

Article history:
Received 06 January 2024
Revised 08 March 2024
Accepted 12 March 2024
Published online 01 May 2024

The Dynamics of Parent-Teacher Relationships and Their Impact on Student Success

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Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Russell, W., Qiu, H. (2024). The Dynamics of Parent-Teacher Relationships and Their Impact on Student Success. *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*, 7(1), 212-218.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijes.7.1.21>



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The dynamics of parent-teacher relationships are pivotal in shaping student success across academic and socio-emotional domains. This study aimed to explore the complexities of these relationships and how they impact student outcomes through qualitative analysis.

Methodology: This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews with a total of 26 participants, comprising 14 teachers and 12 parents from various educational settings. Theoretical saturation was achieved to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Data were analyzed using NVivo software, focusing on thematic analysis to extract patterns and insights relevant to the dynamics of parent-teacher interactions.

Findings: Three main themes were identified: Communication Practices, Partnership Building, and Impact on Student Outcomes. Each theme revealed critical insights: effective communication practices are essential for maintaining informed and engaged relationships; partnership building based on mutual respect and trust enhances collaborative efforts; and these relationships positively influence student academic performance and social-emotional development.

Conclusion: The study underscores the significant influence of robust parent-teacher relationships on student success. It highlights the need for strategic educational practices that support these relationships to foster better student outcomes.

Keywords: Parent-teacher relationships, student success, qualitative research, educational dynamics, communication practices, partnership building, academic performance, social-emotional development

1. Introduction

The nexus of relationships between parents, teachers, and students plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational outcomes and overall development of students. Emerging research has increasingly highlighted how the dynamics within these relationships can profoundly influence student success across various dimensions—academically, socially, and emotionally (Carmona-Halty et al., 2021; Fu et al., 2022; Kausar et al., 2020; Mohammadi et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Roubinov et al., 2020; Schriever, 2021).

In recent years, studies such as those by Fu, Pan, and Chen (2022) have underscored the longitudinal impacts of parent-teacher relationships on students' academic achievements, specifically noting substantial influences in Chinese middle school contexts (Fu et al., 2022). Similarly, Santiago et al. (2016) have documented the critical role of trust in parent-teacher relationships, suggesting that this factor alone can significantly affect the educational trajectory of elementary school students (Santiago et al., 2016). These findings resonate with earlier work by Hughes and Kwok (2007), which pointed out that the quality of both student-teacher and parent-teacher relationships could serve as a catalyst for enhancing engagement and achievement among lower-achieving readers (Hughes et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the study by Minke et al. (2014) elaborates on the concept of congruence in parent-teacher relationships, exploring how alignment between parental and teacher perspectives can contribute to more effective educational strategies and improved student outcomes (Minke et al., 2014). This notion of congruence aligns with Ren and Fan's (2020) investigation into informant discrepancies and their implications for preschoolers' learning approaches, emphasizing the nuanced role of parent-teacher interactions in early educational settings (Ren & Fan, 2020).

On a broader scale, the research by Wang, Brinkworth, and Eccles (2013) highlights the moderating effects of teacher-student relationships on adolescents' emotional and behavioral adjustments, further supporting the interconnectedness of relationship dynamics within educational contexts (Wang et al., 2013). This interplay is also evident in Yang et al.'s (2024) longitudinal study, which connects the quality of parent-child relationships to the subsequent development of teacher-student relationships (Yang et al., 2024).

Moreover, literature by Garbacz, McIntyre, and Santiago (2016) specifically addresses the complexities of these

relationships for students with autism spectrum disorders, indicating unique challenges and considerations that underscore the need for tailored communication and engagement strategies (Garbacz et al., 2016). This specialization in communication strategies is critical, as evidenced by the diverse communication methods and their impacts documented across various studies (Hughes et al., 2005; Hughes & Kwok, 2007).

Additionally, the impact of parental involvement on student academic performance has been explored in various cultural and educational settings, as highlighted by Ibrahim, Jamil, and Abdullah (2012). Their findings from Katsina state primary schools in Nigeria contribute to a growing body of evidence suggesting that active parental involvement can significantly enhance student academic outcomes (Ibrahim et al., 2012).

In summary, the burgeoning research on parent-teacher relationships offers compelling evidence of their profound impact on student outcomes. This study aims to build on these foundations, providing fresh insights into the mechanisms through which these relationships influence student success across diverse educational settings and practices. Through a meticulous exploration of qualitative data, this research endeavors to offer actionable strategies that educators and policymakers can employ to foster more effective and supportive interactions among parents, teachers, and students.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This qualitative study was designed to explore the dynamics of parent-teacher relationships and their impact on student success. The data collection method involved semi-structured interviews, which were selected due to their flexibility in allowing for deep exploration of the perspectives and experiences of participants. The interviews were designed to reach theoretical saturation, where no new information was observed in the data, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the topic.

The study targeted a diverse group of participants comprising teachers and parents from various educational settings, including urban, suburban, and rural schools. The selection criteria aimed to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and viewpoints related to the dynamics of parent-teacher interactions. Participants were recruited through educational institutions and parent associations, ensuring voluntary participation and informed consent.

This study adhered to ethical guidelines to protect the welfare and rights of the participants. All participants provided informed consent, were made aware of the study's purpose, and were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality in the dissemination of the results.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Semi-Structure Interview

The semi-structured interviews were conducted using a guide prepared beforehand, which included open-ended questions to probe the nature of parent-teacher relationships and their perceived impact on student academic and social outcomes. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes, conducted either in person or via video conferencing tools, depending on the participant's preference and geographical location.

2.3. Data Analysis

The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim. NVivo, a leading qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, was employed to assist in the data analysis process. The software facilitated the organization, coding, and thematic analysis of the

transcribed data. Initial codes were generated based on the interview questions, and as more data were collected, these were refined and grouped into themes in an iterative process. The thematic analysis focused on identifying patterns and relationships within the data that illuminated the dynamics of parent-teacher relationships and their effects on students' educational experiences.

3. Findings and Results

In this qualitative study, a total of 26 participants were recruited to explore the dynamics of parent-teacher relationships and their impact on student success. The demographic composition of the participants included 14 teachers and 12 parents, ensuring a balanced perspective from both groups involved in the educational process. Among the teachers, 8 were from urban schools, 4 from suburban, and 2 from rural settings, reflecting a variety of educational environments. The parent group was similarly diverse, comprising 7 parents from urban, 3 from suburban, and 2 from rural backgrounds. The participants ranged in age from 28 to 54 years, with a mean age of 39 years. The gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 13 females and 13 males participating in the study.

Table 1

The Results of Thematic Analysis

Categories	Subcategories	Concepts (Open Codes)
Communication Practices	Frequency of Interaction	Daily updates, Weekly summaries, Semester reports, Attendance notifications
	Modes of Communication	Email, Phone calls, Text messages, Parent-teacher meetings, Online portals
	Responsiveness	Response time, Acknowledgment of receipt, Follow-up actions, Clarity of communication
Partnership Building	Content of Communication	Academic progress, Behavioral issues, Social development, Extracurricular activities, Homework assignments
	Barriers to Communication	Language differences, Technological access, Time constraints, Privacy concerns
	Role Perceptions	Educational partner, Support role, Authority figure, Mentor
	Engagement Opportunities	Parent volunteering, School events, Parent-teacher organizations, Fundraising activities
Impact on Student Outcomes	Trust and Respect	Mutual respect, Reliability, Transparency, Confidentiality
	Academic Performance	Grades improvement, Test scores, Subject comprehension, Study habits, Learning enthusiasm
	Social and Emotional Development	Peer relationships, Emotional resilience, Conflict resolution, Self-esteem, Empathy
	Parent and Teacher Expectations	Expectations alignment, Realistic goals, Feedback importance, Academic pressure, Personal development focus
	Intervention and Support Strategies	Tutoring, Counseling, Special education services, Behavioral plans, Parental guidance

In the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with parents and teachers, three primary themes emerged: Communication Practices, Partnership Building, and Impact on Student Outcomes. Each theme encompassed several

subthemes with related concepts highlighted through the data analysis using NVivo software.

3.1. Communication Practices

Communication between parents and teachers was characterized by its frequency, modes, responsiveness, content, and barriers. Frequent interactions, as described by one teacher, "range from daily updates to semester reports, which help keep the parents informed and engaged." The modes of communication varied widely, including emails, phone calls, text messages, parent-teacher meetings, and the use of online portals. One parent noted, "I appreciate the quick responses I get via email, which doesn't always happen with phone calls."

The content of these communications often covered a broad spectrum: "We discuss everything from academic progress to social behaviors and any necessary interventions," a teacher explained. However, barriers to effective communication were also identified. A parent mentioned, "The language difference is a significant hurdle; sometimes, the messages sent home are not in a language I can understand fully."

3.2. Partnership Building

This theme revolved around the perceived roles of parents and teachers, the opportunities for engagement, and the levels of trust and respect. Role perceptions varied, with a teacher stating, "I see myself as a partner in the child's education, not just an authority." Opportunities for parent engagement included volunteering, attending school events, and participating in parent-teacher organizations.

Trust and respect were fundamental to effective partnerships. "Trust builds over time when both parties are open and honest," said a teacher. Another parent commented, "Respect is crucial; it assures me that my input is valued in my child's education."

3.3. Impact on Student Outcomes

The final theme focused on how parent-teacher interactions influence student academic performance, social and emotional development, alignment of expectations, and the strategies for intervention and support. Academic performance improvements were often linked to effective parent-teacher communication, as one parent highlighted, "Regular updates on academic progress allow us to address any issues early on."

Social and emotional development was another critical area impacted by these relationships. "Teachers and parents need to work together to support children's emotional

resilience and peer relationships," a teacher remarked. The alignment of expectations between parents and teachers was seen as essential for fostering a supportive educational environment. One parent stated, "It's vital that we share realistic expectations and goals for my child's success."

In terms of interventions and support, strategies such as tutoring, counseling, and specialized educational services were frequently discussed. A teacher explained, "We coordinate with parents to set up any additional support services a student might need, be it tutoring or behavioral plans."

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this qualitative study, three main themes were identified that encapsulate the dynamics of parent-teacher relationships and their impact on student success. These themes are: Communication Practices, Partnership Building, and Impact on Student Outcomes. Each theme is divided into several categories that further refine our understanding of these complex interactions. Communication Practices includes categories such as Frequency of Interaction, Modes of Communication, Responsiveness, Content of Communication, and Barriers to Communication. Partnership Building is composed of Role Perceptions, Engagement Opportunities, and Trust and Respect. Lastly, Impact on Student Outcomes is explored through categories such as Academic Performance, Social and Emotional Development, Parent and Teacher Expectations, and Intervention and Support Strategies.

The Communication Practices theme revealed crucial insights into how often parents and teachers interact, the methods they use, and the effectiveness of their communication. Frequency of Interaction varied, ranging from daily to semesterly updates, which help maintain a consistent and informative dialogue. Modes of Communication were diverse, including emails, phone calls, text messages, face-to-face meetings, and digital platforms like online portals, each serving different needs and preferences. Responsiveness was noted as a critical factor, with timely replies seen as essential for building trust and maintaining engagement. The Content of Communication primarily involved discussions about academic progress, behavioral issues, and student welfare. However, participants also identified several Barriers to Communication, such as language differences, technological access limitations, and time constraints, which could hinder effective communication.

Under the theme of Partnership Building, the study highlighted the roles and expectations of both parents and teachers, their opportunities for engagement, and the level of trust and respect in their relationships. Role Perceptions included seeing each other as partners, supporters, or mentors, emphasizing collaborative and supportive roles rather than authoritative ones. Engagement Opportunities were identified in various forms, such as school events, parent-teacher meetings, and collaborative projects, which facilitate direct involvement in the educational process. Trust and Respect emerged as foundational to these partnerships, with participants stressing the importance of mutual respect, honesty, and openness as the basis for effective collaboration and interaction.

The theme of Impact on Student Outcomes was particularly significant, linking the quality of parent-teacher relationships directly to student academic and social-emotional success. Academic Performance was frequently discussed, with improvements often attributed to enhanced communication and joint problem-solving strategies between parents and teachers. Social and Emotional Development was also a focus, with effective parent-teacher relationships seen as vital for supporting students' emotional resilience, peer interactions, and overall social skills. Parent and Teacher Expectations helped align goals and strategies for student support, while Intervention and Support Strategies such as tutoring, counseling, and personalized support plans were noted as essential tools for addressing individual student needs.

Our study highlighted the critical role of frequent and effective communication between parents and teachers in enhancing student outcomes. Participants emphasized the importance of diverse communication modes, including digital platforms and face-to-face interactions. This finding resonates with the work of Santiago et al. (2016), who noted that trust and clear communication channels are foundational to fostering positive relationships between parents and teachers (Santiago et al., 2016). Furthermore, Hughes and Kwok (2007) demonstrated that effective communication is crucial for engaging parents in the educational processes, particularly for students who are lower achieving. These prior studies support our findings that well-established communication practices contribute significantly to educational success, emphasizing the need for schools to adopt versatile and accessible communication strategies (Hughes & Kwok, 2007).

The theme of partnership building revealed that both parents and teachers view their relationship as a

collaborative endeavor aimed at supporting student development. This was particularly evident in discussions about shared roles and mutual respect. These findings align with Minke et al. (2014), who found that congruence in parent-teacher perceptions significantly enhances the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts (Minke et al., 2014). Similarly, Garbacz, McIntyre, and Santiago (2016) highlighted that tailored strategies are crucial in supporting students with specific needs, such as those with autism spectrum disorders, further underscoring the importance of strong, respectful partnerships in addressing diverse student requirements (Garbacz et al., 2016).

Our results indicated that robust parent-teacher relationships positively influence student academic performance and social-emotional development. This is supported by Fu, Pan, and Chen (2022), who observed a longitudinal impact of these relationships on students' academic achievements in China (Fu et al., 2022). Moreover, the work of Wang, Brinkworth, and Eccles (2013) provides additional support, showing that teacher-student relationships serve as a moderating factor in students' emotional and behavioral adjustments (Wang et al., 2013). The intervention strategies discussed by our participants, such as personalized tutoring and counseling, align with these findings and highlight the practical implications of strong parent-teacher collaborations.

This qualitative study has effectively illuminated the complex dynamics of parent-teacher relationships and their significant impact on student success. Through semi-structured interviews, three main themes were identified: Communication Practices, Partnership Building, and Impact on Student Outcomes. Communication Practices encompassed the frequency and modes of interaction, responsiveness, and content, highlighting the crucial role of effective communication in fostering an educational environment conducive to student success. Partnership Building revealed the importance of role perceptions, engagement opportunities, and trust and respect in strengthening the collaborative efforts between parents and teachers. Finally, the theme of Impact on Student Outcomes demonstrated that positive parent-teacher relationships directly contribute to improvements in student academic performance and social-emotional development. These findings underscore the essential nature of strong, communicative, and collaborative relationships between parents and teachers as a cornerstone of effective education. They highlight the need for educational strategies that

prioritize and foster these relationships to enhance student outcomes.

Despite the insightful findings, this study has some limitations. The sample size was relatively small and primarily sourced from a specific geographical and cultural setting, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the study relied solely on qualitative data from interviews, which, while rich in detail, might benefit from triangulation with quantitative measures or observational data to provide a more comprehensive view of the dynamics involved.

Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings across different educational settings and cultures. Incorporating a mixed-methods approach could also enrich the understanding of parent-teacher relationships by combining qualitative insights with quantitative data on student outcomes. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore how these relationships evolve over time and their long-term effects on student success.

The implications of this study for educational practice are clear: schools and educators should invest in developing robust systems and training to improve communication and collaboration between parents and teachers. This might include the implementation of regular, structured communication channels and workshops that train both parents and teachers on effective collaboration techniques. Moreover, schools should consider policies that encourage parent engagement in a variety of school activities, fostering an inclusive environment that values and utilizes the input of parents in the educational process.

Authors' Contributions

In this study, the authors collectively were responsible for data collection, analysis, and manuscript writing.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

This study acknowledged all those who contributed to its completion.

Declaration of Interest

No conflict of interest was reported.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles such as confidentiality and voluntary participation.

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