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**A CASE STUDY ON PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT ON CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Chela Chin

This study is aimed at determining the extent of parents' involvement in children's education, the factors that influence the extent of parents' involvement in children's education and the effects of parents' involvement in children's education. A case study was carried by using the questionnaire which was administered to a group of thirty parents from Iban community in Rumah Albert Angang, Sengalang Debak in Betong District. The questionnaires consist of three sections: Section A (Extent of parents' involvement in children's education), Section B (The factors that influence the extent of parents' involvement in children's education, and Section C (The effects of parents' involvement in children's education). The results showed that majority of the parents who involved in this study realized the importance of their involvement in their children's education was vital in improving their children's academic achievement. By getting involved these parents felt that they had performed their part alongside the school and that they were not leaving it to the school alone to educate their children. The results also showed that these parents strongly believed that their involvement in their children's education could bring positive effects toward their children's academic achievement as well as their children's attitude and social behavior, and motivate them in their learning. Based on the findings, suggestions and recommendations for further studies were also discussed.

ABSTRAK

PENGLIBATAN IBU BAPA DALAM PENDIDIKAN ANAK-ANAK

Chela Chin

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mendokumentasikan sejauh mana tahap penglibatan ibu bapa dalam pendidikan anak-anak, mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi tahap penglibatan ibu bapa dalam pendidikan anak-anak serta kesan penglibatan tersebut terhadap pendidikan anak-anak. Kajian kes telah digunakan dalam kajian ini ke atas tiga puluh orang ibu bapa dari kalangan masyarakat Iban dari Rumah panjang Albert Angang, Sengalang Debak. Borang kaji selidik telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Terdapat tiga bahagian dalam Borang kaji selidik tersebut iaitu Bahagian A (Tahap penglibatan ibu bapa dalam pendidikan anak-anak), Bahagian B (Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi tahap penglibatan ibu bapa dalam pendidikan anak-anak), serta Bahagian C (Kesan penglibatan ibu bapa terhadap pendidikan anak-anak). Hasil daripada kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa majoriti ibu bapa yang terlibat dalam kajian ini menyedari peri pentingnya mereka melibatkan diri dalam pendidikan anak-anak mereka untuk meningkatkan pencapaian akademik mereka. Dengan penglibatan mereka ini, mereka beranggapan bahawa mereka tidak menyerahkan tanggungjawab mendidik anak-anak secara langsung kepada para guru sahaja sebaliknya bekerjasama dengan pihak sekolah dalam mendidik anak-anak mereka. Kajian ini juga mendapati para responden percaya bahawa penglibatan mereka mampu memberikan kesan positif kepada pencapaian akademik anak mereka selain membentuk sikap dan peribadi anak-anak serta memberi perangsang kepada mereka dalam pelajaran. Cadangan-cadangan bagi penyelidik akan datang juga turut disyorkan.

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LIST OF ABBREIATIONS

SES Socio Economic Status

PTA Parent-teacher-Association

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the research problem, research objectives and research questions, significance and definitions of key term, and finally the summary.

1.1 Background of the study

It is no doubt that parents' involvement with the schools has become a major educational issue in the 1980s. The survey on parents' involvement in students' academic achievement is another aspect of study in the realm of education. In Malaysia, as far as children's education is concerned, parents' involvements are vital in children's education to promote student achievement.

The findings of the previous studies supported the contention that parents' involvement is an important element in student achievement. Parents are considered as the role model for their children in their concern for their children's success in life. Nevertheless, the work of imparting knowledge to children is not solely the responsibility of teachers but a collective effort from students and parents (William, 2001).

Similarly, to a certain extent, student's academic achievement may depend on the amount of time parents spend on communicating with teachers and monitoring student's

homework in the home (Dimock et al., 1996). Hence, parents' commitment is needed for instance to arrange appropriate study time and space, modeling desired behavior such as reading for pleasure, monitoring homework and actively tutoring student in the home (Cotton and Wikelund, 2001). As a result, when parents are involved in their children's education, their children will be motivated as their parents show concern in their education.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study intends to find out the extent of parents' involvement on children's education, the factors that influence the extent of parents' involvement in children's education, and the effects of parents' involvement in children's education.

The research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parents' involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement. Further, the research shows that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects (Cotton and Wikelund, 2002). Hence, when school and parents are able to work hand in hand together, it is hoped that success for the school, parents and most importantly, the students will be achieved.

1.3 Research objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- (i) To examine to what extent parents show concern in their children's education.
- (ii) To investigate the factors that influences the extent of parents' involvement in children's education.
- (iii) To find out the effects of parents' involvement on children's education.

1.4 Research questions

This study will be carried out based on the following research questions:

- (i) To what extent do parents show concern in their children's education?
- (ii) What are the factors that influence the extent of parents' involvement in children's education?
- (iii) What are the effects of parents' involvement on children's education?

1.5 Significance of the study

Parents' involvement is a powerful influence in students' educational success. Studies showed that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's education; the more beneficial are the achievement. Consequently, this study is carried out to examine the extent of parents' involvement on children's education, including the

factors that influence the extent of parents' involvement on children's education as well as to find out the effects of parents involvement on children's education.

Therefore, with the findings made after the research had been carried out, it is hoped that the results will provide parents in Rumah Albert Angang's long house (in which this study is carried out) a better understanding on their involvement in their children's education and its positive effects on children's education, as well as their attitude and behavior to enhance their academic achievement.

As a result, they would play a more active role in enhancing their partnership with the school authorities as well for the greater benefits of their children. It is perceived that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, they would have students who achieve better results. According to Feuerstein (2000), parents' involvement have positive impact on student's performance.

1.6 Definition of key term: Parents' Involvement

The term "Parents' Involvement" will be used widely as this study intends to find out the extent of parents' involvement in children's education, the factors that influence the parents to be involved in their children's education as well as the effect of parents' involvement on children's education.

Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations (Parent-Teacher Conference, for instance). Besides, they can become more involved in helping their children improve their schoolwork, providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, monitoring

homework and actively tutoring their children at home. They also can volunteer to help at school activities.

By sharing and putting serious effort in their children's schoolwork at home, this kind of assistance do contribute greatly to their children's attendance, achievement at school and at home and also in classroom behavior.

1.7 Summary

This chapter has given an overview of the background of the study and why the study is worth addressing. It also mentions the objectives of the study and the research questions to be answered. Specific terms used in the study have been elaborated explicitly for readers' understanding. Basically, the following chapter of this study will focus on the literature review related to the topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter review those literatures related to parents' involvement in children's education. It will look into to what extent of parents' show concern in their children's education. Apart from that, this literature review will also explain the factors that influenced the extent of parents' involvement in children's education as well as the effects of their involvement in children's achievement.

2.1 Parents' Involvement in Children's Achievement

Parents' involvement in student's academic achievement may include educational activities such as monitoring student's homework, donate money, volunteering in school activities, teaching extra classes, giving motivational talk or attending the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings (Feuerstein, 2000).

Parents' involvement was vital in children's education because parents have important perspectives on their children and could provide teachers with valuable information about their children (Becher, 1986). Students whose parents were involved in their schooling demonstrated advanced academic achievement and cognitive development (Herman and Yeh, 1980).

One of the ways parents could get involved in their children's education was through Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). A few studies had shown that parents'

involvement in the PTA was considered to be the most important predictor associated with students' success in learning (Feuerstein, 2000).

Researches showed that the more intensively parents were involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial were the academic achievement effects (Cotton and Wikelund, 2001). Thus, parents' involvement in the PTA played an important role in student's achievement. The role of PTA could be seen as a platform for parents and teachers to share their views on how to upgrade student's achievement. Through PTA also parents could offer help by volunteering to deal with outdoor activities or work in the classroom (Cotton and Wikelund, 2001).

In other instance, Sallie (2001) claimed that parents' involvement in children's schooling fostered a positive attitude towards education. It bonded the family and encouraged children to enjoy reading and the use of language. Moreover, it enhanced higher education and improves achievement.

Besides that, another way of parents to get involved in their children's education as stated by Stockard et al. (1992) was by teaching extra classes. By giving motivation talks also parents could help to increase student's motivation to learn and subsequently help them to understand the importance of education, which was obligatory in determining future career.

According to Seibold (1998), parents' involvement encompassed many different ways in which parents could involve in student's learning process. It included parents reading and monitoring of their children's homework to active role in helping the school to achieve academic achievement excellence. In other words, when parents get involved in the PTA, by volunteering in school activities or monitoring of homework, would

beneficial to students' confidence and self-esteem that came with secure feeling in their parents' commitment.

2.2 Type of involvement that works best in enhancing student's achievement

The researches showed that the more intensively parents were involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial were the achievement effects. This held true for all types of parent involvement in children's learning and for all types and ages of students (Cotton and Wiklund, 2001). National PTA (1997) claimed that, in general, the more direct the involvement of parents and child accomplishing the goal, the better the results. For example, parents listening to children's reading at home has a clear impact on student's reading improvement. Apart from that, parents who were directly involved in their children work or homework assignments, or tutoring them using materials and instructions provided by teachers, did show particularly impressive results.

According to Cotton and Wiklund (2001), there were strong indications that the most effective forms of parents' involvement were those which engaged parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home such as helping their children doing their schoolwork, arranging for their children's study time and television viewing. Moreover, parents could also showed a good example for their children to follow such as reading any academic articles or books so that to inculcate the interest to read.

Along similar line, researchers found that the more active forms of parents' involvement produced greater achievement benefits than the more passive one.

Considerably greater achievement benefits were noted when parents' involvement was active that was when parents worked with their children at home, when they attended and actively support school activities and when they helped out in classroom or field trips and so on.

However, as for which specific kinds of involvement in children's learning have the greatest affective benefits, no clear answer emerged from the research. Whereas direct parents' involvement in instruction seemed to be the single most powerful approach for fostering achievement benefits, all of the active forms of parents' involvement seemed more or less equally effective in bringing about improvement in student's attitude and behavior. Thus, all parents' involvement worked and worked well (Cotton and Wikeland, 2001).

2.3 Factors that influenced the extent of parents' involvement in children's education

According to Henderson (1981), when parents showed a deep interest in their children's school work or other activities, the parents were actually helping to promote the development of attitude in their children that was the key success in the schooling process. However, there were factors that limit the extent of involvement of parents in their children's education.

Based on the Bordieu's theory of Cultural Capital (as cited in Feuerstein, 2000, p.31) stated that schools represent and reproduce middle or upper class values, a focus of communication. Hence, teachers who had these kinds of backgrounds (middle or upper

class backgrounds) were able to communicate effectively with middle and upper class parents. Unfortunately, for parents who came from a lower social economy status (SES) background, they found it was difficult to adapt to the dominant culture of the school and thus put them at the disadvantage. This condition affected parents' interest and obligation to get involved in school activities compared to parents of middle or upper class SES background. Based on this comparison, Bordieu concluded that these differences were one of the main factors that affected parents' extent of involvement in children's education.

This theory was also supported by Lareau (as cited in Feuerstein, 2000, p.31) as she agreed that the existence in differences in Cultural Capital related to the family SES had influenced amount of interaction a parent has with the other parents, parent's understanding of school process, amount of contact parents had with school staff and parents communication skill with the school. Lareau found out that upper and middle class parents were more likely to become actively involved in school activities compare to working class parents who were more likely to give supportive role but not much direct involvement. She found that these findings were another important discovery as it suggested that Cultural Capital influenced the extent of parents' involvement and also students' achievement.

Another factor that influenced the extent of parents' involvement at school level namely students' characteristics, school characteristics and staff characteristics. According to Lortie, Purkey and Smith (as cited in Feuerstein, 2000, p.32) they defined staff characteristics in terms of teacher's age, experience and their interpersonal skill with parents. These factors affected the teachers' ability to work with parents. Apart from

that, those internal factors developed level of relationship with the parents that was either establish a close contact or otherwise.

Apart from that, students' Social Economic Status (SES) and the number of ethnic group representative whether they were the majority or minority also served to be the factor in determining the extent of parents' involvement in schools. According to them, parents from the majority group did tend to participate more actively compare to those parents whose ethnic group was minority.

Other factors were such as location of the school, size, the climate of the school, and school activities among community of the area. No doubt that school that was near to the residence of the parents may attracted more parents to get involved. Undeniably, all the factors mentioned above were all depended on how the parents viewed the school as learning institution whether it could provide a good and meaningful education for their children's future or otherwise.

2.4 Effects of parents' involvement in children's education

Based on the previous studies, the findings showed that parents' involvement in children's education had lead to higher student's academic achievement. As for parents' participation in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), studies showed that parents' involvement in the PTA were much inclined to help their children with their homework, that was mainly to upgrade their academic achievement. Thus, the involvement of parents in their children's education was likely to provide positive effects on student's academic achievement in the long run.

Keith et al. (1993) claimed that the effects of parents' involvement in school activities had a very powerful effect on whatever performance in school as parents played the motivating factor for their children. Researches showed that the more intensively parents were involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial were the achievement effects.

The effectiveness of parents' involvement in children's education was further stressed by Clark (1990), as he stated that parents who were always concerned and aware of their children's educational needs, such as communicating regularly with their subject teachers, reinforced school work, and monitoring completion of classroom assignments would have children who scores high grades in their examination.

As stated by Einstein (as cited in Zellman et al., 1998, p. 372), when there was more interaction between parent-school, students would begin to realize the importance of school, of working hard, thinking creatively, and helping one another. As a result, parent-school cooperation would enable students, school and parents to produce their own success.

This was supported by Greenwood and Hickman (as cited in Hoover, Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.4) as they claimed that parents' involvement in school activities has many positive benefits for students especially in enhancing their academic achievement. Students whose parents were actively involved in school activities and also concerned in their children's education, earned higher grades and test scores, created positive behaviors and emotional development.

National PTA (1997) also agreed that when parents were involved in their children's education, those students had higher grades, better attendance, completed

homework more consistently, and exhibited more positive attitudes and behavior. Apart from that, Junior and Senior high school students whose parents were remained involved, made better transitions, maintained quality of their work, and developed realistic plans for their future.

2.5 Summary

All the literature reviews mentioned above touch upon the parents' involvement in students' achievement, type of involvement that works best in enhancing students' achievement, factors that influenced the extent of parents' involvement in children's education, and effects of parents' involvement in children achievement. It is hoped that when parents are actively involved in children's education, they will be encouraged to learn and progressed in school.