

The Influence of Parental Involvement and Education Policy on Student Achievement in High Schools in NongChok District, Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the influence of parental involvement in education related activities on student achievement in high schools in NongChok District, Bangkok, Thailand. To compare the influence that parental involvement has on student achievement as well as analyze the joint influence of parental involvement and education policy on student achievement, parents are categorized in accordance with demographic characteristics. The population in the comprised parents who have children that are currently studying in public high schools in NongChok district, Bangkok, Thailand. A non-random sampling method was used in determining the sample of respondents used in the survey. The calculated sample size was 210 respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaire which had 0.88 reliability. Determining demographic characteristics was based on descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, and Standard Deviation; while One-way ANOVA, and Multiple Linear Regression analysis techniques were used to analyze the data. Study results indicated that 60.5 percent of respondents were married mothers (79.5 percent), had high school education attainment or equivalent to (51.4 percent), worked as employees (43.8 percent), earned below or equivalent to 150,000 Baht per year (44.3 percent), and worked less than or equal to 8 hours per day (71.9 percent). Testing of hypotheses showed that the involvement of parents in students' education of parents takes various forms; type of the parents had a statistically significant influence on students' achievement at 0.01 level. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis indicated that education policy had significantly influence on students' achievement at 0.01 level, while parental involvement did not show statistically significant relationship with students' achievement.

Keywords: *demographic factors, education policy, parental involvement, student achievement*

INTRODUCTION

Student achievement continues to be an issue of serious concern in Thailand. This is because of little change it has shown despite various attempts to reform it for more than ten years. Neither the government nor the community has been able to solve the declining rate of the students' achievement. Substantial increase in the budget of the education ministry, has been tailored toward helping children from poor households to access education has had modest success. Nonetheless, the performance of students on examinations as a measure of education quality continues to show a downward trend.

The performance of students on basic education as shown in several National Tests continues to be unsatisfactory. Moreover, the performance of Thai students on Programs for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that 15 year old was lower than that of other students from other participating countries. This was specifically so on mathematics and sciences.

Several factors may account for students' academic performance. A number of scholars have identified parental involvement in education activities of their children as one of the factors that influence students' academic performance. The higher the level of involvement of parents in the education of their children, the higher the likelihood that their children will academically perform well.

The objective of this paper is to study the influence that the level of involvement of parents in school activities on students' achievement in NongChok District, Bangkok Thailand. The study categorized parents based on their demographics, after which the influence that parental involvement on education policy on students' achievement was analyzed.

A number of previous research established an association between type of parents and students' motivation. Eccles & Schiefele (1998), who conducted research on child-rearing practices by both parents, found that the practice improves motivation and academic achievement of students (as cited in Santrock, 2006, pp. 432). Taneja

(1976), furthermore finds that cooperation and assistance of both parents is essential for future lives of children in society. Parents should teach their children techniques to use in evaluating what is good and what is bad behavior. Sutherland (1988) emphasized that both parents are the first teachers to educate their children. The role of parents starts, influences, and teaches children right from the earliest days of their lives. This role continues as long as it takes. The children learn to speak, to dress, and to behave in a certain way based on what their parents taught them. Even when the children enter into formal education system, the aforementioned roles of their parents continue to affect their behavior (pp. 63). Hurlock (1956) notes that fathers serve as role models for their children rather than merely giving direct commands.

Munsinger (1975) contends that absence of any one or both parents creates various serious problems for children during their upbringing. Mussen & Kagan (1974) notes that boys who grow up in households where fathers are absent have higher tendency of encountering difficulties in social, emotional and cognitive development than boys who grow up households where fathers are present. Munsinger (1975) reported that divorced women complained about the difficulties they face in managing their children after divorce. Separation of parents may create a sense of guilt in the children. Newcombe (1996) further explained that stress and insecurity of divorced parents is reflected in their relationships with their children.

McCandless & Trotter (1977) further elucidates that one of the key goals of middle-income parents is to raise their children as self-directed individuals whom have the ability to think for themselves, socially active in an acceptable manner not because it is required by authorities but due to their own beliefs. Bjorklund & Blasi (2012) revealed that poverty, loss of job, or other significant life stressors influence the quality of parent-child interactions. Berns (1985) noted that children from lower class are often viewed in school as slow learners, aggressive, and absent. Brooks (1987) referred to parents whom spend less time with their children as those whom have less quality

time with their children.

Many scholars define the concepts of parents' involvement and how it influences the students' achievement differently. Comer (1988) defines parents' involvement as specific behaviors that parents do within and outside schooling (pp. 24). Meanwhile, Swap (1990) identified parents' involvement in improving school achievement for all children and it must be a national priority (as cited in Christenson & Conoley, 1992, pp. 57). Epstein (1991), developed the typology further by categorizing the variety of involvement activities in which parents can take part, which include among others parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Hoover & Sandler (1997) notes that parents prefer to be part of their children education for three reasons, interalia: fulfillment of their personal construction of parental roles; personal sense of efficacy for being able to help their kids; and for the opportunity and invitation chances they receive from schools to participate.

Students' achievement has been described in various terms as performance success, student success, and academic achievement. Ferrett (2010) contends that student's achievement comes from habits. Kiewra (2009) characterizes "student success" to manifest high academic achievement, effective learning skills, and motivation to succeed. Meanwhile, Knoll & Patti (2003) believes that being socially and emotionally intelligent contributes to academic achievement (as cited in Elias et al., 2003).

The hypotheses should be (1) *Each parent demographics have significant influence on students' achievement*; (2) *Parental involvement and education policy have significant influence on students' achievement*.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research method was based on a review of literature that included theoretical and empirical studies on the subject that

were published in academic journals, reports, and books. The targeted population of this study were parents whose children were studying in high schools in NongChok District, Bangkok Thailand. Using the entire population in this study was difficult for technical and feasibility reasons, which is why a sampling method was deemed necessary. The study used a non-random sampling technique to collect primary data, which was done in April 2016.

The following formula was used in determining the sample size:

$$n = \frac{PQZ^2}{e^2} \quad (\text{Worrakijkasemkul, 2010}).$$

Calculation based on the formula led to a sample size of 208. However, in the event of data failure, an additional 1 per-

cent or equal to $\frac{208 \times 1}{100} = 2.08$ as added to the sample. Thus, over the sample was 210 participants. A questionnaire was developed which was used in collecting primary data on the ground concerning dimensions of students' achievement and the parental involvement. The questionnaire was divided into four parts interalia general information of respondents, parental involvement, education policy, and students' achievement. However, prior to using the questionnaire in the survey, a pretest that involved 30 participants was conducted. Based on pre test results, it was concluded that the alpha coefficient for 37 items was 0.88, which indicated that the items in the questionnaire had high relative internal consistency. In other words, the questionnaire was highly reliable to collect data on the dimensions needed.

As soon as all data were collected, they cleaned, coded and tabulated prior to analyzing using a statistic computer program (SPSS) for both the descriptive analysis (\bar{X} and S.D) and hypothesis analysis (*One-way ANOVA* and *Multiple Linear Regression*).

Hypothesis 1: Each parent demographic has significant influence on students' achievement, which was analyzed based on *One-Way ANOVA* with 95% confi-

dence interval.

The steps of hypothesis testing involved firstly, analysis of equality of variance using *Levene Statistic Test*. Secondly, in the event there is an equality of variance, *One-Way ANOVA* will further analyze the source of variance. In the event the significance value was less than 0.05, null hypothesis was rejected. *LSD* (Least Significance Difference) will further be used to determine which pair causes the differences. Thirdly, in event of inequality of variance, *Robust test* was instead in further analysis. If the significance value was less than 0.05, null hypothesis was rejected. *Dunnett's T3* was then used to determine which pair causes the difference.

Hypothesis 2: Parental involvement and education policy have significant influence on students' achievement. Analyzing the hypothesis involved using a Multiple Linear Regression model.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

The results of the descriptive analysis of the general information section of the respondents found that 60.5% of the respondents are mothers, whom are married (79.5%), have had high schools or equivalent educations (51.4%), are currently employed (43.8%), earn an income below or equal to 150,000 per year (44.3%), and work less than or equal to 8 hours per day (71.9%).

Parental involvement section showed that the parents prioritize their roles as a parent by placing $Y_i = (b_0 + b_1X_{2i} + b_2X_{3i} + \varepsilon)$ their sense of efficacy in participating in their kid's education first, followed by their responsibility as a role of constructions enforcers, then the opportunity and invitation available for them to participate in their kid's education.

Meanwhile, education policy section results showed that parents agreed that technology plays a big role in the educational development of their children. Furthermore, they believed that school leadership and con-

tinuously training program provided for teacher are also important elements that can influence their children's education.

The students' achievement section showed that parents strongly agree that current educational achievement influences higher education outcomes in the future. Moreover, children who can socialize both inside and outside their homes have higher likelihood to achieve better educational outcomes. Results of the hypothesis analysis are explained below.

Hypothesis 1: The parents's demography can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievements. Hypothesis 1.1 type of parents can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. The result indicates that the type of parent can significantly explain the difference in students' achievement with the significance value of 0.01 which means the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 1.2 Status can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. The result indicates that status cannot significantly explain the difference in student achievement with the significance value is at 0.05. This means that the hypothesis is rejected. Hypothesis 1.3 Parents' education can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. The result indicates that level of the parents' education cannot significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement with the significance value is at 0.05. This means that the hypothesis is rejected. Hypothesis 1.4 Occupation of parents can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. The result indicates that the occupation cannot significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement with significant value is at 0.05 which means the hypothesis is rejected. Hypothesis 1.5 Family income can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. The result indicates that the family income cannot significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement with the significance value is at 0.05. This means that the hypothesis is rejected. Hypothesis 1.6 working hours can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Analysis Between Parental Involvement and Education Towards Student Achievement

Variables	B (standardized)	t_{ratio}	$t_{\alpha=10\%}$	Conclusion
Constant	1.54	5.47	1.28	Significant
X2	0.06	1.07	1.28	Insignificant
X3	0.52	8.42	1.28	Significant

$F_{ratio} = 42.44$
 $F_{table} = 3.04$
 $R^2 = 0.29$

(Source:Sudjana. (1996). pp. 491-496)

The result indicates that working hours cannot significantly explain the difference in student achievement with the significance value is at 0.05 which means the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: The parental involvement and education policy can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. The result indicates that parental involvement and education policy can significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement (Table 1). Table 1 summarizes the multiple regression analysis results between the parental involvement and the education policy toward the students' achievement.

Both X2 and X3 influence students' achievement (Y) with R^2 at 0.29. While, X3 is only partially constant with the students' achievement (Y). It indicates that education policy has stronger influence on student achievement than parental involvement. This is because parents believe that government possesses more skills and abilities than themselves to enhance the students' achievement. Besides, traditional beliefs of the Thai parents that emphasize the role of the family in separating the role the school plays children's education. However, more effectiveness can be achieved through collaboration of the three parties, that is ; the ministry

of education, schools, and parents in joint actions in designing education policies that will enhance students' achievement.

Conversely, X2 or the parental involvement is neither constant nor significant. This non-significant result indicates that parental involvement (X2) has no influence on the dependent variable or the students' achievement (Y). The probability that the questionnaire had an ambiguous or non-straightforward questions might cause the insignificant value. Therefore, IOC (Index of item-Objective Congruence) can be introduced to enhance the questions' validity. Discussion of the above results follows.

Firstly, research results indicate that only one demographic factor, parents, has significant influence on students' achievement. This clearly indicates that parents are important in improving children' achievement. This results corroborates Taneja's (1976) study that finds that cooperation and assistance of both parents is essential for their children lives in society. The same applies to study by Sutherland (1988) that considers both parents as first teachers to educate their children.

Remarkably, study results also found that fathers tend to have more influence than mothers on the students' achievement. This is because mothers and fathers portray different characteristics at home especially in

Thai society. Fathers tend to push their children for higher achievement while mothers put more emphasis on nurturing. The finding is also relevant to Hurlock's (1956) theory, which states that fathers tend to teach child role models on how to act rather than through issuing commands.

Secondly, results found that education policy has more influence on students' achievement than parental involvement. This is because in Thai society parents tend to have higher trust and belief in the ability of teachers of their children and schools to develop children skills more than themselves. Moreover, parents have high expectation of the education system to do so more than themselves.

Most parents in Thai society are still traditionally involved in their children's education by attending meetings from time to time or donating financial or school equipment. In contrast, parental involvement in terms of academic activities and school-committee partnerships is still very low. Thus, findings reflect the tendency of Thai parents to see the role of the family as a separate case from the role that school play in children's education. This is quite different from Western point of view where schools and households cooperate in maximizing students' achievement.

In Thai traditions and cultures, individuals try to avoid involving themselves in affairs of other people and have high respect for school authorities in decision making. This is why parents do not want to interfere in the school management especially parents who have low education background. Such parents think that they lack sufficient knowledge on how to develop abilities of their children compared with the capacity that teachers and schools have.

In addition, parents have both an attitude and a belief that schools must take full responsibility for children's education. That is why they do not interfere in their children's education. They believe that the education system will both help and teach their children how to read, to write, and to arithmetic. According to them, that is exactly children attend school every day.

Thailand lacks a clear system and mechanisms to support and promote parental involvement in children education similar to what is in place in developed countries. Besides, relevant organizations and networks in Thailand are not yet supportive of the concept of parental involvement in the education of their children (OEC, 2008, pp. 2-3, 19).

CONCLUSION

Based on results of the first hypothesis analysis, the conclusion that can be drawn is that concluded that only the type of parents variable has significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement. Meanwhile, results of the second hypothesis analysis indicated that education policy is the only independent variable that is able to influence students' achievement. However, parental involvement did not significantly explain the difference in the students' achievement as an independent variable.

As a policy recommendation, this study advises the Thai Ministry of Education to conduct further research to identify areas that can help to strengthen parental involvement in the education progress. Moreover, harnessing collaboration among households, schools, and community to discuss steps that can be taken to enhance the students' achievements is also recommended.

Besides, there is need for schools and the Ministry of Education to conduct seminars that parents about research findings, which should increase their awareness of the importance of parental involvement in children educational achievements.

In addition, there is need for a platform to design and facilitate the process of parental involvement in the children education. The three parties, that is the Ministry of Education, schools, and parents should participate actively designing such a process. An example of that is Germany. Each Germany state plays a vital role in developing a system and mechanisms that promote parental involvement in the children education. Moreover, every state has freedom to define and delineate its policies and regulations

in the realm of education. Parents play an important role in the budgeting and resources allocation, as well as in monitoring and assessment of performance of educational institutions and students.

Besides, NGOs also an important role in education. NGOs have access to school facilities which they use in providing children after-school programs, as well as in conducting training classes for parents, all of which contribute to higher parental involvement in education.

As for areas for further research, the study recommends the need for future research that will specifically target male participants and their opinion on parental involvement and how that influences students' achievement in Thailand. This is because most of the extant studies carried out in Thailand so far tended to show stronger focus on female gender than male ones.

In addition, the study recommends the need for a comprehensive review of specific education policies such as early retirement of teachers and how they impact on parental involvement and students' achievement.

Finally, the type of school, either private or public, might have also influence parental involvement. To that end, there is need for future research on the role that type of school in the context of private-public dichotomy, influences parental involvement and students' achievement.

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