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# Parental Involvement in Child Education

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## Abstract

Considering various modern educational obstacles, educators perceive parental involvement (PI) in their children's education as a potential solution. The long-standing theory positing a positive correlation between PI and children's academic achievement has garnered considerable attention as an appealing partnership within communities. This non-empirical study examines a substantial portion of the literature in this domain, encompassing both empirical and non-empirical works, with the aim of elucidating the various forms of PI, its effects, and the barriers it faces. The findings underscore a favourable association between PI and both academic achievement and children's well-being. A thorough analysis of the collected literature reveals that parental home supervision exhibits the weakest correlation with students' academic performance, whereas parental aspirations and expectations for their children's educational attainment emerge as the most influential factors. Additionally, findings suggest that despite challenges associated with PI and its connection to social-class origins impacting academic success and failure, factors like family socioeconomic status (SES), educational background, and resource limitations, still lead to positive outcomes for their children's education.

**Key Words:** parental involvement, parent participation, parent-school partnership, parental involvement and academic success, parental involvement in school and parent and child learning

## 1. Introduction

Over the years, a wealth of research literature has consistently shown that PI is widely recognized as a crucial factor in promoting positive academic outcomes and overall well-being of children. (Epstein, 2001; Hill and Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2005, 2007; Wilder, 2014). The comprehension of PI varies among different stakeholders and institutions (Head, 2020), yet it uniformly embodies certain characteristics. The concept of PI encompasses a wide array of activities, ranging from communication with teachers, to actively participate with homework, school events and decision-making processes. This dissertation seeks to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of PI by utilizing Epstein's Framework of Six Types of PI. By examining its various forms including home-based involvement, school-based activities and collaborative partnerships, explore its distinct effects on children's educational journeys and well-being. Additionally, address arguments around the topic, identify barriers that may hinder parental engagement, and propose strategies to enhance parental participation.

Research findings suggest that PI is perceived and interpreted differently by various individuals, influencing the nature of their contributions to their children's schooling. Furthermore, it is evident that there exists a variety of forms of PI, with studies indicating that parental aspirations and expectations for their child's academic success hold significant efficacy beyond mere involvement in school activities. Despite predominantly positive findings in research, ongoing flaws and debates regarding PI in child education revolve around its nature, and its effectiveness across diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts, and the level to which schools should facilitate parental participation (Hill and Tyson, 2009; Sheldon and Epstein, 2005).

Hill and Craft (2003) advocate for expanding the definition of involvement to include various forms of support beyond traditional tasks like assisting with homework, while some emphasize the importance of the quality rather than the quantity of parental engagement. Furthermore, accurately measuring PI is difficult due to its complexity and the need to consider cultural differences in parental roles and expectations.

Overall, it is important to highlight that collective research proves that PI constitutes a vital component of children's educational journey. This paper will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research found on PI in a child's education. This will include: the effect, the different roles and barriers to PI. Seeking to raise this awareness among parents and educators, by investigating the impact of PI on the educational development and well-being of children, including the following aspects: (i) What are the effects of PI in children's academic attainment? (ii) In what way do parents contribute to their child's educational journey? (iii) What factors influence parents to be involved in their child's education? This topic holds significant importance within the realm of education, and it is hoped that with this understanding, schools can devise efficient strategies and interventions to enhance PI (Powers, 2016), thereby positively impacting not only their children's education but also various facets of their lives. Given my personal investment in this subject, I am mindful of the potential biases that may be present in this dissertation. By establishing clear objectives, aids in maintaining focus and ensures that my research remains dedicated to addressing specific inquiries rather than straying into subjective areas.

## 2. Method of literature

This non-empirical dissertation seeks to summarise existing literature that has been critically analysed linking to the topic of PI, gaining literature from multiple authors allows readers to understand the topic in a broader context (Aveyard, 2007; Naoum, 2012; O'Hara, 2018; Oliver, 2012; Cottrell, 2014). This section examines and analyses authors academic sources, ideas and their contributions to the area of study being undertaken (Mukherji and Albon, 2018) and then connecting them together in a meaningful way. Cottrell (2014) argues that a literature review is essential for familiarising oneself with the field of the chosen

subject, examining it from multiple perspectives, and considering it from various angles to develop an in-depth awareness of who and what is significant in the subject and why. It involves identifying, evaluating, and summarising the relevant information to provide a clear understanding of the current state of knowledge on a subject (Mukherji and Albon 2018) of PI in child education. Furthermore, to identify gaps, examine patterns and trends that can assist in formulating findings for the research questions and for future research (Cottrell, 2014; Fink, 2014).

Embarking on the venture of non-empirical research for this dissertation required the analysis of information found mainly through reviewing empirical data as well as some secondary data. Taking on the non-empirical approach to this project, brings the richness of credible information that has already been discussed on the topic from larger scope of data from different perspectives, contexts, and cultural diversities in a larger frame (Cohen et al., 2017). Additionally, a non-empirical involving synthesizing existing knowledge and critically analysing theoretical perspectives, researchers can propose new models, paradigms, or conceptual frameworks that guide future empirical research (Bryman, 2016).

The sources used for this dissertation included a few key pioneers of this subject, such as Epstein (1987), Fan and Chen (2001), and Hornby and Blackwell (2018), alongside academic literature from various sources such as books, journals, and policies. The credibility of these sources was carefully assessed (Thomas, 2017), and they were critically examined to determine their alignment with the thesis, leading to the development of a case that explores the topic of PI in child education and addresses the research questions (Machi and McEvoy, 2016).

Engaging in non-empirical research enables researchers to gather relevant data, establish connections, and relate them to the research question. However, this approach has its limitations. Firstly, as noted by Patton (2002, p. 432, cited in Cohen et al., 2017), because secondary researchers must synthesise data into findings, there isn't a definitive formula or method to follow; thus, researchers determine the most effective data collection approach. Secondly, while research can incur costs and consume time (Creswell and Creswell, 2023), non-empirical researchers lack firsthand data from participants, which is invaluable for obtaining the most pertinent information for a particular topic.

Respected peer-reviewed databases were utilised for a comprehensive literature review (Mukherji and Albon, 2018), incorporating SAGE journals, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Taylor and Francis, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. Employing a diverse range of sources and viewpoints was facilitated through the utilization of these varied databases (Naoum, 2012; Hughes and Tarrant, 2020). Initially, the browse was wide; however, searches were detailed (Cottrell, 2014) and were conducted by combining terms, keywords, and phrases used to investigate and analyse articles on PI in child education: 'parental involvement', 'parent participation', 'parent-school partnership', 'parental involvement and academic success', 'parental involvement in school' and 'parent and child learning'. The date range was vague at first to gain information on the early days of this subject and then began to broaden to the past five - ten years to form a comparison and acquire more knowledge.

It was important to implement strategies to develop critical reading (Clark, Foster and Bryman, 2019) whilst seeking relevant literature. Questions were kept in mind during reading, including assessing how researchers presented important findings, the characteristics of participants, the study location, the types of PI examined, making connections, taking notes, and relating them to the research questions (Aaron, 2019). Key points were highlighted using specific colours based on categories and written in the margins. Exploring various time periods, cultures, and viewpoints (Lindgren, 2011) contributed to a thorough and reflective search. Reviewing the abstract and determining its relevance helped in determining which articles were relevant to the chosen topic and worth reading and downloading. Clark, Foster, and Bryman (2019) emphasized the significance of specifying the methodology and criteria used for selecting, evaluating, and gathering sources based on themes. The literature was initially compiled into a Word document and then organized according to themes for ease of reference. Then the data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet,

where it was structured into columns and categorized based on themes relevant to the research questions, with its significance evaluated to determine its alignment with the study hypothesis (Cottrell, 2014). Upon organizing the material into themes, it became apparent that there was a wealth of information to explore regarding PI. To streamline the analysis, Epstein's theoretical framework – specifically, her six types of PI – was employed to categorize the subjects under the identified themes.

Engaging in research on a deeply personal topic can predispose individuals to form preconceived notions, potentially biasing the selection of information that aligns with pre-existing ideas and viewing it through a singular perspective. Consequently, continuous self-evaluation was essential throughout this process.

Initially, prior to embarking on this dissertation, the theoretical perspective focused on the ecological systems theory, particularly emphasizing the influence of parents/family on children's education. The initial focus of the literature review was on exploring the intricate interplay between various ecological factors and their impact on parental behaviours and educational outcomes for children. However, it was discovered that barriers and factors influencing parental engagement with their children's learning were also integral aspects of the topic and thus included in the study.

# 3. Literature review

## Parental involvement in child education

PI in child education can be defined in various ways by different individuals, yet its fundamental purpose remains consistent. Extensive international research confirms that PI enhances both the academic achievement and social development of children of all ages (Culp, 2016; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Hornby, 2011; Jeynes, 2003, 2010). It encompasses diverse responsibilities, including participating in school governance, providing assistance with homework, and engaging in reading activities with children (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2023; Hornby, 2011). However, Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) suggest that a child's educational journey is influenced not only by these factors but also by the psychological states and behaviours of parents regarding school and their child (Reynolds and Shlafer, 2018, p. 158). Additionally, it's important to recognize that a child's achievement is shaped by various individuals, processes, and institutions (Fan and Chen, 2001) but for the purpose of this paper, the focus remains on PI. A deeper examination of PI underscores its crucial role in many aspects of a child's educational journey. Apart from laying the groundwork for future success, it plays a vital role in fostering children's overall development (Grey and MacBlain, 2015; Lambert et al., 2021).

## 3.1. Epstein's six types of parental involvement

Joyce L. Epstein's contributions to the realm of family and community engagement in education have roots tracing back to the 1980s, and her work has since become fundamental in comprehending the intricate nature of PI. Through rigorous empirical inquiry, Epstein has underscored the significance of fostering partnerships among schools, families, and communities to support student achievement. Her research has studied many aspects of parental engagement, recognizing the necessity for a comprehensive framework to inform both scholarly inquiry and practical application in this domain. Initially, Epstein's framework was initially divided into four categories of PI: fundamental responsibilities, school-centered engagement, home-based participation, and involvement in student decision-making. Subsequently, it was then categorized into six discernible types, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Epstein aimed to furnish educators, policymakers, and researchers with a structured blueprint for fostering substantive connections between families and educational institutions Epstein, 2001; 2011).

Epstein's model holds paramount importance in the context of this research endeavour, as it furnishes a holistic framework for comprehending the manifold ways in which parents contribute to their children's educational journey. By delving into these six categories, the ensuing literature review will underscore the diverse roles parents play in nurturing their children's learning and development, both within the confines of the educational institution and in broader societal contexts (Epstein, 1987; 2001; 2011).

The literature review undertaken examines various forms of PI in children's education. through theoretical lenses, drawing upon Epstein's Framework of Six Types of PI. It explores the diverse forms of PI, including home-based activities, school-based involvement, and community partnerships, highlighting their respective impact on children's academic journey and well-being. Additionally, explores the arguments around the subject, barriers that might hinder parental engagement in child education and suggests strategies to implement solutions for parental participation.

A multitude of empirical research, literature reviews and meta-analysis have documented extensive research and support the theory that PI significantly contributes to the academic success of children (Cox, 2005; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Fan and Chen, 2001; Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005, 2007; Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack, 2007), presenting evidence, theoretical stances, and perspectives that address the following three research questions: (i) What are the effects of PI in children's academic attainment? (ii) In what way do parents contribute to their child's educational journey? (iii) What factors influence parents to be involved in their child's education?

### 3.1.1. Exploring the effects of parental involvement in child education

To investigate the first research question 'What are the effects of PI in children's academic attainment?' The literature of Bowlby (1969), Fan and Chen (2001), Henderson and Mapp (2002) Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), Cox (2005), Jeynes (2005; 2007), Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack. (2007), Fan and Williams (2010), Rouse (2012), Valerie (2014), Wilder (2014), Cripps and Zyromski (2015), Culp (2016), Parveen, Hussain and Reba. (2016), Svoboda et al. (2016), Department for Education (2023), Reynolds and Shlafer (2018), Glazzard, Potter, and Stones (2019), Makarewics (2022) and Goulet et al. (2023) will be critically examined to support the theory that PI in children's education contributes to academic success.

### 3.1.2. Academic Attainment

In discussions regarding the influence of PI, academic achievement is often asserted as the foremost consequential aspect of research - a wealth of literature reviews and meta-analyses have extensively documented research and empirical evidence supporting the theory that PI significantly contributes to children's academic success (Cox, 2005; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Fan and Chen, 2001; Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Pomerantz and Moorman, Litwack, 2007).

Academic success, as defined by Rouse (2012), encompasses the attainment of educational goals set by educational institutions, such as achieving high grades, completing degrees, or mastering specific areas of knowledge or expertise. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, established in England, aimed to sets standards for the education, care, and development of children aged one to five. According to the Department for Education (2023), academic attainment within the EYFS context refers to achieving early learning goals and developmental milestones that equip children with essential skills in communication, language, literacy, mathematics, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional development. These skills provide a solid foundation for academic success in subsequent stages of education.

A child's academic success in school and parental participation is linked to having long-term educational achievements (Jeynes, 2007; Culp, 2016; Reynolds and Shlafer, 2018, p. 158). Research by Fan and Chen (2001), Svoboda et al. (2016), Wilder (2014), and Makarewics (2022) consistently suggests that PI

positively correlates with academic success, as measured by grades, test scores, and overall performance. While there may be variations in how PI is defined across studies, Wilder (2004) argues that regardless of these differences, the impact remains positive.

However, Fan and Chen (2001) found that the impact of parental engagement was «small to moderate» yet practically meaningful. Their research, conducted in 2022, aims to address the considerable inconsistencies in empirical studies on the subject, advocating for a quantitative synthesis to examine the effect size across various studies and perspectives. This aggregated approach, as supported by Smith (2020), enhances statistical power and precision, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and enhancing the external validity of research findings. Conversely, Svoboda et al. (2016) conducted a longitudinal study with a larger sample size of 272 families (816 total respondents), tracking individuals from middle school through college, to provide reliable insights into the impact of PI on academic development over time, capturing trends and patterns that may not be captured with cross-sectional designs (Cohen, 1992; Menard, 2002). To obtain insights across various age demographics, Parveen et al. (2016) study, encompassing participants from kindergarten to secondary levels, underscores that the impact of PI on enhancing children's academic performance was found to be the strongest among kindergarten students. These results imply that the influence of PI on a child's educational achievement is not limited by age. Nevertheless, Goulet et al. (2023) maintain that there remains a necessity for further longitudinal studies to explore the implications of PI on high school students.

### 3.1.3. Self-esteem and wellbeing

'Prioritizing the well-being of children is widely recognized as paramount, as it lays the groundwork for adult functioning' (McAuley, 2010, p.21). While PI in child education is commonly discussed in terms of its influence on children's academic success, a substantial body of research indicates its significant impact on children's self-esteem and overall well-being. Valerie (2014) contends that PI extends beyond mere support for academic endeavours, involving direct intervention by parents to shape and nurture their child's attitudes and behaviours towards fostering positive self-esteem.

In their study, Fan and Williams (2009) explored the effects of PI on students' academic self-efficacy, engagement, and intrinsic motivation across diverse cultural backgrounds, involving 15,325 adolescents and parents. Their findings underscored that active PI, characterized by support, encouragement, and high expectations, correlates with the development of robust self-efficacy in students. Similarly, Cripps and Zyromski (2015, p.4) examined the relationship between PI and adolescent psychological well-being, noting that beyond enhancing students' well-being and self-concept, such involvement also enriches their interpersonal relationships, fostering more fulfilling interactions with peers.

Moreover, Bowlby's attachment theory (1969) argues that the quality of early parent-child relationships profoundly influences later social and emotional development. Secure attachment, according to Bowlby, fosters the development of trust, emotional regulation, and social competence, contributing to positive relationships with others. Glazzard, Potter, and Stones (2019) further emphasize that early interactions with parents establish a foundational blueprint in a child's mind for understanding relationships, affirming the multitude of ways in which PI in a child's education positively impacts both academic achievement and well-being.

## 3.2. Ways parents contribute to their child's education

The current debate about PI in child education explores the impact it has on children and their academic attainment and well-being. However, this section addresses the second inquiry of the research, 'In what way do parents contribute to their child's educational journey?'. The literature of Vygotsky (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1994), Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), Upham, Cheney and Manning (1998),

Hill and Tyson (2001), Henderson and Mapp (2002), Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), Lee and Burkam (2003), Fitzgerald (2004), Kyriakides (2005), Ou (2005) Knopf and Swick (2006), Epstein (2001; 2011; 2018; 2019), Thompson (2008), Donker (2010), Donley (2012) Rouse (2012), Wilder (2014), Al-Mahrooqi, Denman and Al-Maamari (2016) Chan and Ritchie (2016), Conus and Fahrni (2019), Plujim, Gelderen and Kessels (2019), Thartori (2018), Azad, Marcus and Mandell (2020), Head (2020) Licardo and Leite (2022) and Mbhiza and Nkambule (2023) have either supported the research query or conducted investigations into the various methods through which parents contribute to their child's education. This section will be categorised through Epstein's framework of six types of PI.

### 3.2.1. Parenting

Parenting represents a manner through which parents can actively contribute to their child's educational development. According to Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992 cited in Sutterby, 2017, p.24) 'adults help shape children who are in their care through sharing of the household's historical and cultural knowledge and skills, that is, funds of knowledge'. Parenting, as conceptualised within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework, predominantly takes place within the microsystem, encompassing immediate environments where children directly engage, such as family, school, and peer groups. Within this domain, parenting summarizes the behaviours, attitudes, and practices of caregivers aimed at nurturing and guiding children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994). Epstein (2011) elaborates on the notion of 'parenting' within PI, referring to teachers aiding families in establishing supportive home environments for children and facilitating the school's understanding of its families. Substantial research conducted in recent years has delved into the significance of partnerships between educators and families in enhancing learning and developmental outcomes for children (Epstein, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2004; Knopf and Swick, 2006).

Rouse's (2012) study explains how this research has influenced Australia's formulation of key practice principles for educators across the early childhood and care sector. Moreover, her case study, which featured participants with diverse personal experiences, underscored the importance of demonstrating empathy towards families' challenges and offering support as needed to cultivate positive relationships with parents/families. One participant conveyed a deep understanding of the emotion's parents may undergo when entrusting their child to care and stated, "I sometimes think they find it hard to leave their children, it's not a personal thing" (Rouse, 2012, p. 21), while another emphasized the concerted effort in building familial bonds with families stating, "there's a lot of effort that has to be put on to form a partnership, and you need the basis of any relationship, trust and respect". Gay (2010) suggests that teachers who understand families' complexities can effectively adjust teaching methods to support students and create a culturally responsive learning environment.

However, Henderson and Mapp (2002) caution that language barriers or communication obstacles between teachers and families may impede effective collaboration and understanding of familial circumstances. Nevertheless, both teachers and parents share a common aspiration for their child's academic success. Purola and Kuusisto's (2021) research, conducted a decade after Rouse's study, echoes similar sentiments. Their examination of 93 parents' perceptions of their involvement in the early childhood education community indicates that mutual support between educators and parents can be facilitated through the exchange of resources, ideas, and strategies to promote children's learning and development.

#### Expectations and aspiration

It has been suggested that parents' expectations and aspirations for their child constitute the most influential aspect of PI in their educational journey (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). While it may

not appear to be a conventional method of PI in a child's education, it indeed is. When parents harbour specific aspirations, expectations, and standards concerning their child's academic progress, personal growth, and future accomplishments, they actively participate in shaping their child's educational journey. Epstein (2001) explains that this often reflects from parents' beliefs about the importance of education for future opportunities and success. Wilder's (2014) meta-synthesis findings found that parents expectations for their children was found as the strongest in relation to PI. He adds that because children are likely to harbour similar attitudes and beliefs as their parents, having high parental expectations appears to be vital for academic achievement of children. Lee and Burkam (2003) support this idea, but they delve into how schools can either mitigate inequalities or reinforce existing advantages depending on parental expectations. This underscores the significance of collaborations between parents and schools to enhance a child's educational outcomes.

### 3.2.2. Communicating

Research underscores the paramount importance of fostering positive communication between teachers and students, as well as among adults within the educational community, as a cornerstone for monitoring and supporting children in academic settings (Upham, Cheney, and Manning, 1998). White (2016) suggests that effective communication with parents necessitates the cultivation of a sense of community, active engagement, and meaningful dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and alignment of perspectives. Epstein (2019) introduces the concept of communication as a reciprocal exchange facilitated by teachers, utilizing diverse technological platforms to share information about school programs and students' progress. Additionally, Upham, Cheney, and Manning (1998) conducted a study in two distinct communities in New Hampshire, one suburban and the other rural, focusing on communication patterns between teachers who teach children with Emotional or Behavioural Disorders (EBD) and parents of children with EBD in middle school. They identified key strategies for enhancing communication, including early meetings for proactive communication to establish rapport, regular progress updates to address any issues affecting communication, flexible scheduling to accommodate both parents and teachers, and the utilization of electronic connections such as telephone answering services and email to facilitate information exchange between parents and teachers.

Thompson (2008), in his study on the characteristics of parent-teacher email communication, highlights the increasing prevalence of email as the primary mode of communication between parents and teachers. However, his research findings indicate that only a minority of parents utilize email communication consistently throughout the year. Given the constraints of parents' busy schedules, teachers adopting diverse communication methods offer a convenient and efficient way to keep parents informed about their children's educational progress (Wilder, 2014).

The lack of familiarity between parents and teachers may present communication challenges, often relying on implicit expectations (Sykes, 2001). Azad, Marcus, and Mandell (2020) contend, in their examination of communication dynamics between teachers and parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), that communication nature significantly influences the quality of the teacher-parent relationship. Their findings emphasize the necessity of employing culturally sensitive strategies, especially for parents from economically disadvantaged and racially diverse backgrounds, to ensure their active participation and sense of importance in the communication process. Similarly, Conus and Fahrni (2019), in their study conducted in a neighbourhood predominantly occupied by migrant families residing in low-cost rental properties, identify various barriers hindering effective communication, including unacknowledged structural and socio-psychological obstacles faced by parents. They suggest that teachers should recognize these barriers and proactively address them, particularly parents' concerns regarding potential consequences on their relationship with teachers or their perceived reputation.

cultivating a supportive and constructive parent-teacher relationship is essential for achieving the overarching goal of promoting children's academic success (Hill and Tyson, 2001). However, Jackson, Turner and Battle (2015) argue that this is only effective when approached in a welcoming and positive manner. Prioritizing quality over quantity in fostering effective communication between parents and teachers is equally crucial. Consequently, engaging in collaborative dialogues enhances children's learning outcomes and promotes reflective teaching practices among educators, fostering continuous professional growth and development (Vygotsky, 1978), which in turn facilitates a robust and effective line of communication within home-school partnerships.

### 3.2.3. Volunteering

Epstein's (2018) theory suggests that parents volunteering in school and teachers organizing parent help at school, home, or other locations, including audiences for student activities is a way in which parents can be involved in children's schooling. Parents engaging in school activities and events is said to be beneficial to children but is also supporting the school as a whole (Salem Press, 2014). According to Epstein (2001), this form of engagement develops positive relationships with teachers and school staff that facilitate open communication, collaboration and mutual understanding which are essential for creating a supportive learning environment for children.

A recent qualitative phenomenological study conducted by Mbhiza and Nkambule (2023) delved into the experiences (Donley, 2012) of teachers and parents in rural South African schools regarding PI. This research revealed the multifaceted nature of PI parent's perspectives and its significance in the school context. When asked what the significance of partnership for the schools' and learners' success, one parent described PI as "participating in all activities of the school, paying schools fees, raising funds, attend meetings" p.105. Whereas another expressed his view, "PI in school, it's very important, we must help the school look clean, fix broken things, cut grass" (Donley, 2012 p. 105 and 106). Parents associated the notion of school partnership with infrastructure maintenance and school appearance due to their perception that classrooms were merely spaces for educators.

Similarly, research by Chan and Ritchie (2016 p. 296) with Chinese immigrant parents in New Zealand, a parent stated, "I helped with the setting up, tidying up and decorating kindergarten". However, parental understanding and engagement in involvement activities may vary based on their educational background. Al-Mahrooqi, Denman and Al-Maamari (2016) found that Omani parents, regardless of their education level, recognized the academic, psychological, and social benefits of PI. Their involvement ranged from visiting schools to assisting with school-related tasks - similarly to, Mbhiza and Nkambule (2023) observed parents assisting with schoolwork, participating in cultural activities, and engaging in governance roles within the school. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate parents' contributions to school activities (Salem Press, 2014). Despite schools' focus on academic performance, initiatives to establish PI in various activities should be encouraged and celebrated. Furthermore, volunteering not only benefits children academically but also provides opportunities for parents to develop skills, interact with diverse groups, and contribute meaningfully to the school community, ultimately enhancing their self-esteem and confidence (Furrer and Skinner, 2003).

### 3.2.4. Learning at home

Parents engaging in homework activities alongside their children represent just one of numerous ways through which they can participate in their child's educational journey (Culp, 2016). Homework plays a vital role in fostering positive study habits among children. Wages (2022) suggests that it also offers families an opportunity to engage with their children's educational journey, gaining insights into their academic pursuits. Despite ongoing debates regarding the efficacy of homework and concerns about

its potential to induce stress and impact children's well-being (Barbour, 2010), research indicates while their parent's manner of participation might vary based on the family's cultural norms or the individual traits of the child (Antony-Newman, 2019), active PI in homework assistance contributes to students' academic success and fosters long-term learning behaviours and attitudes (Cooper, 2007). Additionally, Research indicates that reading books to children is highly beneficial for their learning and development (Smith, 2020) and exposure to books fosters a passion for reading, ignites imagination, and enhances cognitive growth in children, setting the groundwork for both academic achievement and continuous learning throughout life. Furthermore, Epstein (2018) advocates for parents' engagement in learning alongside their children, as teachers can provide valuable guidance and resources to facilitate effective homework support.

Desforges and Abouchaar's (2003) literature review underscores the significant role of PI in homework, with a substantial percentage of first graders receiving assistance from their parents. However, Ou (2005) highlights a decline in PI as children progress through school, attributing this trend to diminishing parental confidence in their ability to assist with homework, as noted by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003, p.43). Barbour (2010) points out that inadequate parental confidence and understanding pose significant barriers to providing homework assistance, which in turn affects children's academic achievements.

Research by Newham (2019) underscores that Cambodian parents experience diminished confidence and resources to aid their children with homework due to language barriers, cultural disparities, and limited resources. Moreover, Donker's (2010, p.10) case study findings in Ghana suggest that the absence of a mother figure, as highlighted by a single parent, is perceived to be a hindrance to effective home-based learning, emphasizing the perceived influence of mothers on their children's education (Donker, p.32).

While PI correlates with increased student achievement (Ballen and Moles, 1994), Licardo and Leite (2022) propose that parents possessing higher levels of education exhibit increased engagement with teachers, attributed to their comprehension of the importance of education and refined communication abilities. This discrepancy creates an inequity in the access to optimal support throughout the educational process for all children. Regrettably, this situation does not assign blame, yet it inevitably results in some children experiencing deficits in this regard.

In spite of this, The National Education Association (NEA) emphasizes the importance of balanced PI in homework, encouraging independence and self-reliance in children (Cooper, Robinson, and Patall, 2006). Thus, neither excessive nor minimal PI is deemed optimal for children's academic success, highlighting the importance of striking a balance.

### 3.2.5. Decision-making

According to (Wages, 2022 p.39) 'One of the most powerful ways to encourage educational success in your child's school life is to become involved'. Decision-making is an active way parents can actively contribute to the educational success of their children. The Department of Education (2023) underscores that parents who actively participate in their child's educational journey tend to achieve higher levels of academic performance. Epstein (2018) further emphasizes the significance of parents and family members serving as representatives and leaders in school decision-making processes to bolster child academic achievement.

The National Curriculum in England, which offers a structured framework for teaching and learning across primary and secondary schools (DfE, 2013; 2014), although consulting with parents and guardians for valuable insights and feedback, are not directly involved in the curriculum decisions. Head's (2020) research, primarily centred on parents, particularly mothers, of early years children in the Midlands, acknowledges parents' participation in school meetings, PTA meetings, events and being part of the decision-making process, positively impacts their children's educational journey.

In a related study, according to Kyriakides (2005), there are additional beneficial outcomes associated with this collaborative partnership. The study suggests that when parents are encouraged and equipped to collaborate with children, they develop more positive attitudes, become more engaged, and actively support school activities. His research focuses on delineating school policies on fostering active partnerships to enhance school effectiveness. The study reported higher academic attainment in each subject among students at the experimental school following the implementation of the policy, as well as six months later.

Additionally, parent meetings serve as crucial platforms for teachers and school staff to disseminate essential information regarding curriculum updates, school policies, and student progress. This practice aids in keeping parents informed and engaged in their child's educational journey, aligning with the notion that meaningful PI in decision-making processes yields improved educational outcomes for students (Hoover and Wagner, 2013).

### 3.2.6. Collaborating with the community

Partnering with the community serves as a method through which parents can actively contribute to the education of children. Thartori (2018) research involving 80 Albanian parents found that parental collaboration with the community among Albanian parents indicates that there was less involvement reported in this aspect compared to other forms of PI. Specifically, most parents were not or rarely involved in collaborating with the community in activities such as helping other families, collaborating with businesses and industries, and organizing after-school programs. The study found that between 30% and 39% of parents reported some level of involvement in community collaboration activities. On the other hand, Pluijm, Gelderen and Kessels (2019) emphasizes the importance of collaborating with the community to support parents with less education in promoting their children's oral language development and that community collaboration can involve various stakeholders such as schools, teachers, researchers, and other community members working together to provide resources, workshops, training sessions, and materials to support parents in enhancing their children's language skills. Additionally, engaging with the community allows schools to better understand and respect the cultural backgrounds and values of their students and families. This cultural competence fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment where all students feel valued and respected (Garcia-Reid, Peterson and Reid, 2005). Furthermore, McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggest that the sharing of information, resources, and feedback, leading to more effective problem-solving and decision-making processes.

## 3.3. Factors that influence parental involvement

This section answers the third research question, 'What factors influence parents to be involved in their child's education?'. It examines the various elements that affect PI in child education, encompassing socio-economic status, societal dynamics, cultural heritage, and school-related factors. It explores how contextual elements shape parents' perceptions of their roles in education and the obstacles they encounter in actively engaging with their children's schooling. While it is widely acknowledged that PI in child education is crucial for academic success, numerous barriers impede such engagement. The literature by United Nations (1989), Delgado-Gaitan (1992), Coleman et al. (1996), Desimone (1999), Robinson and Harris (2014), Hornby and Blackwell (2019), Klooper (2020), Makarewiccz (2022), and Goulet et al. (2023) has been critically analysed and utilised to support this theme.

### 3.3.1 Socioeconomic status

The Coleman report conducted in the United States in 1966 titled 'Equality of Educational Opportunity', investigated educational disparities and the impact of socioeconomic status on academic achievement.

The findings from 600,000 students and tens of thousands of teachers challenged prevailing assumptions about the causes of educational inequality. While many had believed that differences in school resources such as funding, facilities, and teacher qualifications were the primary drivers of academic achievement gaps, the Coleman Report suggested otherwise. The report found that variations in school resources had less influence on student outcomes than factors like socioeconomic background and family circumstances (Coleman et al., 1966).

Numerous studies conducted since then have provided ample evidence to substantiate and reinforce this theory. Recent research by Goulet et al. (2023) in Canada has specifically examined the perceptions of young students regarding PI highlighting that various factors may influence the extent to which parents engage in their child's educational journey and consequently shape their experiences in his research paper. Klooper (2020) discovered that parents who were involved in the study perceived themselves as educators of their young children. However, they also acknowledged encountering societal and political obstacles within the educational system. Turney and Kao (2009), Villiger et al. (2014), and Camacho-Thomas et al. (2016), as cited in Goulet et al. (2023), highlight the differential involvement patterns among immigrant parents and those with low socioeconomic status (SES). While immigrant parents often exhibit heightened expectations and involvement in their child's academic endeavours, families grappling with low SES encounter obstacles such as time and resource constraints that impede their engagement in school-related activities.

Moreover, Kozol (1991) and Ogbu (1978, 1987), cited in Desimone (1999), underscore the systemic disparities within the United States education system, particularly concerning children from low-income and racial minority backgrounds. Despite the recognized importance of PI in enhancing academic outcomes, its efficacy for low-income children may be hindered by multifaceted risk factors associated with poverty, encompassing health, safety, schooling, and housing (Desimone, 1999; Krause and Dailey, 2009; Jackson et a., 2015). However, Robinson and Harris (2014) propose that the link between education and economic status implies differences in parents' knowledge levels as a positive. Consequently, children may have varying opportunities to learn and practice academic tasks at home regardless of their status and background.

Socioeconomic issues are a significant component of societal issues, whereby poverty or financial instability can impede PI by limiting access to essential resources such as transportation, technology, or time off work for educational pursuits. Furthermore, families contending with economic adversity may confront stressors that divert their focus away from supporting their child's educational endeavours (Green et al., 2010). Additionally, societal norms pertaining to gender roles, or the perceived value of education exert considerable influence on parental attitudes and behaviours to educational involvement. Cultural beliefs may prescribe specific roles for mothers and fathers, thereby shaping their degree of engagement with their child's schooling in distinct ways.

### 3.3.2. Societal factors

Societal factors can serve as barriers to PI in a child's education in various ways. These barriers may arise from broader social norms, cultural expectations, economic conditions, and institutional structures within a society. Cultural values hold varying beliefs regarding parenting roles and responsibilities, gender expectations and educational emphasis in different settings can significantly impact the level and type of involvement. Delgado-Gaitan (1992) highlights how language barriers or communication challenges can hinder effective collaboration between schools and families, particularly affecting immigrant or minority families. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) found that language difficulties, particularly for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, were cited as barriers in two out of eleven schools surveyed. Limited proficiency in the dominant language of the education system may impede parents' ability to interact with teachers or comprehend school policies and procedures (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Moreover, parents' educational backgrounds play a crucial role in shaping their confidence and capability to engage with their child's education. Parents with lower levels of formal education may feel less equipped to support their children academically or navigate complex educational systems, leading to decreased involvement (Lareau and Horvat, 1999). Makarewicz (2022) argues that parent's educational level affects a child's development and school performance. Additionally, parental dropout rates or academic struggles can further impact the level of PI (Jackson, Turner and Battle, 2015).

Jackson, Turner and Battle (2015) research discovered that barriers that hinder PI vary but more specifically disparities in resource accessibility and opportunities among children. However, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) underscores principles advocating for children's rights to education and equal opportunities, emphasizing equality and non-discrimination. Articles 2 and 28 of the Convention emphasize that every child should have access to education and opportunities without discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, religion, language, or family background. Education should aim to develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest extent, fostering respect for human rights, cultural diversity, and the environment (United Nations, 1989). These principles underscore the importance of promoting equal access to education and opportunities for all children, irrespective of socioeconomic status, and ensuring that measures are in place to address disparities and provide support to those in need.

### 3.3.3. Strategies to promote parental involvement

Achieving effective PI necessitates a strategic approach and favourable conditions that leverage social and cultural connections. Drawing from an extensive review of literature and theoretical frameworks, this section delineates evidence-based strategies for fostering parental engagement across various levels, encompassing individual, school, and community-based interventions.

As previously underscored, a significant barrier to PI lies in parents' limited understanding of its significance in their child's learning journey (Jackson, Turner and Battle, 2015). Hence, concerted efforts are required to enact necessary measures within schools.

Firstly, Parents must understand the concept of PI in order to fully accept their responsibility in their child's educational journey. Hoover-Dempsey (2010) advocates for schools to elucidate to parents the significance of their involvement and provide guidance on how they can effectively support their children's educational needs. Similarly, Fan and Chen (2001) emphasize that equipping parents with knowledge fosters advocacy for their children's education and promotes reinforcement of learning at home. Aligning with Every Child Matters (ECM) framework, it also underscores the vital role of family and community support in children's well-being (DfES, 2003), this approach reinforces the importance of familial engagement in educational endeavours.

Secondly, fostering open and consistent communication channels between parents and schools is imperative. Epstein (2001) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) advocate for regular updates on students' progress, dissemination of information regarding school events, and avenues for parents to communicate with educators. School initiatives can empower parents through workshops, seminars, and online resources aimed at enhancing parenting skills, understanding child development, and offering support with literacy and homework (Reynolds and Shlafer, 2018; Fan and Chen, 2001; Henderson and Mapp, 2002), thereby bolstering parental confidence in supporting their child's educational journey and enhancing their involvement in school activities.

However, for these initiatives to succeed, schools must cultivate an environment where parents feel welcomed and valued. Dantas et al. (2011) stress the importance of educators and administrators recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students to foster a sense of belonging within the school community. Initiatives such as organizing family-centric events, establishing parent-teacher associations, and inviting PI in decision-making processes can further

strengthen this sense of partnership (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Epstein, 2001), thereby contributing to a positive school culture and enhancing parental engagement.

## 4. Ethical considerations

Commitment to ethical standards is of extreme significance when conducting non-empirical research, as it ensures the protection of the rights and well-being of participants, in addition to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the study when using someone else work (Fink, 2014). According to Rhodes and Weiss (2013, p. 3) ethical issues in literacy research are 'relevant and useful' for university students embarking on research, especially when it involves data collection from or about living individuals, it requires ethical scrutiny (Denscombe, 2021). Aubrey et al. (2000, p.156) argue that ethics in research refers to the process of forming moral decisions regarding the objectives and methodologies of a study as well as a 'set of principles underpinning a project' which is the foundation of research (Mukheji and Albon, 2018).

As a secondary researcher drawing from current and past literature, it is imperative to verify that the authors adhered to ethical principles during their research endeavours. While examining the findings of various research articles, it became evident that some did not disclose the ethical protocols followed when conducting empirical research involving both children and parents. While authors may have deemed this information as irrelevant, its omission reflects a lack of transparency and the withholding of a crucial aspect of the research process (American Psychological Association, 2019). Regardless of the method chosen for data collection, whether it be interviews, surveys, or observations involving parents and children, obtaining informed consent is vital (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Parents must comprehend the study's objectives, the possible risks and benefits of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without facing repercussions. While this requirement was emphasized in several literature reviews, it was not universally addressed in all sources. Related to this point is the importance of safeguarding the confidentiality of participants, particularly when addressing sensitive subjects concerning family dynamics and education (Mukheji and Albon, 2018). Guaranteeing that all data utilised throughout the research process and outcomes are rendered unidentifiable by anonymizing personal information through pseudonymization is essential (Flewitt, 2020).

While examining ethical considerations addressed in the papers, particularly in the context of conducting non-empirical research on PI in child education, I recognized potential benefits and risks. I hope parents who come across my dissertation will realize that (PI) encompasses more than just sitting down and working with their child; rather, there are numerous other approaches that are not as intensive or time-consuming as commonly perceived. However, given that PI is multifaceted and perceived differently by various individuals, I was concerned that I might not be able to cover all aspects of the topic due to word count limitations. Additionally, considering the sensitive nature of the topic, I wanted to ensure that my research did not offend anyone who may not be actively involved in their child's education or chooses not to be. The intention was to raise awareness and promote a positive impact.

In the process of research there are certain issues that can arise. According to Coady (2010) in the nineteenth century, research conducted on indigenous peoples often lacked consideration and exhibited power imbalances (Corsaro, 2015). Power dynamics in research involving both adults and children are intricate and carry ethical implications. Therefore, it is crucial to engage in reflexivity and contemplate one's positionality. Throughout this research journey, I examined how my background, experiences, biases, and perspectives might influence every stage of the research process (Carter, 2018), from crafting research questions to interpreting findings. Embracing reflexivity involved engaging in reflective exercises such as journaling and engaging in discussions about the research process with peers and family members. These activities allowed me to gain insights into my own perspectives and assumptions, ultimately helping to approach the research from a more neutral standpoint.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, this dissertation has explored the intricate domain of PI in child education, aiming to comprehend its dynamics, effects, and significance. By conducting a thorough literature review and a non-empirical analysis of existing research, several key insights have emerged. It's clear that PI encompasses a wide range of activities, from academic support to emotional guidance, all of which significantly influence children's educational outcomes. The research confirms the positive link between PI and academic achievement, highlighting the crucial role parents play in their children's educational success and overall well-being. However, it also acknowledges challenges such as socioeconomic disparities and cultural variations that impact the nature and extent of PI.

The study's contribution lies in its nuanced examination of PI, revealing both its benefits and obstacles across diverse contexts. By combining existing literature, a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of PI has been attained, informing educational practices and policies. The findings advocate for tailored approaches that consider individual and contextual factors rather than simplistic views of PI.

Reflecting on the research process, initial perspectives on PI were largely validated, but deeper engagement with diverse viewpoints led to a more nuanced understanding of its complexities. The profound impact of PI on children's aspirations and expectations underscored the importance of addressing this topic. Looking ahead, there's a pressing need to explore strategies for enhancing PI, especially among marginalised communities. Recommendations include culturally sensitive approaches, providing support for parents, and fostering partnerships between stakeholders. Further research should investigate the long-term effects of PI and effective interventions to ensure equitable access to education for all children. In hindsight, there are aspects of the research process that could be improved, such as expanding the scope to include the effects of PI on young adults and adults, exploring unconventional forms of PI, and examining gender roles and expectations in PI contributions.

Overall, this research journey has been enlightening, deepening understanding of the complexities of PI and prompting advocacy for inclusive practices that empower parents as partners in their children's educational journey.

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