analysed through Reliability Analysis Scale Alpha using computer statistical Package science social (SPSS) software.

Data collection procedure

The researchers conducted a number of steps to ease the research process:

- a. obtained a confirmation form as a student of Sultan Idris Education University at the faculty office,
- b. prepared working papers, studied instruments and conducted discussions with supervisors and guidance teachers,
- c. obtain permissions from the management and administration of the kindergartens involved.

Data Analysis Method

The researchers used the data analysis method. This method is used to obtain accurate and useful information. After the questionnaires were collected, the researchers used the Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) software with descriptive statistical methods to obtain the mean, percentage, frequency and standard deviation. According to Chua (2016) in a study by Nor Najihah Najib (2018), the Cronbach method is an internal consistency method which involves calculation of the correlation value between the scope of each item in the test and the total score for all in the test.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study outlined three research objectives:

- I. Identify the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning.

Table 1 The parental involvement in children's home-based learning

Scale Item	Strongly Disagree (n)	Percentage (%)	Disagree (n)	Percentage (%)	Average (n)	Percentage (%)	Agree (n)	Percentage (%)	Strongly Agree (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean
1) I always talk about my child's learning at school.	1	2.0%	1	2.0%	8	16.0%	18	36.0%	22	44.0%	4.1800
2) I always listen to my child's stories about events	1	2.0%	3	6.0%	6	12.0%	15	30.0%	25	50.0%	4.2000

which happen in school.												
3) I always discuss with my child about his/her learning development.	1	2.0%	3	6.0%	9	18.0%	13	26.0%	24	48.0%	4.1200	
4) I care about my child's movements.	1	2.0%	3	6.0%	5	10.0%	17	34.0%	24	48.0%	4.2000	
5) I always exchange opinions with my child.	1	2.0%	4	8.0%	9	18.0%	17	34.0%	19	38.0%	3.9800	
6) I always ask about my child's homework.	1	2.0%	3	6.0%	5	10.0%	14	28.0%	27	54.0%	4.2600	
7) I always ask about my son's activities planning.	1	2.0%	6	12.0%	4	8.0%	18	36.0%	21	42.0%	4.0400	
Average	7	2%	23	6.6%	46	13.14%	112	32%	162	46.29%	4.14	

Table 1 shows the data analysis of items in Section B on the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning. From Table 9, the overall mean is 4.14 which indicate a high level.

II. Identify the home-based learning environment provided by parents.

Based on Table 2, the data on the home-based learning environment provided by parents is presented. From Table 2, the overall mean is 4.28 which indicate a high level.

III. Identify the level of support towards children's excellence

Based on Table 3, the data was obtained from the questionnaire of Part B. The data analysis in this table shows the level of parental support for children's excellence. Table 3 indicates the overall mean of 4.15 which is at a high level.

Table 2
Home-based Learning Environment provided by parents

Scale	Strongly Disagree (n)	Percentage (%)	Disagree (n)	Percentage (%)	Average (n)	Percentage (%)	Agree (n)	Percentage (%)	Strongly Agree (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean
1) I provide space for my child to study at home.	1	2.0 %	0	0.0 %	8	16.0 %	17	34.0 %	24	48.0 %	4.26
2) I make sure my child has a	1	2.0 %	0	0.0%	11	22.0 %	15	30.0 %	23	46.0	4.18

learning schedule at home.												
3) I reduced noise from television while my child is studying.	1	2.0 %	0	0.0 %	7	14.0 %	13	26.0 %	29	58.0 %	4.38	
4) I make sure my child's place of study is clean.	1	2.0 %	0	0.0 %	8	16.0 %	14	28	27	54.0 %	4.32	
5) I provide physical facilities such as tables and chairs to make it easier for my child to learn.	1	2.0%	1	2.0 %	6	12.0 %	18	36.0 %	25	50.0%	4.32	
6) I provide learning materials such as story books, reference books, activity books and magazines for my child	1	2.0%	0	0.0%	7	14.0%	19	38.0%	22	44.0%	4.20	
7) I provide a set of stationery on the study table to make it easier for my child to complete homework	1	2.0%	1	2.0%	6	12.0%	14	28.0%	28	56.0%	4.34	
Average	7	2%	2	0.57%	53	15.14%	110	31.43%	178	50.86 %	4.28	

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

This study used 50 respondents among parents to children aged 5 to 6 years in a KEMAS kindergarten in the small district of Kudat with different family backgrounds and different levels of education. The researchers focused on the three research questions analysed namely:

- I. What is the level of parental involvement in children’s home-based learning?
- II. What is the level of home-based learning environment provided by parents?
- III. What is the level of parents’ support towards children’s excellence?

Based on the data analysis obtained in Chapter 4, the data is divided into 4 parts namely parents' background, the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning, the level of home-based learning environment provided by parents and the level of parental support for children's excellence.

All these aspects will be discussed more clearly and in detail in this section.

Parents’ background

Based on the result of data analysis in Chapter 4, this study only involved 50 respondents consisting of parents to children in one of the KEMAS kindergartens in Kudat represented by 12 males and 38 females in terms of gender. It can be seen that the involvement of female is more than male.

Research Question 1: What is the level of parental involvement in children’s home-based learning?

Based on the analysis of the findings obtained, the researchers discovered that the overall mean for the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning is 4.14. This shows that the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning is at a high level.

Referring to the items in the questionnaire, the researchers discovered that the highest mean was for Item 6 which is 4.26 reflecting on parents who always asked about their child's homework while at home. Items 2 and 4 have the same mean value of 4.20 in which Item 2 refers to parents who always listen to their children’s stories about events that

happen at school and parents care about their children's movements. Item 7 has the lowest mean with 4.04 referring to parents who always ask about the planning of their children's activities.

Research Question 2: What is the level of home-based learning environment provided by parents? In addition, from the study conducted, the researchers discovered that the overall mean for the level of home-based learning environment provided by parents is 4.28. This explains that the mean value is at a high level.

Referring to the items used to investigate the level of learning environment provided by parents, the researchers discovered that the highest mean value recorded was for Item 3 with 4.38 in which for the item, parents stated that they always reduce noise interference from television while their children were studying. This can be seen by parents who care about the environment that should exist while their children are studying at home. In the questionnaire, Items 4 and 5 have the same mean value of 4.32 where parents always provide their children's study place in a clean condition and provide physical facilities such as tables and chairs for their children's learning. The

lowest mean is Item 2 with 4.18 which parents ensure their children have a study schedule at home.

5.4 Research Question 3: What is the level of parents' support towards children's excellence? From the findings obtained, the researchers found that the overall mean for the level of parental support for children's excellence is 4.14. Based on this overall mean, it is evident that the level of support given by parents to the excellence of their children is at a high level.

From all the items in the questionnaire, the researchers discovered that the highest mean recorded was for Item 1 with 4.30. Based on Item 1, it is evident that parents support their children's excellence by always giving praise and encouragement to their children. For Item 2, the mean value is 4.28 which indicate a good level. This item is related to the encouragement and motivation that parents always give to their children to ensure that their children are always eager to learn. The lowest mean value is in Item 5 with 3.88 which refers to parents who provide additional classes for their children.

Table 3 Level of support towards children's excellence while at home

Scale	Strongly Disagree (n)	Percentage (%)	Disagree (n)	Percentage (%)	Average (n)	Percentage (%)	Agree (n)	Percentage (%)	Strongly Agree (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean
Item											
1) I always give praise and encouragement to my child	1	2.0%	1	2.0%	9	18.0%	10	20%	29	58.0%	4.3000
2) I always give encouragement / motivation to my child.	1	2.0%	2	4.0%	6	12.0%	14	28.0%	27	54.0%	4.2800
3) I always guide my child to do homework	1	2.0%	1	2.0%	9	18.0%	13	26.0%	26	52.0%	4.2400
4) I always follow my child's learning development	1	2.0%	2	4.0%	5	10.0%	17	34.0%	25	50.0%	4.2600
5) I always follow my child's learning	1	2.0%	5	10.0%	9	18.0%	15	30.0%	19	38.0%	3.8800

development 6) I always follow my child's learning development											
7) I provide extra classes for my child	0	0.0%	4	8.0%	10	20.0%	16	32.0%	20	40.0%	4.040 0
8) I attended activities organized by the school related to my child's excellence	0	0.0%	5	10.0%	9	18.0%	16	32.0%	20	40.0%	4.020 0
Average	5	1.43%	20	5.71%	57	16.29%	101	28.86%	166	47.43%	4.15

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of the study revealed that the overall mean value for the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning, the level of home-based learning environment provided by and the level of parental support for children's excellence is at a high level. The researchers discovered that parents of children in KEMAS kindergarten, Kudat, still care about their children's learning at home by constantly monitoring and providing learning necessities for their children. However, the researchers hope that certain parties should also monitor the involvement of parents in their children's home-based learning either in government or private kindergartens.

Overall, the advantage of this study is the extent of parental involvement in children's home-based learning which will affect children's academic achievements. This study can also be used by the local community as their guide to better understand the importance of parental involvement in children's home-based learning.

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