

Parental Involvement in Homework: A Review of Current Research

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ABSTRACT

This study explores four primary research questions based on the Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2001) meta-analysis with a contemporary emphasis exploring parental involvement with their children's homework today. This includes exploring which activities and strategies parents employ and how parental involvement with homework influences student outcomes. Preliminary findings indicate that parents involved in their students' homework expect to have a positive outcome. Results of this study partially support Walker's (Walker et al., 2005) theoretical model in terms of predicting levels of parental involvement, there is lack of model support in parental motivation from the available research. Further discussion is provided below.

INTRODUCTION

In the US today, parents tend to be very busy juggling work life and family life. This makes it harder for parents to be involved in their child's school life. Parental involvement refers to parents and family members use and investment of resources in assisting with their student-children's schooling. This can be done in or outside of school. While teachers are often the first point person in public education students are generally expected to complete their work at home under parental watch. Teachers spend time and resources to include parents in their child's work and their activities. With both parties doing their part, the outcomes can be great. Parents are encouraged to be involved as much as they can, because it has shown a consistent, positive outcome. Studies has shown that parental involvement can improve student outcomes and lower dropout and truancy rates. Overall, parental involvement research has been beneficial for the child's future.

METHODS

Not unlike the Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2001) study, key characteristics included for the analysis involved only studies that explored homework measures and parenting practices. One additional element of the present study was the purposive nature of including studies that included demographics information as to include more diversity and representation on the subject of parental involvement in homework.

Initially from 2001 to 2020, nearly 200 (n=191) empirical studies were collected. Studies that did not include purposes, design, homework involvement measures or demographics (unique to this study), they were not retained. From these requirements a total of (n=) 67 studies remained for in-depth analysis.

ORIGINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001

Why do parents become involved in children's homework?

What do parents do when they help with homework?

How does parental involvement influence student outcomes?

Which student outcomes are influenced by parental involvement in homework?

RESULTS

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Authors	Purpose	Primary Research Design, Sample Size, Characteristics, Minority Population	Homework Measures
Watershed, H., Rogalski, K., Viranen, P., Gustafson, B. E., Xunus, T., & Hammenstein, A. (2015)	Examined the association between parental involvement in their offspring's academic and index of internalized mental health symptoms.	Design: Cohort study, survey Participants: 9 th grade students	Students completed a comprehensive questionnaire that covered health, social and socioeconomic conditions, and school/work conditions.
Wilde, S. (2014)	Synthesize the results of meta-analyses that examined the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement and identify any generalizable findings across the meta-analyses regarding the relationship between these two constructs.	Design: Meta-Analysis Participants: Reviewed nine existing studies, (teachers, administrators, policy makers, parents and students)	Focused on the students' academic outcomes and impact of parental involvement.
Xu, M., Benson, S. N. K., Madley-Canin, R., & Staines, R. P. (2016)	Examine the relationship between parental involvement, self-regulated learning (SRL), and reading achievement of fifth graders using an archival data research design.	Design: Longitudinal Study/Survey Participants: Kindergarten – Fifth grade students of 1998-2009	Participants completed student assessments, parent interviews, teacher and school administrator questionnaires regarding key variables: parental involvement, self-regulated learning, and reading achievement (understanding)
Zarate, M. E. (2007)	Examine Latino parents' perceptions of their participation in the education of their children, school and teachers' expectations of parental involvement, programmatic initiatives addressing parental involvement in education, Latino students' perceptions of the role of parental involvement in their education.	Design: Study sites interviews Participants: Latino middle school and high school students and parents.	Interviews with parents, educators, administrators, students, and directors.
Zick, C. D., Bryson, W. K., & Oroschak, S. (2001)	Examine how married mothers' work patterns affect the frequency of shared parent-child activities and, in turn, if these parent-child activities and work patterns are related to children's behavior and academic achievements.	Design: National Survey of Families and Households Participants: 13,000 households	Households were interviewed in different waves with surveys that asked extensive questions regarding various aspects of individual and family well-being.

Parental involvement is crucial for student success because of their ever-increasing ability to engage in logical and analytic thinking, problem solving, planning, and decision-making. Parental support serves to increase. A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Strategies That Promote Achievement showed that "among the types of involvement, parental involvement that creates an understanding about the purposes, goals, and meaning of academic performance; communicates expectations about involvement; and provides strategies that students can effectively use (i.e., academic socialization) has the strongest positive relation with achievement." (Hill, 2009).

- Similar to the 2001 study, parents reported key reasons for involvement was to improve their child's learning experience
- Parents also reported involvement to ensure a positive outcome and it's expected of parents.
- Partial support was found to increase in assisting with homework when children are struggling academically.
- Tam (2009) found that cultural practices moderate amount of devotion towards parental involvement. Chinese parents were the most involved according to findings.
- Positive environments were also found to be key to improved academic performance. If the home environment was positive, quiet, limited distractions students were more apt to succeed and parents were more likely to be supportive and involved.
- Gonzalez et al., (2005) found parental models of example to be the most important factor for minority students' organization and academic competence.
- By exploring the original research questions and adding a required component for emphasis on more diverse populations included in the research we hoped to find results that are more applicable to a wider range of parenting cultures and styles.
- Results of this study find partial support to Walker's theoretical model in terms of predicting levels of parental involvement but did not find support through motivation.
- Some parents shared they assisted children to find answers more quickly; helped despite knowing rules about independent work; pushed the student to work harder than what was appropriate for the age (Van Voorhis, 2013 & Tam, 2009)
- Barriers (Rogers, 2009; Zarate, 2007) arose from research that prevents parents from becoming involved in their children's education. These barriers were student-barriers (e.g., ADHD, disabilities or withholding information) or parent barriers (work, lack of time to help, focused on other siblings).
- Latino homes also faced barriers, parents provided reasons of language barriers, lower education levels among parents.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Authors	Purpose	Primary Research Design, Sample Size, Characteristics, Minority Population	Homework Measures
Tim, V. C., & Chan, R. M. (2009)	Examine parental involvement in homework and its relationship with primary school children's educational outcomes within the Chinese sociocultural context of Hong Kong	Design: Survey Participants: Students, parents, and teachers at primary schools.	Students took a questionnaire and a homework diary that recorded homework-related information for 3 days. Parents filled a self-administered questionnaire on their involvement in homework process.
Van Voorhis, F. L. (2003)	Examine the effects of weekly interactive science homework on family involvement in homework, student achievement, and homework attitudes.	Design: Quantitative Participants: 6 th and 8 th grade students.	18 weeks study with Teachers involve parents in assignments with directions for family and parent involvement, and 4 classes completed non interactive homework. Parents took a 75-item questionnaire that was scaled in satisfactory reliabilities.
Walker, J. M., Wilkins, A. S., Dallaire, J. R., Sandler, H. M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2005)	Describe efforts to operationalize Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's explanation and how, in turn, those efforts led to revisions in their theoretical model.	Design: Interviews, Surveys Participants: 50 parents of elementary school children	Focused on highlighting the importance of teacher/school inviting and influencing parent involvement participation with existing research.
Walker, J. M., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Whited, D. R., & Green, C. L. (2004)	Focus on how teachers can involve parents in homework and how they may tap the potential of after school staff and parent leaders in supporting parents' homework involvement.	Design: Meta-Analysis Participants: Reviewed existing research with school involvement participation in 2001-2004	Students took a 30-minute survey that measured behavioral and emotional engagement and parents had a 30-minute telephone interview related to home-based and school-based involvement along with academic socialization.
Wang, M. T., & Steinhilber, S. (2014)	Conceptualize parental involvement as a multidimensional construct—including school-based involvement, home-based involvement, and academic socialization—and examined the effects of different types of parental involvement in 10th grade on student achievement and depression in 11th grade.	Design: Surveys, interviews, school record Participants: 10 th grade students from 10 different high school (approximately 1,857)	

DISCUSSION

The emphasis on parental involvement with homework has long been a topic of research and discussion. Studies and literature focus on many factors such as culture, SES, teacher/parent relationship, mother's education etc. Research more recently has explored the use of strategies or tutorials available for parents to utilize outside of the classroom. While studies have noted that some factors like what makes for parental involvement and varying definitions of help make it hard to measure the exact impact a positive parental involvement has on homework, the results have all been positive. Mentions of abolishing homework all together or adjusting policy such as NCLBA focus more on what can be done outside of the classroom that can ensure long-lasting success in higher education. Discussion surrounding barriers such as learning disabilities also were weighed in as well as race, finding that those were the sectors that had low parental involvement or positive academic success. Suggestions for improved resources, more support for parents, regular teacher check-ins and further investment for school programs are discussed as well.

RESULTS

The results of this review provided valuable insights on the benefits of parental involvement in student's homework and as to why we should look at why homework in general is beneficial for the students' academic achievement, what ways we can teach parents on how to effectively help their children, and ways teacher, administration, and policymakers can do better for the academic achievement of the children. These findings give support into why more effort should be put into parental involvement and not just in the homework process, but in all the child's education. School staff should be able to prepare and teach parents on how to be involved in the child's education despite language barriers or learning disabilities. Administration and policy makers should provide more resources to teachers to allow them to help the parents out, so that at the end the child's education really benefits from it all.

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