

Parental Support in the Learning of Students with Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Home

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Abstract Education policy encourages parental support as a mechanism for improving learning outcomes. This survey was conducted to determine how well parents can contribute to academic achievement in the special education needs (SEN) among deaf and hard of hearing students. This study uses the Epstein Parent involvement Model and Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory. A set of 20 questionnaire items with a five-point Likert scale adapted from this study by the Ministry of Education Malaysia was used. A total of 22 students from a secondary school in Seremban were selected for the purpose of this study. The data were analyzed descriptively and in inference using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 to obtain scores. The Pearson correlation test shows that the relationship between deaf and hard of hearing students' academic achievement and parental support is a strong and significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$). The findings show low parental support with deaf and hard of hearing students' academic achievement, which is also a low level. Overall, the study found that parents need to pay close attention to providing a home-based learning environment, social interaction, communication, and academic support to help children develop their potential self and achieve better student academic achievement.

Keywords: parental support; deaf and hard of hearing students; academic achievement

INTRODUCTION

Parental support in education can be carefully measured in accordance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 (Polloway et al. 2013). The level of parental support in the academic achievement of the SEN is a good effort as embodied in the IDEA 2004 policy (Burke, 2013). Thus, SEN's academic achievement is a collaboration between various parties that requires collaborative practice in the construction of IEP. In Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, the closest environment to a child is his or her family (Bronfenbrenner, U. 1977).

Morrison (1978) argues that the concept of comprehensive parental support is an actualization process of the potential of parents, to help parents find strengths and talents and to apply them to themselves and their families. Support of parents greatly determines the achievement of the children in the goals set by the school. Conway (2003) argues that parental support needs to be stimulated because it has a profound effect on children's social development. The findings of Arnold (2008) show that higher parental support determines high achievement of children's academic. Rohaty (2003) explain in her study in Malaysia, often home conditions do not support children's learning environment. While the parents of the working class are usually busy with work and less time to entertain the children. Finally, parents fail to play a role in the

academic achievement of special children.

Based on figure 1, it shows that the average use time of 7 - 16 years old students, based on 42 weeks in school and an average of 5.5 hours in school each day (primary and secondary), 2 hours of compulsory co-curricular time and 8 hours a day. Compared to 52% of time spent at home and in the community, only 15% of a child's time is spent at school (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2011).

Problem Statement, Previous studies on the involvement of SEN parents in education (Taib, 2009), IEP construction (Abidah Abd Rahman, 2014) and parent cooperation (Khalid, Yasin & Hanafi, 2013) are relatively limited in Malaysia when compared to studies conducted abroad. The academic achievement of the SEN hearing problem is closely linked to the support and encouragement of parent with special need students.

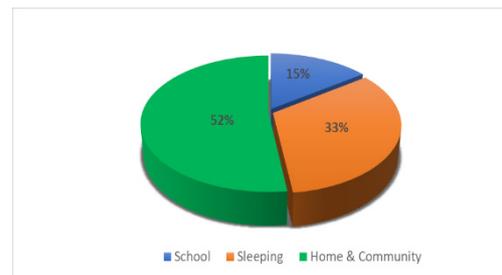


Figure 1: Students Time Usage (Resource Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2011)

However, parents are unable to help their children because they are too busy with their careers and lack of knowledge and interest in finding ways to help and improve their children's academic achievement (Landmark, Robert & Zhang, 2013). Parents put many reasons to limit their participation in the SEN education process of hearing problem students. The most common parental constraint is time, lack of knowledge about the educational process and lack of confidence in expressing opinions (Yasin & Kuan, 2009).

Furthermore, socio-cultural differences, socioeconomic status, parental education status and language barriers also have an impact on parental support (Landmark, Robert & Zhang, 2013). Parents cannot adapt when they are less interested and in a less conducive environment and are uncomfortable with their perceived personal background. Personality and professional skills are also measure of the level of parental support in academic achievement (Rehm, Fisher, Fuentes-Afflick & Chesla, 2013). Family members especially parents play an important role as socialist agents in children's life and have a significant impact on children's development more at home than school (Nazrah Jamaludin, 2018).

Some parents are unaware of the importance of academic achievement for their children's future (Landmark, Robert & Zhang, 2013). The level of parents' understanding of SEN's academic achievement of hearing problem is relatively low. In addition, parents are less exposed to detailed educational program implementation information at school (Abdullah et al., 2015). Generally, the community perception of the disabled with the assumption of individual abilities and skills is limited (Zinaida Ariffin., 2006). Students with hearing disabilities, like other special needs students, have the same interests and aspirations as normal students. In fact, there are those with cognitive abilities that can produce higher academic achievement than normal students (Tahir, Mustafa & Yassin, 2009).

However, many students with hearing loss are excluded from learning because they fail to master the knowledge and skills taught in school. Although provided with equal educational opportunities as a typical student, the hearing impairment experienced by these students remains a major obstacle to the communication and learning process. This is because students with hearing problems often have speech problems. This causes them to often feel alienated from the surrounding community, less confident and less energetic. However, this can be counteracted by the active role of parents support in the learning process of hearing-impaired children. There is no shortage of parents who are still unable to accept their children despite the many interventions that can be conducted at home to aid their learning and development. Attitude, acceptance, engagement and expectations of parents

have been identified as important indicators of the academic excellence of hearing-impaired students. Therefore, a careful study should be conducted to identify and deepen the relationship of parent support to academic achievement of hearing-impaired students.

METHOD

The study was a quantitative study conducted by means of a survey. The survey method has its own advantages as both quantitative and qualitative studies can be applied together. The fields of social science and education often apply survey methods based on non-experimental study design. This method collects information from a group of individuals or samples based on their response to specific questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). Survey study design is typically used for large sample sizes in the data collection process, but in this study the survey method is considered to be the most appropriate design for collecting data from study samples with hearing loss.

Sampling was performed using purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling method is a non-probability sampling method. This method is used because the researcher needs to select a specific sample of the population according to the characteristics and objectives of the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Methods of purposive sampling are also important for identifying and selecting someone who is knowledgeable or experienced about the phenomenon under study (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

To collect the survey data, the researcher used questionnaire method. The study population consisted of 50 students (Form 1 to 5) with hearing impairment who were studying in a special classroom in Seremban. Using the method of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total of 22 students were selected as the sample at the 95% confidence level. According to Maleske (1995), the most important thing to pay attention to during sampling is to ensure that the selected population and sampling are correct so that the findings of the study can be used to make inferences and generalizations about the study population.

Data were collected through a questionnaire instrument on parental support for academic achievement of hearing-impaired students. The social ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner and the Epstein Parent Involvement Model has been used as a guide in this study on parental support for academic achievement. The questionnaire used consisted of a) parent support activities b) providing a home learning environment c) social interactions with children c) communication d) academic support 20 question items adapted from the SARANA questionnaire (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011)

The 2009 PISA International Study (PISA: Program for International Student Assessment), conducted by the OECD (Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development) shows parents spend time with their children at home affects their children's academic achievement (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2011). Therefore, it is important for parents to evaluate their support with their child and take appropriate action to help their child achieve academic success. Parent's questionnaire provided will analyse the strengths and weaknesses in four areas regarding support (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2011): (i) Providing a home-based learning environment, (ii) Social interactions with children, (iii) Communication with children, (iv) Support for children's excellence.

The researcher, who is a sign language teacher, provided the instructions and explanations required by the respondents before and during the questionnaire distributed. Respondents were given an hour and 15 minutes to mark their scores; with an average of two minutes to respond to each item. Once completed, the questionnaires were collected to be analysed. The collection of questionnaires was reviewed to ensure that respondents had answered all the items in the study. The data were manually filled into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 software for statistical analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Parent Support Activities. The role of family members, especially parents who are willing to put the time and energy into providing full support is crucial in determining children's interest and inclination to learn. A parent is the closest person to a child in a family. Therefore, they play an important role in shaping children's development (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Parental support in the educational process in particular helps to develop children's self-concept that directly influences their academic achievement (Rohaty, 2003). There are many types of support activities that parents can provide to ensure children's academic excellence, including involvement in providing a home-based learning environment, social interaction, communication and academic support.

Parents Support Level. The findings show that the level of parental support in terms of providing a home-based learning environment, social interaction, communication and support is in the 'advanced' category according to the recommendations proposed in the Parenting Effectiveness Study Document for Pupil Learning (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 2015), while academic support falls into the 'basic' category. The 'advanced' category is interpreted as

a moderate level of support, and the 'basic' category is interpreted as a low level of support. Therefore, it can be concluded that many of the parents of hearing-impaired students still fail to provide full support to their children's education. There are many forms of support that can be enhanced by parents as a catalyst for children's academic achievement, especially in terms of academic support. Behaviours such as helping children complete homework, reading together, praising and providing tuition classes should be encouraged to stimulate children's interest in learning to achieve better academic performance.

Providing a Home Learning Environment. The findings show that 90.9% of the parents or guardians of the respondents provided a home-based learning environment. This illustrates that parents have the awareness to provide appropriate facilities for students to study at home. The study also found that 72.7% of parents make sure that their student learning space is neat and clean. This finding also demonstrates the parents' 'commitment to fostering students' interest in home learning as much as in school. Mahamud, Hassan & Fakhruddin (2017), explained that home furnished with conducive space and environment is one of the essential requirements for effective learning process among students. This fact is supported by a study conducted by Abd. Razak (2011) on 1000 Form 4 students in Selangor has found that the majority of students expect parental support for their learning process to be reflected in providing a comfortable learning environment at home.

Despite the seriousness of providing a home-based learning space, the majority of respondents' parents did not pay much attention to their home study schedule. 90.9% of students did not have a home study schedule. The use of home schedules helps students balance the time spent on learning and other activities. Timetables also help students to discipline themselves and to diversify their daily activities.

In addition, 68.2% of parents were found to not provide adequate supplemental books for children. The findings of the study also show that all parents of the respondents did not reduce the noise from radio or television while their children were studying. This should also be noted as the noise from the radio or television may affect the student's attention. According to Marchant et al., (2001), parents' actions to ensure that their children use their time wisely and create appropriate home conditions for uninterrupted learning have a positive impact on their academic achievement. This is also supported by Knollman et al., (2007) who stated that parents can improve students' ability to complete assignments and homework by setting a good place and time for them.

Social Interactions with Children. Social interaction in the family is very important for the development of

the children's soul. Ratnawati and Sinambela (2000) explained that harmonious parental relationships with children can enhance their intelligence. This can be seen in the behaviour of parents who often invite children to talk and respond to them. Such behaviour gives children the impression that parents are always willing to pay attention to them, which can directly improve them in the academic achievement. In addition, if family life is always taken care of especially by the parents, the children will appreciate the service and the sacrifice of the parents will motivate them to repay the service that has been poured out through hard work.

The findings show that 68.2% of parents talk with their children daily. This is an easy way for parents to develop friendly and close relationships with children, especially in their early teens. According to Abdul, Syeda, Madiha & Qandeel (2015), it is important for parents to talk to their children on a regular basis as they will feel that there are people who appreciate and care about them over time. Thus, they will not hesitate to share their feelings and express any concerns they may have to their parents, including in their studies.

The findings also show that only 9.1% of parents eat with their children each day, while 59.1% of parents do not spend enough time with their children. Previous studies by Eisenberg et al., (2004) have reported that frequent parenting and children eating together have a positive impact on children's learning and achievement, especially in terms of language development. According to Larson (2008), eating together is an opportunity for parents to inculcate pure values and to cultivate praiseworthy attitudes in the children's soul. Fiese et al., (2002), on the other hand, states that eating together promotes intimacy between parents and children. With such close relationships, parents can provide advice and encouragement to their children's education in a consistent manner, while children are more receptive to the guidance and teachings provided by parents. Therefore, parents should increase their meal time with children as a step toward improving their academic achievement.

Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012), on the other hand, reported the importance of parents engaging in activities with children as a form of social interaction. According to Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012), parents need to spend time in various activities both indoors and outdoors with children as it is an opportunity for parents to reach out to their children and immerse themselves in their lives. Parents should also encourage children to engage in activities such as sports and recreation without any coercion as these activities can enhance children's confidence and self-esteem in facing daily life challenges including school lessons.

In addition, this study also found that only 31.8% of parents were aware of their children's movements while 18.2% of parents were providing religious or moral education to their children, at least once

a week. Parents should devote more time to these activities as children develop within close family and environmental relationships. Good social interactions between children and parents can have a positive effect on their behaviour and self-esteem, including in the learning process. According to Sudjana (2006), students' academic achievement is strongly influenced by their family environment and social interactions. Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012) have stated that it is important for parents to monitor children's activities and to apply moral values such as honesty, trust, respect and responsibility to help children develop positive self-concepts, and noble personalities.

Communication. Communication is an important aspect of ensuring the well-being of a family institution. Poor communication in the family is often characterized by relationships with family members contaminated with negative feelings such as jealousy and resentment, parental attitudes toward children's learning and ignoring the need for children to learn comfortably (Gerungan, 2006). Therefore, parents are responsible for ensuring that these aspects are taken into account in the children's academic development process. Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012) have suggested that parents should discuss what their children go through at school regularly; including asking them about lessons learned, school work to be prepared, recent developments in the lesson, and so on. This recommendation is consistent with findings that show that 45.5% of parents talk about their educational progress while 50% of parents hear their children talk about events at school, at least two to three times a week.

The findings of the study show that 18.2% of parents are aware of the day-to-day workload of children as well as the adherence of Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012) The study also found that 50% of parents exchange their thoughts with their children, at least five times a week, with 18.2% of them doing so daily. In addition, 40.9% of parents were found to be aware of planning their child's activities at least once a week. According to Newchurch (2017), it is important for parents to take their own initiative to find out what their children think and do, especially in relation to their education. This can be done by talking to them regularly. It is not advisable for parents to wait until there is a problem reaching out to their children because at that time, children may no longer be interested in sharing what they have been through, but it may also be frustrating for parents to fail to help their children (Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2005).

Academic Support. The findings showed that 40.9% of the parents did not give praise and stimulation, 59.1% did not give a boost or motivation, 50% did not do reading activities, and 40.9% of the parents did not guide their children to complete homework. Studies have also found that no parents provide tuition guidance for their children.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficient test results

		Providing a home-based learning environment,	Social interaction	Communication	Academic support
Student academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	.835**	.754**	.892**	.653**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.001
	N	22	22	22	22

Among these academic support activities, parental involvement in children's homework has been emphasized by previous studies. Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2001) has reported that parental involvement in children's homework affects their academic achievement. This process involves parents' modelling, reinforcing and teaching activities that support positive development of children's behaviour, attitudes and knowledge (Eereka et.al, 2014). As parents monitor and help children prepare for homework, children have the opportunity to observe and emulate their parents' behaviour, knowledge and skills. This is a process of teaching and modelling for children. Further, repeated exposure to similar situations will serve as a reinforcement step for children. As such, active parental involvement helps children understand the importance of completing homework while changing their perceptions and attitudes toward learning in general. These changes are expected to motivate children to study more diligently.

Most of the parents of this study found that they did not pay much attention to the motivation aspect. According to Ghazi et al., (2010) parents should encourage children to study hard by discussing the importance of education to them regularly; for example by telling the story of an individual's success that can be exemplary, or by describing the hardships of someone who has to travel far and wide to leave loved ones to work due to poor academic standing. By explaining these causes and consequences, parents can increase their children's intrinsic motivation, which in turn motivates them to become more engaged in their learning.

In another study, Henderlong & Lepper (2002) stated that students' intrinsic motivation can also be enhanced by giving praise and words of encouragement. Unfortunately, most of the parents of the survey did not take them seriously. Praises and words of encouragement

act as a reinforcement of children's positive behaviour, so the same mechanism can be used to encourage their involvement in learning. Students who are praised by both parents and teachers will be encouraged to repeat their behaviour and if this is practiced in the teaching and learning process, their academic performance will certainly improve.

The study also found that none of the parents sent the respondents to a tuition guidance class. This may be due to the lack of appropriate tuition centres to support the learning of special needs students. However, parents may choose to provide tuition facilities at home for hearing-impaired children as a measure of enrichment and reinforcement of the materials learned at school.

Relationships between Parental Support Level and Student Academic Achievement. Pearson correlation tests were conducted to identify the relationship between the setting of home learning, social interaction, communication and parental academic support for student academic achievement. The results of this test are represented by the Pearson correlation coefficient, r shown in Table 1.

** The correlation was significant at $p < 0.05$

The findings in table 1 showed in the that there was (i) a strong and significant positive relationship between the provision of home learning and student academic achievement with $r = 0.835$, $N = 22$, $p = .000$; (ii) strong and significant positive relationship between social interaction and student academic achievement with $r = 0.754$, $N = 22$, $p = .000$; (iii) strong and significant positive relationship between student communication and academic achievement with $r = 0.892$, $N = 22$, $p = .000$; and (iv) strong and significant positive relationship between academic support and student academic achievement with $r = 0.653$, $N = 22$, $p = .001$.

Table 2: Regression model for the study variables

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of Estimate
1	.907	.823	.781	.302

Table 3: Regression ANOVA table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.219	4	1.805	19.743	.000
	Residual	1.554	17	.091		
	Total	8.773	21			

Table 4: Regression coefficients of the study variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	Providing learning environment	-.115	.343	-.126	-.33	.741
	Academic support	.295	.196	.218	1.50	.150
	Communication	.892	.268	.845	3.33	.001
	Social interaction	.043	.247	.044	.17	.861

The data obtained is an indication of the direct relationship that exists between parental support and hearing student achievement; whereas the level of parental support increases, student academic achievement will also increase. This gives the impression that as parents place more emphasis on aspects of the setting for home learning, social interaction, communication and academic support, students' academic performance will improve. The findings of this study can be supported by the findings of Hamid, Othman, Ahmad, & Ismail (2011) who also found a positive relationship between parent involvement in terms of discussion, caregiving and communication with student academic achievement. Zulkifli et al., (2011), explain that parents should pay close attention to the aspects of discussion, care and communication with children as a stimulus for them to study hard and achieve good results.

Parental Support Activities That Affect Student Academic Achievement. Multiple regression tests were conducted to identify parenting support activities (home learning, social interaction, communication and academic support) that significantly affected student academic achievement. The results of this test are represented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

The regression models obtained through this study were $F(4, 17) = 19.743$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .823$. This model was significant at $p < 0.05$. Regression coefficients showed that parental support in the form of communication significantly affected students' academic achievement ($p < 0.05$). This finding is consistent with the results of the Yovsi (2014) study that reported a significant relationship between students' academic achievement and their parent-child communication. According to Yovsi (2014), children who have good communication with parents have a

more open mind and are more motivated to succeed in their education.

The data obtained are also in agreement with the findings of Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012) which suggest that communication is one of the important aspects of parental involvement in children's education that has a positive impact on students' academic achievement. Grace, Jethro & Aina (2012), explain communication helps reduce the generation gap between parents and children, especially adolescents and helps parents channel their aspirations into children's education.

CONCLUSION

The study highlighted the importance of parenting support activities to the academic achievement of hearing-impaired students. The strong and significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$) between providing a home-based learning environment, social interaction, communication and academic support with student academic achievement indicates that students' academic achievement of hearing impairment, which is generally at a poor level, can be improved when parents increase their support activities at home. The aspects of communication that have been identified to significantly affect the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment ($p < 0.05$) compared to other forms of support should be taken seriously by parents. In conclusion, the findings of this study hope to give parents, especially children with disabilities an awareness of the importance of their role in providing support for home-based learning environment, social interaction, communication and academic support to help children develop their potential, self-confidence and achieve better student academic achievement.

Suggestions For Advanced Study

This study has explored the relationship between parental support level and the academic achievement of hearing-impaired students. To obtain more detailed information on parental support activities, qualitative data collection could be conducted on the respondents of the study. In addition, data can also be collected directly from parents compared to the students as in this study. This study can also be extended by using a larger number of samples as well as respondents with other types of disabilities. Such studies are seen as important for making generalizations more accurate than the findings.

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