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## **Parents' Satisfaction about Their Involvement in Schools – An Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

The objectives of the study were to find out the opinion of parents about the environment of the school, find out awareness of parents about school curriculum, find out parents views regarding communication about school, explore the views of parents regarding principal's concerns about their complaints, to find out the relationship between parent's qualifications and their involvement in school meetings. The study was descriptive in nature. Data was collected using the survey method with a questionnaire. Sample was selected by convenient sampling. Sample of the study constituted 76 parents of the students. The study led to the findings that majority of the parents were very much satisfied with the school atmosphere, reputation in the area, and security of the school's environment. Majority of the parents knew the curriculum of the school; however, many parents were of the view that they had no clear information of what was being taught in the school. Majority of the parents staunchly agreed that the school effectively dealt with the inappropriate behavior of the students. An average number of parents were agreed that

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the school encouraged them to play an active part in the school matters; an average number of parents preferred to attend meetings arranged at school, and most of the parents were informed about social events arranged in the school. Majority of the parents agreed that the principal gave attention to the complains of the parents. There was found to be a positive relationship between parents' qualifications, and their interest in parent-teacher meetings

**Key Words:** Parental involvement (PI), Parent Development Meetings (PDMs), Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

## **Introduction**

“Parental involvement helps to access the academic achievement of the learners in any form at secondary level” (Dixon, 1992, p. 16). The idea of parental involvement with the student and the school has great meaning which helps to create great incentive for all related individuals. It is recognized that schools commonly don't know what is the meaning of the word Parental involvement (Vandergrift & Greene, 1992). According to Vandergrift and Greene, primarily, there are two basic components that work together mutually well for making up the concept of parental involvement. One of these works as the agreement for the support of parents. This concept helps to hold up the learners, as concerned, comforting, and thoughtful. The other essentials require activities from parents, and their contributions like their helping the learners in different activities in the school. “This arrangement of intensity of dedication and active collaboration makes the parents to involve themselves in the school” (Vandergift & Greene, 57).

The concept of parental involvement in children's education is under consideration since many years, and this area is now going to grip the interest of the community (new studies include Bogenschneider, 1997; Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990; Epstein, 1991; Muller, 1998; Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Smith, 1992; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemptill, 1991;

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Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996; Useem, 1992). Commonly, the study has established a good association among all the levels of involvement by parents, and the learner's academic performance. Mostly, researches concentrate on the starting years of schooling, current studies highlight that parental involvement is essential for grown-up learners. Like researchers said that parental involvement influences the grades of the subjective test scores of young students (Muller, 1993, 1998), and helps to minimize the dropout from the school (Teachman et al., 1996), has positive impact on the grades of high school seniors and the quantity of time they dedicated to homework (Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987), and contributed to victorious adjustment of students in higher ability groups (Useem, 1992).

Brief researches recommend that customary socialization actions give some outputs from parents (Smith, 1992; Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1992; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Investigative findings about parental involvement is significant because these help enlighten the lives of learners.

The literature shows that parents play their part in the learning of their children in many ways. As successful parental behavior involves helping children with their homework, cheering them to study, answering their questions, providing guidance to take some decisions about educational matters; and developing link with the teachers and the school, and attending events arranged by the school (Fehrmann et al., 1987; Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Snow et al.1991; Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 1987). Few studies of parental involvement also concentrate on the gender differences, Bogenschneider (1997).

It is also considered to be true that when parents attend the events arranged at school in which their kids participate, that gives much confidence to the students; and also interaction in

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the school like coming to the school meetings, having direct link with the teacher, and also visits to the classrooms in school. Both types of parental involvement are significant contributors in the achievement of students in education (Muller, 1993; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Useem, 1992).

Decisions and supervision of parents on how young people utilize their leisure time, and the significance of time dedicated to the incomplete homework, shows the level of family concern. These factors show the results on their academic achievement (Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Fehrmann et al., 1987). To evaluate this type of parental involvement, three actions of parental supervision were used: checking homework, limiting television watching, and limiting going out with friends. Research proves that parents should guide their kids at every step of life (Block, 1983; Muller, 1998).

Anyhow, parental involvement can also be modified in the form of expectation regarding educational achievement, and perception of students regarding parental expectations have significant impact on educational outcomes (Muller & Kerbow, 1993).

Discussing the importance of parents' involvement, Malik (2012) observes that learning of students and their behavior can be made better and fruitful, only by getting their parents involved in their schools. Parents are copartners in the learning process of their children; as there are various problems which teachers and school alone are unable to solve. For instance, there are many such learning and behavior problems, and for the resolution of these problems, parents /home/family information and cooperation are required.

In the Education Act of 1988 it is said that parents of students set up a Parents Association. The act says that: "The parents of the learners of a well reputed school have to

develop and assist a parents association for the membership of the school and for developing cooperation between the parents of the students of that particular school”.

The parents association in a school works with the collaboration of the principal, staff and board of management to create good cooperation and affiliation among school and home. Parents associations are involved in these activities:

They organize information and social events for the newly involved parents in the school; they welcome events for the new students of the school; they talk about the topics on which parents like to talk about, for example, they want to talk about the parenting styles. It provides input to the major school events like communication, and confirmation about the debates held in the school. Linking parents’ opinions about the issues related to the policy of the school and to the principal and board as well; write, contribute articles in the newsletters of the school; provide help and support in the organization and supervision of the curricular and co-curricular activities; arrange Fund Raising Events for the development of the school.

### **Strengthening Parental Involvement**

Develop a Parent Council Steering Group to give a platform to parents, so they can express their views about departmental policies and guidelines. Start thinking of new creative ways to demolish barriers in the parental involvement and encourage, foster and maintain the parental involvement at all levels of education as well as the education of their children. Developing and giving help to the network of the parental involvement, and to the consultation with the Learning Partnerships which are available. It confirms the useful mechanisms for the communication at the individual level, so that parents can easily get access to the basic information about the school education; it also provides the ways through which parents can be

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satisfied. Considering the learning partnership, the major focus is on the confirmation of the better cooperation of services at the local level for the betterment not only of the youth, but also for those who are very defenseless. It ensures a variety of policies at the individual level, which help guide the parents and concerned persons about their basic roles in helping children in their learning. It guides and directs the school to ensure that policies are made for designing and strengthening parental involvement which increases the confidence of the parents. It helps to confirm that the principles of personal learning planning which are based on the curriculum for the excellence of studies to be implemented in the schools.

It confirms that the communication and consultation which is with the parents and carers gives access, or gives the chance to reach the basic information and recommendation in different ways that are helpful toward the fulfilling of their desires; give exact and comprehensive brief suggestion **and information to the parents about the progress of their children. Parents are allowed to** participate in the review of the educational progress of their child, and they have a chance to plan something for the future learning of their children. The planning about the learning process helps to promote the dialogue among the learners, teachers and parents. The collective responsibility helps to ensure the link and participation of the parents.

It consults with the parents' forum according to the format of the parent council, and supports the making of the parent council; holds high the process and running work of the parents' council which is mentioned in the act. It starts promoting a shared accountability among schools, parents, teachers and affiliated institutions which are working for the education of the children; provides the channels for transmission of the knowledge that helps to engage the parents with the school and the learning of their children. It tries to reduce the obstacles to the

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involvement of the parents, and through the partnership they promote the equality and social justice in the society; improves the team work and empowers the decision making at the local level between service agencies and partners in the school; provides safety to the value of responsibility to save the resources from exploitation.

### **Parent Teacher Association**

Mostly schools like to hold on and persuade the regular partnership among school, parents and the management of the school.

The schools commonly seek parental collaboration and support through the Parent-Teacher Association which encourage a very good affiliation between home and the school. Parent teacher association members help the school in the following ways:

Taking a review of the school performance by taking help from the Parent Development Meetings (PDMs), and establishing good communication among the school and parents, It provides support to the different activities of the school, like the arrangement of the social events for learners.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) gives a chance to the parents and students to work together, gives feedback and discusses the thoughts with the school management. Parental involvement is encouraged for the development of the child in the social and emotional perspectives. The major concentration is on the involvement of the parents as the critical partners actively participate in the proper functioning of the school.

School age children spend 70% of waking hours in the school where they learn different concepts.

When the parents get involved in the early age of the child's education, it results in

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life-long effects. This is the most valuable type of the parental involvement when parents can easily work with their children on learning tasks at home without any problem.

Eighty six percent of the people believe that help from the parents is the best source to improve the school's repute in the society. In public schools this is the largest problem that parental involvement is less than requirement (Michigan Department of Education 2001). It is proved by the research of decades that when parents are involved in the schools then children have: good grades, good test scores, and good graduation rates in the school; also better school attendance, high motivation, enhanced self-esteem, less level of suspension, minimum use of drugs and alcohol, and little instances of violent behavior.

The major regular predictors of the academic achievement of the children and social regulation are the parents' prospect about the children's academic accomplishment, and agreement with the education of their children at school. The parents of the high scores achievers set high values as compared to the parents of the low achievers.

### **Factors of the Parental Involvement in Schools**

There are three basic factors which affect the parental involvement in the education of their children:

Firstly, parents rely on those things which they consider significant, essential and allowable for their children on behalf of their children. Secondly, the level on which parents think that they have a good impact on the education of their children, and thirdly, parents' thinking that the schools and children want to involve them in the schools' plans and policies and strategies as well (Michigan Department of Education, 2001).

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At all levels of education like elementary and higher level, commonly students are interested that their families should be more informed, and be active partners of the schools so that they will assist the students better and the schools as well. The regular correspondence of the school and parents helps to motivate the students that school and home are affiliated with each other, and that the school is an important part of their life.

The most reliable aspect of the parental involvement in the school and home are the particular programs and the efforts of the teachers which are helpful for giving the encouragement to the involvement of parents in schools which provides the direction to the parents on how to facilitate the children at home.

The schools plan some activities which help the parents to change the environment of their homes which leads to the positive effect on the performance of their children at school. Parents require the basic knowledge of how they can assist their children, and what they must do for this purpose.

### **Various Types of Involvement**

**Parenting:** It provides help to all families to develop their home environment to encourage the individuals as learners. The parent's education and some other courses for training may be offered in this context, and also family support programs may be offered to give health and nutrition concepts to the parents. Home visits are also necessary for pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school learners.

**Communicating:** Develop effective types of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about the programs of the schools, and the educational performance of the children.

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The communication of school with the parents can be improved by arranging conferences with every parent at least once a year, language translators must be provided to guide the parents as per requirement, regularly plan the notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other ways of communication for parents and students in school.

**Volunteering:** Induct and sort out parents' help and efforts for the school. Design school and classroom volunteer programs which facilitate the teachers, administrators, students, and other parents in the school. Construct parent room or family centers for the arrangement of the meetings between parents and teachers.

**Learning at Home:** Give knowledge and ideas to the parents to support the learners at home, and provide them help in curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning. It provides the information to the families on skills which are necessary for students to deal with the different subjects in all grades. It should give knowledge about the homework policies on how to observe and talk about schoolwork at home. Arrange active PTA or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for the leadership and contribution of the parents. Develop the advocacy group to work for the reforms of the school, and for the improvement of the school.

**Decision Making:** It is commonly said that involve the parents in the decisions related to the school which help the development of the parents as the leaders and legislative body in the school. There are some organizations which need the leadership of the parents in schools like; PTA, advisory councils, and committees. There is also the need for the separate encouragement group which helps the parents to work for the reforms and improvement of the school. A system or channel is also required which links the parents and families with the school.

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**Collaborating with Society:** It is necessary to recognize and separate resources and services from the community to make stronger school programs, services of the family, growth and learning of the learners. Collect the information for students and families about community health, cultural, recreational, social encouragement, and other programs and services. Provide the information on the activity of the community that connects the learning skills and intellect, which involves the summer programs for the students to learn more easily.

### **Research Questions**

Seeking answer for the following questions set the directions of the present study:

1. To what extent parents know about the environment at school?
2. Do the parents have awareness about school curriculum?
3. What are the opinions of parents about school-parents association on the behavior of the children?
4. Do the parents have interest regarding communication about school?
5. What are the views of parents about principal's concerns about their complaints?
6. Is there relationship between qualification of parents and their involvement in school meetings?

### **Procedure of the Study**

It was not possible for the researcher to select a random sample of the parents of learners, so convenience sampling was used for study group. Sample of the study were the parents of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students from a private school located in the Burewala named Allama Iqbal Secondary School, Gaggoo, Burewala, including both males and females. The sample was 76 parents, ages 34-59 years old.

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Data were collected by developing a questionnaire. A questionnaire with 13 closed ended statements on 5 rating scale disagree, strongly disagree, don't know, agree and strongly agree was designed and used as the tool for the data collection.

Validity was checked by the expert opinion, and reliability was checked by the pilot testing of the questionnaire. After pilot testing the items were modified according to responses. The parental involvement was selected as the variable of the study to know its influence upon the students at secondary level of education. A mean score of each respondent was calculated.

The whole function of data collection was performed by researchers by having debate with the supervisor. The researchers gathered data from parents as per their convenience according to the commands given by the supervisor in meetings and through electronic correspondence. The data was analyzed item-wise and was presented in the form of tables by using Mean, SD, Percentage and Correlation as statistical technique.

## Results and Discussion

In this study, the researchers have explored the opinions of parents regarding parent-school association. Table 1 shows the demographic information about parents. The data reveals qualifications of the parents are 27.6% SSC, 32.9% HSSC, 22.4% Graduation and 17.1% Masters. . The overall response rate of parents was 76% (N=76).

**Table 1**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Parents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	53	69.7
	Female	23	30.3
	Total	76	100.0

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Age	31-40	35	46.1
	41-50	33	43.4
	51 and above	8	10.5
Qualification	SSC	21	27.6
	HSSC	25	32.9
	Graduation	17	22.4
	Masters	13	17.1
Profession	Teaching	15	19.7
	Medical	3	3.9
	Business	37	48.7
	Banking	2	2.6
	House wife	13	17.1
	Transportation	2	2.6
	Government Servant	4	5.3
Family Income	10,000-20,000	23	30.3
	21,000-30,000	28	36.8
	31,000 and above	25	32.9

The Mean and SD of the opinion of parents regarding school-parent association is described in table 2. It also describes the responses of the parents about the five factors like: Environment, Curriculum, Student's Behavior, School and Parental Communication, and Principle's Role and Parent's Qualification.

## Table 2

Views of parents about each statement in respect of Parents' (N=76) Involvement in Secondary Schools.

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Factors	Mean	SD	
ENVIORMENT	-Atmosphere	4.11	.66
	-Reputation	4.70	.73
	-Security	3.99	.90
	-Effect on Child	4.11	.60
CURRICULUM	-Information of curriculum	4.13	.885
	-Information of being taught	2.91	1.44
	-Standard	4.58	.735
STUDENT'S BEHAVIOUR	-Dealing with inappropriate behavior	3.41	1.36
SCHOOL & PARENTAL COMMUNICATION	-Parental Involvement	3.34	1.37
	-Meetings	3.00	1.09
	-Social events	4.37	1.24
PRINCIPAL'S ROLE	-Contact with principals	4.54	.701
	-Regard of complaints	3.68	1.26

The table 2 shows that the mean value of 4.11 shows that the school has good atmosphere, and the mean value of 3.99 shows that parents were satisfied regarding security of the site and the mean value 4.11 shows that parents are satisfied that school's environment has a positive effect on their children.

The mean value 4.13 shows that parents are satisfied that they have enough information about school curriculum, the mean value of 2.91 shows that parents are of the opinion that they have no clear information of what is being taught in the school, the mean value 4.58 indicates that the parents have the opinion that school enables their children to achieve a good standard of behavior.

The mean value 4.05 indicates that parents were strongly agreed that school effectively deals with the inappropriate behavior of the students.

The mean value 3.34 indicates that parents were agreed that the school encourages them to play an active part in the school matters, the mean value 3.00 shows that average parents prefer to attend meetings arranged at school, and the mean value 4.37 shows that most of the parents were informed about social events arranged in the school.

The mean value 4.54 indicates that most of the parents know how to contact the Principal, and the mean value 3.68 shows that the Principal gives regard to the complaints of the parents.

The number of cases and percentage of respondents is described in table 3:

**Table 3**

Views of parents about Secondary level - each statement in respect of Parents' (N=76)

Involvement in Schools. (Range, min value, max value, Mean and SD of study (N=76))

Variable	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Parent's opinion about Environment of school	76	09	10	19	16.8	1.66
Awareness of parents about Curriculum	76	09	06	15	11.6	1.8
Opinion of parents about Student behavior	76	04	01	05	4.05	0.88
Communication about school	76	10	04	14	10.7	2.19
Parent's views about school principals	76	05	05	10	8.22	1.29

The table 3 indicates the mean value of the opinion of parents regarding school environment is 16.8. The mean value of awareness of parents about school curriculum and what is being taught in the school is 11.6. The mean value of the opinion of parents about the impact of school -parent association on the behavior of students is 4.05. The mean value of the opinions

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of parents regarding communication of meetings and social events is 10.7.the mean value of opinion of parents about contact with principals is 8.22.

**Table 4**

Correlation between parent’s qualifications and their interest in school meetings.

Variables	Parent’s qualification	Interest in school meetings
Parents Qualification		
Interest in School meetings	0.565**	

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2 tailed)

The table 4 shows that there is a positive correlation (0.565) between parent’s qualification and their interest in school meetings. It explains that parents who are qualified take more interest in school related matters, and take part in meetings when the school calls them for this purpose.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Schools are very important institutions of our society that help to educate the learners. Parents must have the information about the environment of the school where children feel themselves secure and protected. The findings of the present study show that majority of the parents were concerned about the environment of the school. Majority of the parents were very much satisfied with the school atmosphere, reputation in regard to its area, security of the site and school’s environment. According to parents these factors have a positive effect on their children. These findings are supported by the study conducted by David Akinlolu Adeyemo

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about “parental involvement, interest in schooling and school environment as predictor of Academic self efficacy among fresh secondary school students in Oyo state, Nigeria” the researcher stressed and advocated that the home-school partnership, enhances the student interest and makes the school environment child friendly. This study shows that parent-school involvement has a positive effect on the children.

The curriculum is also a very important element of the school. About the information about school curriculum, majority of the parents know the curriculum of the school. However very less number of parents had an opinion that they had no clear information of what is being taught in the school, whereas majority of the parents have the opinion that school enables their children to achieve a good standard of behavior. According to Henderson & Berla (1994) as quoted by “Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement”, parents can have a positive impact on student achievement by promoting learning at home, and reinforcing what is taught in school.

The findings of our study show that parents are less informed about what is taught in the school. Therefore there is need to involve parents in what is to be taught in school. This practice will be helpful in enhancing the achievement of students.

The school plays a vital role modifying the behavior of the students. The findings of the study show that majority of the parents strongly agree that the school effectively deals with the inappropriate behavior of the students. This is supported by the survey conducted by Julian Stanley and Jeremy Todd in the year (2009/10) “How school and families can work better together” - the result of this survey has proved that the involvement of parents in school activities is the most useful way to develop the appropriate behavior of the students in school. Majority of

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the parents and teachers have said that school-parent relation is the best way to modify the behaviors of the students.

The mutual communication and exchange of information between parents and school is very necessary. The finding of this study shows that average numbers of parents were agreed that the school encourages them to play an active part in the school matters, the average number of parents prefer to attend meetings arranged at school, and most of the parents were informed about social events arranged in the school. Therefore it is concluded that school -parent communication is very important. Karen Lindner (2004), conducted a research on “parental needs and expectations of school-home communication in a child’s preparatory year of school”. The results of this study showed the variety of parental requirements and expectations of school-home communication. This study recommended that schools provide a broad diversity of communication methods, and that these methods are to be regularly reviewed in consultation with the school community. In the findings, it was also noted that when parents attend the events arranged at school in which their kids participate, gives much confidence to the students - interaction in the school like coming to the school meetings, having direct link with the teacher, and also the visits to the classrooms in school. Both types of parental involvement are significant contributors in the achievement of students in education (Muller, 1993; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Useem, 1992).

Principals are the leaders of educational institutions. Their communication with parents is necessary to bridge the communication gap between school and parents. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the parents knows how to contact the principal, and they were agreed that the principal gives regard to complaints of the parents. The findings of the study were

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Parents’ Satisfaction about Their Involvement in Schools – An Analysis

contrary to the study conducted by Viviane M. J. Robinson and Deidre M. Le Fevre (2010) .In their study, the researchers concluded that the Principals were more skilled in justifying their position in the schools rather than understanding the views of the parents. Contrary to this our research proved that principals listen to the complaints of the parents, and think about what should be done next.

The parent’s qualification is also an important factor in their interest towards school meetings. The findings of the study show that there is direct and positive relationship between parent’s qualification and their interest in parent-teacher meetings.

The research emphasized the school -parent association. Our research regarding parent school association revealed that the parents must be informed about what is being taught in schools because they are not much informed regarding it.

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

In order to increase school -parent association, different modes of communication may be used in the school to keep in touch with the parents. The schools should inform them about the curriculum which is being taught in the school. The school may involve the parents in the curriculum planning phase to implement a good curriculum in the school. Principal must care about the complaints of the parents related to the education of their children. No research has been found to look into the relationship between parents qualification and school meetings, so it is recommended that researches should be conducted in this significant area.

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