

THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY FROM THE KALMUNAI EDUCATION ZONE, SRI LANKA

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Parental involvement is widely recognized as a key determinant of student achievement. However, evidence from peripheral, socio-economically disadvantaged regions of Sri Lanka remains limited. This study investigates the effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of senior secondary (Grades 10–11) students in the Kalmunai Education Zone, Ampara District, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. Adopting a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 60 teachers, 120 students, and 120 parents using questionnaires, and from 47 educational stakeholders, including principals, deputy and assistant principals, zonal education officers, and school development society members, through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document reviews across twelve schools. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically and triangulated with quantitative findings. The findings show that parents' educational level, economic status, time allocation, and direct educational support are associated with student achievement. The majority of teachers regarded parental involvement as highly important (42 of 60, 70%), while a substantial proportion of parents allocated only limited time to their children's studies (61 of 118, 52%) and reported average or low economic status (82 of 120, 68%). The principal challenges constraining involvement were parents' time constraints, low educational qualifications, and economic hardship. Thematic analysis of interviews and survey data revealed that active parental support, academic interest, and constructive parent–teacher collaboration were key facilitators of improved achievement, whereas educational, economic, and time-related limitations were consistently cited as negative influences. The study recommends that strengthening parent-teacher partnerships, together with targeted parental education, economic support, and awareness programs, is essential for improving student achievement in disadvantaged zones. As the first focused investigation of parental involvement in the Kalmunai Education Zone, it offers context-specific guidelines for educational planners, school administrators, and policymakers.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Kalmunai education zone, Parent-teacher collaboration, Parental involvement, Secondary education