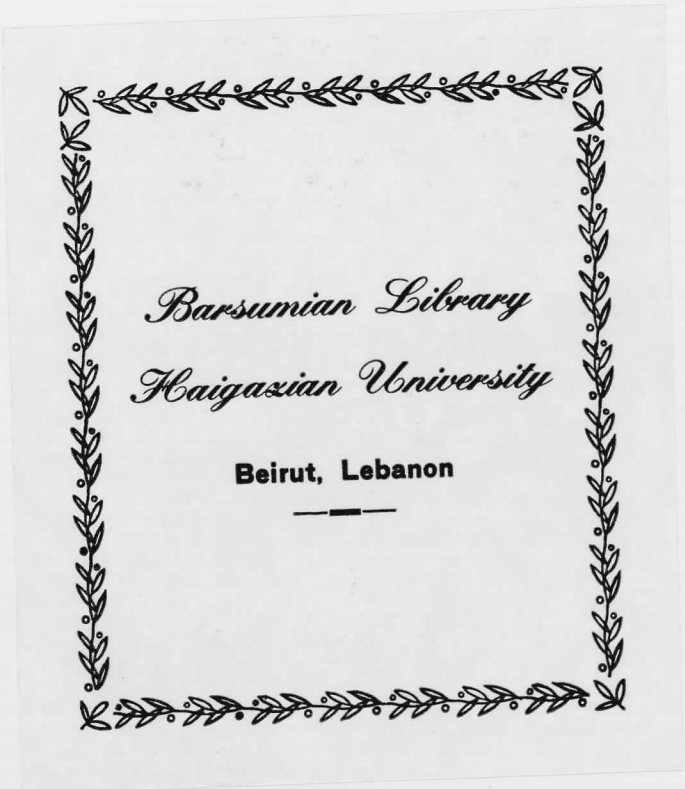

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY

THE EFFECTS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT HOME AND PARENT EDUCATION LEVEL ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by
MARY BETH COFSKY

Beirut, Lebanon
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of parent involvement at home and parent education level on student achievement at an elementary school (Grades 1-6) in the suburbs of Beirut. A nine-item questionnaire and student grades in English and Mathematics were used to collect the data. The results showed that there was a negative correlation between student achievement and help with homework, a positive, slight correlation between student achievement and discussions about school, and a positive, strong relationship between student achievement and parent education level. The negative correlation may have been because poor student performance resulted in parent involvement. The two positive results were weaker than expected, possibly because the research was conducted at a private school rather than at public schools.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Student academic performance is a concern for educators, parents, and students themselves. What are the factors that influence student success? How can students who are not doing well be helped? Certainly all families care about their children and want them to be successful in school (Ames & Archer, 1987). The central purpose of most schools is the dissemination of knowledge and skill development (Powell, 1991), and all teachers and administrators want their students to achieve well in school—that is, after all, what schools should be all about.

In a speech given in 1994, Richard W. Riley of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education stated that the family is the "rock on which a solid education can and must be built," and that families have "power, promise, and potential" to help improve education. Larry Decker, of the National Education Association (1997), notes that the evidence of the benefits of parent involvement is overwhelming. He goes on to say that it amounts to "malpractice" if schools make no effort to work towards parent involvement.

Parent involvement is a key factor that influences student success. One of the reasons for examining this topic is that research has shown that parent involvement in children's education is related to many positive outcomes, including fewer behavior problems (Comer & Hayes, 1991), lower drop-out rates (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1992), as well as higher student achievement (Baker and Stevenson, 1987, Muller, 1993).

Research also shows that when parents are actively involved in a child's education, the student is more likely to stay in school and more likely to achieve (Anderson, 2000). Involving parents has become so important that it is a major aspect of reform programs. The eighth goal of Goals 2000: Education America Act called for increased parent involvement in education (Trusty, 1998).

Although involving parents in the education process is an aspect of current school reform programs, it is not a new concept. In 1951, Pestalozzi wrote that the family was a major learning environment. The Coleman Report (1966; cited by Greenwood & Hickman, 1991) found that one-half to two-thirds of the variance in student achievement was accounted for by home variables, rather than school variables.

Schneider (1993) posits that the degree to which parents are actively involved in their children's education is one of the most important factors in their children's success in school. Involving parents meaningfully in their children's education can improve the educational process; parents know their children's personalities and can contribute insights that can strengthen the

academic programs (Comer, Haynes, 1991). Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie (1992) noted that parents have a deep understanding of their children's unique characteristics which can enhance the learning process. Bronfenbrenner (1974) states that parental involvement is critical to good education.

The research done in the past decade on parental involvement shows that children's development and academic outcomes are determined to a considerable extent by parent actions (Halle, Kurtz-Costes & Mahoney,1997). Many studies support the theory of overlapping spheres of influence between families and schools on the learning and development of students. When teachers involve parents in the teaching process, parents increase their interactions with their children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children, and students are more successful in school as well as having more positive attitudes towards school and learning. (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Greenwood & Hickman (1991) found that the most effective educational programs are those where the home and school work together. Other studies demonstrated that there must be consistency between the home and the school in order to stimulate learning (Davies, 1991, Hill, 2001).

Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University, (1991), who has probably done more research on parent involvement than any other educator, states that there is a large volume of literature which documents how important family and school connections are for increasing student success. Pena (2000) posits

that parent involvement has been shown by researchers to have many positive benefits for students, the most important of which is improved student achievement. In a review of 66 studies about parent involvement, Henderson (1986; as cited in Greenwood & Hickman, 1991) found that when parents are involved with their children in the education process, both at home and in school, children do better in school, go farther in schools, and the schools themselves become better schools.

Families are the earliest and most fundamental socialization institutions for young children and families provide the foundations for later life, including academic achievement and success in school. Ames & Archer (1987) state that parents are the ones who provide the earliest development of a child's academic motivation. In other words, families play a vital role in laying the foundation for their children's academic success.

With such convincing evidence as to the efficacy of parent involvement, a question then arises as to why more parents are not involved. What prevents parents from taking part in this critical process?

One of the major reasons offered by many educators centers around Socioeconomic Status (SES) (Anderson, 2000; Bracey, 2001; Bowman, 1994; Desimone, 1999; Griffith, 1998; Pena, 2000; Zellman & Waterman, 1998) According to Bourdieu (1977), schools represent and reproduce middle and upper class values and forms of communication, and the reason that schools represent these values is that most teachers come from middle/upper class backgrounds. The teachers subsequently have difficulty

relating to lower class parents. This bias towards middle and upper class values puts students from low SES at a disadvantage. Children of parents of low SES are more likely to do poorly in school and less likely to graduate. Poverty is one of the variables associated with academic failure—children from low SES generally perform at below average levels in reading tests than children from higher SES (Anderson, 2000; Watkins, 1997).

The ideas of Bourdieu are supported by Pena (2000) who posits that parents from the low SES often feel threatened by the authority of the teachers as well as by their own lack of formal knowledge. Parents can also be frustrated or embarrassed when helping their children with skills the parents don't remember, never learned or learned in a different way. (Hoover-Dempsey, et al. 1995; VanVoorhis, 2003). In addition, Pena and others state that language, culture and SES barriers limit parental involvement in schools. According to Greenwood & Hickman (1991), some parents of low SES may not value education, or feel powerless to influence schools, or feel that they lack the knowledge and skills necessary to be involved. Children of low SES parents are in danger of not succeeding because there is a lack of continuity between the schools, families and communities, and their parents are less likely to help at home (Baker & Stevenson, 1987; Bowman, 1994; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow & Fendrich, 1999; Watkins, 1997; Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

An additional factor that affects parent involvement is that families with lower incomes and less education often believe that it is up to the

schools to educate their children, that it should be left to the "experts". They believe that it is the school's responsibility. (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Lewis, 2004).

For parents of low SES who do want to be involved, a reality that hinders them is the great demands on their time. Frequently their work hours prevent them from attending school activities and from helping their children with homework (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Griffith, 1998).

Another very important aspect for students of low SES that affects parent involvement is the education level of the parents themselves. Many times because of their level of education they are not able to help their children. (Griffith, 1996; Hill, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, et al. 1995; VanVoorhis, 2003). Anderson (2000) citing the National Center of Education Statistics (1993) states that children from higher SES tend to score higher in school, finish high school and attend college.

Family income is related to educational level of the parents and affects involvement. Many parents from low SES may have had less positive experiences with schools and feel unable to provide their children with the skills necessary to negotiate the school system effectively. Students from low SES families have difficulty breaking out of the cycle of poverty (Halle et al., 1997; Hill, 2001)

However, even though SES can be a negative factor in parent involvement, studies show that some parents from the low SES are successful in helping their children. SehAnn Lee (1993) found that parent involvement

can be an effective factor for non-traditional families for improving student outcomes. Despite the negative biases, parents from the low SES are frequently involved in tutoring and home instruction. Parents from all SES levels and backgrounds can be productively involved in the educational process of their children. Many want more information on how they can be involved and help their children. Some studies found that parent involvement affected achievement and homework more strongly than did SES (Anderson,2000; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, 1995; VanVoorhis, 2003).

Hall et al., (1997) found that parent behaviors (how they help their children at home, beliefs and attitudes regarding the possibility of success for their children) can circumvent the detrimental effects of poverty.

There are many ways in which parents can be involved in student school work. There are three basic types of parental involvement. The first type is behavioral involvement, which refers to participation in academic activities at school and at home. The second type is cognitive involvement, which means exposing children to intellectually stimulating activities. The last type is personal involvement, which refers to knowing what is going on with the child at school (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski & Apostoleris, 1997; Kurdek & Sinclair, 2000).

Epstein (1995) provides six aspects of parental involvement: First, parenting—numerous studies have shown that authoritative parenting styles are the most effective: parents who are concurrently demanding (strict and in

control) and responsive (supportive and involved) (Trusty, 1998). Second, parents can be involved through communication—with the school and the child's teacher. Third, parents can volunteer—helping in the school. Fourth, parents can be involved in learning at home—helping in homework, discussing school activities with their children. Fifth, parents should be part of decision making—being involved in the decision-making process regarding their children's placement and courses. Sixth, parents can collaborate with the community—involving community businesses and organizations in school whenever possible. Similar types of involvement are cited by many other researchers as well (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 1992).

Henderson (as cited in Greenwood & Hickman, 1991) in summarizing the literature on types of parental involvement condenses parental involvement into two types: first, when parents are involved at school for the purpose of strengthening the school program (volunteering, advising) and second, when parents are involved in activities aimed specifically at helping their own children (homework, communication with teachers, attending events).

Research show that when parents are involved in education, students, schools, parents, and even society benefits. The benefits to students are 1) that they are more successful in school—receiving both higher grades and higher achievement test scores; 2) they have increased positive behavior and emotional development; 3) they demonstrate fewer behavior problems and fewer learning problems; 4) they have more positive attitudes towards

schools; 5) they develop better homework habits and learn more effectively, and 6) they have better school attendance and lower drop-out rates (Epstein, 1990; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Pena, 2000).

Schools also benefit when parents are involved with their children's education. Studies show that schools with parent involvement out-perform and are more effective than schools with no parent involvement. Schools with parent involvement also have lowered rates of grade retention and lowered rates of special education placements. They also have increased student attendance and reduced absenteeism and they have increased support from parents and improved school community relationships (Anderson, 2000; Epstein, 1990; Pena, 2000).

Parents who are involved develop better attitudes towards education, become more active in the learning process, and demonstrate an increased interest in and support of school programs and their children's progress (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991)

Society benefits as well when parents are involved because parental involvement is consistent with the belief that the primary responsibility for a child's well-being lies with parents. Parent involvement also addresses the considerations of equity and equal opportunity and being more involved, they help their children be more successful in school (Desimone, 1999).

Research also shows the importance of parent involvement from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. While the types of involvement and help may change, it is still crucial that parents be involved with their children

throughout their school years. Beginning from pre-school, parents help lay the foundation for learning. The Commission on Reading (1985) found, or re-emphasized, that parents, not schools, lay the foundation for children's reading, and this Commission placed on parents the obligation to support their children's continued growth as readers. It is parents who stimulate their child's adult intelligence and lay the foundation for formal reading instruction, which is of paramount importance for a student's success in school (Anderson, 2000; Epstein, 1995; Pryor, 1995).

Parental involvement can be at home or at school. Research shows the importance of parental involvement, in general, and the significance of home involvement in particular. The present research focuses on parental involvement at home.

There are many ways in which parents can be involved at home. Riley (1994) posits that parents can help by insisting on their children's daily attendance at school, by providing appropriate reading material and literature at home and by monitoring the amount of TV their children watch.

One of the most basic ways in which parents can be involved is to provide a home environment that is conducive to learning. According to Iverson, Brownlee, & Walberg (1981), home environment refers to the amount and kinds of educational experiences which the parents provide for the child. Anderson (2000) posits that educationally stimulating experiences include trips to the library, learning based TV programs, a quiet place to study, and that a home with this environment is a major determinant of

learning. Muller & Kerbow (1993) state that the structure and character of the child's home environment is the most critical aspect of parent involvement, because it is least likely to change or to be influenced by external constraints. The home environment also reflects the nature of the parents' values.

Other ways in which parents can be involved in the learning process at home are by helping their children with homework; participating in and discussing homework and other learning activities that are taking place at school; keeping their children in school; having high expectations of their children and engaging in authoritative parenting practices as detailed above.

Parental involvement in the homework process has received both popular and professional attention. Newspaper articles and books of advice on helping with homework are numerous. Educators have developed programs to help parents with the homework process (Hoover-Dempsey, et al. 1992).

Homework is a complex process and it begins for students at the early elementary stage of education. These are the years when parents play a significant role in helping students form positive attitudes towards homework, as well as forming strategies for accomplishing homework successfully (Hoover-Dempsey, et al. 1992).

Many researchers have shown the importance of homework, positing that it is necessary for success in schools. Homework has been found to have

a considerable positive influence on achievement and grades (Fehrman, Keith & Reimers, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey, et al. 1995; Keith, 2002).

Hoover-Dempsey, et al. (1995) identified six ways parents can participate in the homework process. First, they can provide general oversight and ensure completion of homework. Second they can respond to homework efforts by rewarding and encouraging their children. Third, they can engage actively in homework by helping or tutoring. Fourth, they can help children break homework tasks into smaller, easier to accomplish units. Fifth, they can engage interactively by demonstrating strategies of how to complete it. Sixth, they can help their children learn processes that will benefit achievement.

Xu & Corno (2003) concluded that parents can help students establish routines for completing their homework, arrange a quiet environment in which their children can work and monitor not only completion, but also their children's attention, motivation and emotions as they finish their homework.

While all of the research conducted in this field has been done in the United States, none has been found in the Middle East, specifically Lebanon. The present research focuses on parental home involvement and how it affects student school success in Lebanon. We are attempting to find any correlations between parent home involvement and student success in school, specifically help with homework and discussion of school work. We are also attempting to find if there is a relationship between parent education level and student achievement in school.

B. RATIONALE

Much research has shown that there is a positive relationship between parent involvement and student success in school. Research also shows that all parents want their children to be successful (Ames & Archer, 1987; Davies, 1991). This is a vital aspect of education and one that needs to be addressed here in Lebanon.

There have been no studies conducted in Lebanon on the topic of parent involvement and student school success. School administrators are always looking for ways to enhance student achievement. In addition, a large number voice complaints that many parents in the schools are either minimally involved with their children's education, or not involved at all. These complaints are heard over and over, not only by administrators, but by teachers as well.

This research is a pioneering research to gather foundational data on parental involvement and student success in schools. If a relationship is found here in Lebanon, this can become the basis for reporting to parents and helping them work towards being more actively involved in their children's education. The data gathered, along with data from other studies may convince at least some parents to take their role in the education of their children more seriously.

This study, therefore, is designed to achieve the following purposes:

1) To determine if there is a correlation between parent involvement with homework and student achievement in a private elementary school in the suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon.

2) To determine if there is a correlation between discussions of parents with their children regarding school activities and school work, and student achievement.

3) To determine if there is a correlation between parent education level and student success.

C. HYPOTHESES

H1: Students whose parents are involved with them in the homework process will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents are not involved in the homework process.

H2: Students whose parents talk with them about their work in school will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents do not talk with them.

H3: Students whose parents have reached a higher level of education will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents have reached a lower level of education.

D. DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

The following variables are defined for this study:

- Parent involvement according to Anderson (2000) is interactions between parents and their children that may result in the development of the child or parent participation at the school the child attends.
- Parental home involvement is defined according to Watkins as:
  - Helping with homework
  - Discussing homework
  - Discussing what is being learned at school
- Student achievement in English and Mathematics is defined as:
  - The combined grades in English and Mathematics for Quarter 2 and Quarter 3
- Parent educational level is defined as:
  - The highest level of education attained by parents

E. METHODOLOGY

The sample of the current study constituted 183 students in grades one through six attending a private school in the suburbs of Beirut. The instrument used to collect the data on parent involvement in the homework process and in discussions about school was a 9-item questionnaire, which the parents of the students were asked to complete. The reliability and validity of the instrument used was measured by Pearsons Product-Moment

Correlation as well as different cross-tabulations. The above-mentioned three hypotheses were tested using simple linear regressions analyses.

F. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Many researchers have discussed the positive relationship between parent involvement and student success. These combined studies have involved thousands of students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 and hundreds of schools in the United States. There have been no studies done in Lebanon on this topic.

The results obtained in this study could have several viable purposes:

- To gather preliminary data about the relationship between parent involvement and student success in school
- To be a foundation for developing programs to help parents to be more actively involved with their children at home in order to improve their children's academic achievement
- To encourage further study in this vital aspect of education
- To be a foundation for further studies regarding the many aspects of parent involvement and student success in school, such as the relationship between parent school involvement and student success, parental social networks and involvement, parenting styles and student success, to name a few.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Parents and educators everywhere are concerned about student success in school and want to know what factors go into making students successful. What role can parents play? Are their efforts efficacious? Do parents have an effect on student learning and academic achievement? How important is it that parents be involved in the learning process? Studies conducted by many researchers have repeatedly shown the importance of family involvement to student success.

So many studies have been done that Griffith (1998) divided them into three categories: 1) at-risk studies, which are studies concerning less educated, single parents, parents in the language minority and parents with personal problems; 2) descriptive studies, those studies which detail how parents are involved in schools, and 3) outcome based studies, which link parent involvement to positive outcomes.

The general conclusions from this research are that all families care about their children and want them to succeed, and teachers and administrators want to involve parents (Epstein, 1995). All of these studies indicate the importance of parental involvement in the success of their

children in school. Many of them also discuss the various types of parent involvement and offer suggestions as to how parents can be involved.

Importance of Parent Involvement

Based on the current research, most educators recognize parental involvement in school activities and in students' school work as integral to successful academic performance (Griffith, 1996). According to many researchers, parent involvement is considered an important aspect of academic achievement; in fact, it is widely accepted as desirable and even essential. In a study of 179 grade school students, parents, and teachers, Baker & Stevenson (1987) found a positive relationship between parental involvement and school performance. Fehrman, et al. (1987) show that parental involvement resulted in students achieving higher grades, spending less time watching TV, and developing more positive attitudes towards school. Parent involvement has been shown to play an important part in fostering children's cognitive growth and academic success. Comer & Haynes (1991) found that parental involvement is essential for teaching and learning.

With the plethora of research conducted on the significance of parent involvement for the success of students, increasing parent involvement in the academic lives of children has become a key element in many recent reform movements (Shephard & Rose, 1995). It is considered so important that is has become a focus of parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders

and politicians (Davies, 2002; Lewis, 1997). In a survey of 100 principals in New York City and rural New York state, parent involvement was the highest ranked concern (Kells, 1993). It was also the subject of a study regarding how school boards look at parent involvement (Devlin-Scherer, 1994).

Parent involvement in children's education is repeatedly and consistently associated with positive outcomes. Among these outcomes are higher grades and higher achievement test scores, increased positive behaviors and emotional development, fewer behavior and learning problems, lower drop out rates, improved attitudes towards school and learning, and improved school attendance and homework habits (Baker & Stevenson, 1987; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Desimone, 1999; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, 1995; Griffith, 1996, 1998; Hill & Craft, 2003; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Kells, 1993; Kurdek & Sinclair, 2000; Trusty, 1998; Watkins, 1997).

Research shows that parental involvement is necessary at all levels of a student's school career—beginning in kindergarten and elementary, and continuing through middle school and high school. Most parental involvement in home activities takes place at the kindergarten and elementary level. The types of involvement change through the years, but having parents actively involved with their children is essential for school success beginning with kindergarten all the way through the high school years. (Anderson, 2000; Baker & Stevenson, 1987).

In Elementary School

The research of Epstein & Dauber (1991) supported the growing literature which documents the importance of parent involvement for increasing student success. They surveyed 171 teachers in eight inner city schools (five elementary and three middle schools) and found that when teachers make parent involvement part of teaching practice, students improve in attitudes and achievement. Further, Griffith (1996), in a study of 42 elementary schools, found that schools that had parent involvement also had higher achievement test scores. He also found that teacher perceptions of the quality of parent involvement was positively and significantly related to competence behaviors, reading comprehension, and mathematics problem solving.

Izzo et al. (1999), in a study of 1,025 urban elementary school children and their parents, found that when parents participate in school, they learn from teachers how to work at home to enhance their children's education.

Watkins (1997) conducted research which focused on the achievement goals of parents: mastery achievement, which puts greater focus on learning from and understanding tasks, and performance achievement, which is more concerned with performing well, rather than understanding. He conducted a survey on 303 parents of students in grades two to five in an elementary school and found a positive correlation between parent involvement and student achievement, regardless of the achievement orientation they preferred.

In his research, Sheldon (2002) surveyed the parents of students (n = 195) in grades one to five in two elementary schools, one urban and one suburban. He found that parents are more involved when they believe they can be effective and this involvement leads to increased student success in school. His study also focused on the importance of parents' social networks and how that plays a role in their involvement at home and at school.

In Middle School

Studies find there is consistently more involvement from parents of elementary school students, and that the amount of involvement declines as students move into higher grades. Zill & Nord, (1994) show that in elementary grades, specifically ages eight to eleven, there is a 73% involvement rate, but this drops to 50% by age 16. However, research shows the importance of parents continuing to be involved in their children's schooling through middle and high school. A number of research studies have been conducted regarding the importance of parental involvement in middle school years (Trusty, 1998; VanVoorhis, 2003; Xu & Corno, 2003).

Rutherford & Billig (1995) state that schools and districts must involve families as partners with adolescents, because the middle grades are critically important as students move from childhood to adolescence. In his study, Van Voorhis (2003) examined the effects of family involvement in homework and students achievement. Sixth and eighth grade students (n = 253) participated in the study, and the results showed that when parents

participated in the homework process, students were more successful. The study involved training parents (TIPS: Teacher Involve Parents in Schoolwork) and then comparing the results of the trained groups with the results of those classes whose parents did not receive training. Those students whose parents had been trained turned in more accurate assignments and earned significantly higher grades.

Xu and Corno (2003) also conducted research regarding family involvement in homework management. Using survey data from 121 urban middle schools (grades six, seven, and eight), they found that family involvement resulted in improved homework strategies. Families were particularly helpful in providing a positive environment in which their children could work. Students from the study indicated that they were aware of the importance of study conditions in homework completion; other studies have shown the importance of homework completion to student achievement (Fehrman, et al. 1987).

In High School

Several studies have shown that parental involvement decreases as students get older (Devlin-Scherer, 1994; Zill & Nord, 1994). However, Anderson (2000) states that parent involvement is necessary from Kindergarten through Grade 12 because parental involvement is important in children's cognitive growth and academic success. Other researchers have conducted studies showing the importance of parental involvement in high

school (Anderson & Keith, 1997; Battin- Pearson, Newcomb, Abbott, Hill, Catalano & Hawkins, 2000; Fehrman, et al., 1987; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles & Sameroff, 2001; Pryor, 1995).

Fehrman et al. (1987), conducted research using a sample of 28,051 high school seniors from 1,016 high schools and found that parental involvement at the high school level had an important direct, positive effect on grades. They also found that parent involvement led to increased homework completion, which also had a positive effect on grades.

Pryor (1995) collected data through questionnaires from five school districts. The data included 516 ninth grade students, 305 parents, and 38 teachers. The vast majority of students, parents, and teachers agreed that when parents were involved, the students performed better in school.

Battin-Pearson et al. (2000) discussed the importance of the foundations laid by families which are important for academic achievement and success in school. Anderson & Keith (1997) posited that parental home involvement has been found to foster achievement and is recommended for enhancing educational equity. In their study of 8,100 at-risk students (a term used for students likely to be unsuccessful at school or to drop out of school), they found that quality of schooling and parental involvement had positive, but indirect influences on academic achievement. However, they also found that quality of schooling and parental involvement had a strong influence on student motivation, which is highly related to student success.

Parental involvement has been determined by research to be essential for student success in school and is crucial at all levels of students' academic lives. Research has shown that parent involvement differs throughout the different ages, and even lessens as children grow older, but what is vital, is that parents remain involved from the earliest levels until the children graduate from high school.

Types of Parental Involvement

With so much research having been conducted regarding the importance of parent involvement, the next question is: What is parent involvement? What types are there? What forms can it take? What is it, exactly, that parents are expected to do to be involved in their children's education?

The research regarding types of parental involvement is extensive and cannot be fully examined within the scope of this research. However, of all the research examined, two general "definitions" of types of parent involvement were found to be helpful.

The first was articulated by Greenwood & Hickman (1991). They cited Henderson (1986) who summarized the types of parent involvement into two categories: 1) those aimed at strengthening the school, and 2) those involved with assisting one's own child.

Gronick & Slowiaczek (1994) summarized parent involvement into three types: Behavioral involvement—participation in activities at school and

home; Cognitive/intellectual involvement—exposing children to intellectually stimulating experiences such as trips to the library or museums and discussions about current events; and Personal involvement—knowing about what is happening with the child in school.

These major categories are then subdivided into a number of more specific areas—those related to school involvement and those related to home involvement. (Epstein, 1995; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Sheldon, 2002). Because the concept of parental involvement through volunteering is not prevalent in Lebanon, the primary focus of this paper is parental involvement at home, because this is something in which all parents can participate with very little training.

Home involvement with children's learning has important effects on children's achievement. A multitude of studies have linked parent involvement at home to students' success in school (Fehrman, et al. 1987; Keith, 2002; Muller, 1993; Sheldon, 2002; Watkins, 1997).

This present research focuses on parental involvement with their children at home, involvement such as creating a positive learning environment, helping with homework, and talking with their children about school.

Creating a positive learning environment is a very important aspect of parent home involvement. It is a basic requisite for learning at home. A positive home environment is essential for fostering student success (Anderson, 2000; Iverson, et al. 1981; Muller & Kerbow, 1993). Epstein &

Dauber (1991) state that one of the basic obligations of families is to provide positive home conditions that are supportive of school learning and behavior throughout the school years.

Xu and Corno (2003) surveyed data from 121 urban middle schools (grades six, seven and eight) and found that parental involvement was significant for helping students have a learning environment in which to complete their homework, which has already been mentioned as a necessary ingredient for school success. The above study supports what educators have stressed: that the structure and character of a child's home environment is, in many ways, the most critical area of parent involvement (Muller & Kerbow, 1993).

Muller (1993), in another study, noted that parental involvement in the completion of homework, including restricting the watching of TV on week days, was strongly associated with school success.

Fehrman et al. (1987) found that parental involvement including monitoring children's daily work, had an important, direct effect on grades. Baker & Stevenson (1987), in their study of 174 grade school children, parents, and teachers, found that parent involvement in creating a positive learning environment resulted in the children achieving higher grades, especially when TV watching was decreased and more time was allotted to homework.

The Coleman Report (1966), which was cited in Greenwood & Hickman (1991), indicates that the home learning environment accounts for

many student performance variables. The family is a critical institution in the learning teaching process—not just the schools.

Helping with Homework

A number of researchers have examined parent involvement as shown through help with homework. In their study of 69 parents of students in grades one to five in a metropolitan area, Hoover-Dempsey, et al. (1995) found that homework was the most common point of intersection between the parent, the child and the school, and that homework completion was necessary for success in school. They also found that the parents they surveyed believed that interaction with their children regarding homework was their responsibility and part of parenthood.

Parent involvement at home can be as simple as ensuring that there is structure in the child's home environment that is conducive to completing homework assignments, as mentioned above (Bracey, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, et al, 1995; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Shepard & Rose, 1995).

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1995) stated six specific ways in which parents can participate in the homework process: 1) providing general oversight and ensuring that homework is completed, 2) encouraging their children for their efforts in homework, 3) engaging actively in homework by helping or tutoring, 4) breaking homework into smaller tasks, 5) demonstrating strategies for completing homework, and 6) helping children learn processes that will benefit achievement.

In the study conducted by VanVoorhis (2003), sixth and eighth grade students (n = 253) participated in an 18 week study of parental involvement in homework. The results, as mentioned earlier, showed that students who had help with homework completed it more accurately and earned higher grades.

Based on the discussion of the importance of parental involvement in the homework process, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Students whose parents are involved with them in the homework process will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than those students whose parents are not involved in the homework process.

Talking with Children About School

Another way in which parents can be involved at home is in speaking to their children about school and school work. Many studies show that when parents talk to their children about school, their children achieve higher scores on tests (Bracey, 1996; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Muller, 1993).

Feuerstein (2000) used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study:88. The NELS:88 was conducted using 1,032 schools and 24,599 eighth grade students. From the data he obtained from, Feuerstein found, as did others, that parental involvement is an important variable associated with success in school, and that one aspect of parent home involvement is the amount of time that parents speak to their children about

school. The NELS:88 data also showed that when parents talk to their children about school, their children score higher on reading and mathematics tests (Bracey, 1996). Muller (1993) found that students talking with their parents about current experiences in school (the work they are doing, their attitudes towards their work, for example) was strongly associated with higher test scores.

Based on the above discussion of the importance of talking to children about school and school work, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Students whose parents talk with them about school and school work will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than those students whose parents do not talk with them.

Parent Education Level and Student Achievement

With the vast amount of research indicating the importance and critical nature of parent nature, why are all parents not involved in their children's schooling? What prevents them from being active participants in this vital aspect of their children's lives?

A third aspect of this study was to examine the relationship between parents' Socio-Economic Status (SES) specifically the aspect of education level attained, and student achievement in school. Many sociologists, educators and researchers have addressed the issue of the impact of SES on education, especially since SES has been found to be a strong predictor of parental involvement (Grolnick, et al. 1997).

Socio-Economic Status is determined by the criteria of income, occupation and level of education attained. According to Pena (2000), parents from low SES feel threatened by the authority of teachers and the perceived SES differences as well as their own lack of formal knowledge. A number of other studies also indicated that parent education level, one of the criteria of SES, was significantly related to parent involvement (Epstein & Dauber, 1993; Fantuzzo, Tighes & Childs, 2000; Hill, 2001).

Studies have shown that parent involvement patterns vary according to parental social, racial/ethnic, and economic factors, and that lower income, less educated parents are less likely to be involved than more educated, higher income parents (Desimone, 1999; Hoover-Dempsey, et al. 1995; Muller & Kerbow, 1993).

Why is there a difference between parents of low SES and higher SES? What keeps them from being involved? Bourdieu (1977) posits that schools represent and reproduce middle and upper class values and forms of communication because most teachers come from middle and upper class backgrounds. This bias towards middle and upper class values put low SES students and parents at a disadvantage. Teachers have difficulty relating to low SES parents. As Bowman (1994) states it, there is a difference between the schools and the students from economically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Lareau (1987), borrowing from Bourdieu, posits that middle class parents are more likely to be involved than low SES parents. He found that

low SES parents were more likely to take a supportive role in the education process. Other researchers have supported this view and have indicated that families with lower incomes and less education often believe that it is up to the schools to educate their children (Lewis, 2004; Pena, 2000).

Bowles and Gintis (1976) found that schools in working class neighborhoods were more regimented and controlled by the administration, and allowed for less parental involvement.

Pena (2000) also found that parents feel intimidated by the educational jargon which interferes with communication with their children's teachers. Low SES parents also found language and culture a barrier, as well as their own limited education and for some, their own negative school experiences.

Many studies, however, have also shown that despite the barriers, parents of all socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups want to learn more about how to help their children. Low SES parents are not apathetic; they do not know what to do and face difficulties in breaking out of the cycle of poverty (Davies, 1991; Decker, 1997; Halle, et al. 1997). Davies (1991) found that it is what families do, rather than their demographic group that affects their children's learning.

On the other hand, research has also found that parent education level does have an affect on involvement, which in turns affects student achievement. Parents of high educational attainment whose children were in lower grades were more involved in their children's education than parents of

lower educational attainment. (Baker & Stevenson, 1987; Epstein & Dauber, 1993; Hill, 2001).

Anderson (2000) cited data from the National Center of Educational Statistics (1993), which stated that children whose parents lacked a high school diploma were twice as likely to live in poverty than those whose parents were high school graduates, and seven and a half times as likely to live in poverty than those children whose parents had more than a high school diploma. The study also indicated that children of low income homes were more likely to do poorly in school and less likely to graduate—unable to break the cycle of poverty, as mentioned earlier (Halle, et al. 1997).

The present study examined the SES criterion of parent education level to determine if there was any relationship between parents' level of education and student success in school.

Based on the discussion about the importance of parent education level, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3. Students whose parents have reached a higher level of education will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents have reached a lower level of education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

A. SAMPLE

Student success is at the heart of all schools. How to help students be successful has been the subject of innumerable research studies which have covered many different aspects of education. One important aspect of student success is parent involvement at home in the learning process. No study in the field of correlating parental home involvement and parental educational level with student success has been done in Lebanon to date. Therefore, this present research is pioneering research, the first step in gathering data to see if there is a correlation between student success and parental home involvement.

The present research focuses on the elementary school level for a number of reasons. First, parents tend to be more involved with their children's education at the elementary level. Second, it is easier to give parents suggestions on how to help their children at home in the elementary grades. If parents have not been involved, it is more difficult to begin at the middle school or high school level. And, as mentioned earlier, one of the goals of this research is to be a foundation for helping parents be more involved at home with their children's education.

A number of research studies conducted on the relationship between parent home involvement and student success in school were single school studies. Following this precedent, the sample for this research is a single school. The sample is limited to an elementary school (Grades 1-6) located in the suburbs of Beirut. There are 260 students in the elementary section of the school and the primary language of instruction is English. The parents who responded to the questionnaire had completed various levels of education themselves, from less than a high school diploma to PhD. Participation in the research was optional and parents whose questionnaires were used gave permission for their child's grades to be used in the research.

Of the 260 questionnaires sent home, 78% (n = 202) were returned and of those returned n = 183 parents (85%) gave permission for their child's grades to be used. (A few parents did not give permission and some children whose parents did give permission had not been in school long enough to make their grades valid for the research. These 19 questionnaires were excluded from the research.)

B. PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was finalized following a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted in English, several weeks prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, in order for the researcher to acquire practical feedback and suggestions. A number of parents from schools other than the school designated for the research participated in the pilot study. The responses indicated that the questionnaire was clear and easy to understand. The

suggestions made by the parents in the pilot study were incorporated into the final questionnaire, as discussed later.

After completion of the pilot study, a packet was sent home with each child in grades one through six. The packet included a letter, the questionnaire and an envelope in which to return the questionnaire. The letter explained the purpose of the questionnaire and the confidential nature of the research. Both the letter and the questionnaire were written in English and Arabic, since many of the parents do not speak or read English. The parents were asked to return the questionnaire to the class teacher within one week, using the envelope provided.

C. LIMITATIONS

This research had the following limitations:

Response bias limitations

The research was conducted using a questionnaire which was sent to parents with a letter explaining the purpose and nature of the research. Because the researcher was also the Director of the school, parents might have felt it necessary to respond to the questionnaire in a way that was socially appropriate—in other words, what they thought the Director would want to hear, or what would make them look like "good" parents in the eyes of the Director, or the social desirability affect.

This aspect may have been compounded by the fact that the names of the students had to be used in order to obtain permission from the parents to

use the students' grades and then to correlate those grades to the parent responses. Although the parents were assured repeatedly (in the letter and on the questionnaire itself), about the confidential nature of the study and that no names would be used in the results in any way, the fact that their names were involved may also have affected their answers.

Because it was a questionnaire that was sent home, it was not possible for the researcher to explain to each respondent the importance of honest answers and to assure them personally of the confidentiality of the questionnaire.

Language and Cultural Limitations

Many of the parents whose children attend the school in which the research was conducted do not speak English, and although both the letter and the questionnaire were translated into Arabic, it could be that some of the parents did not fully understand.

The cultural aspect is also a limitation for a researcher gathering data here in Lebanon. Some Lebanese are not familiar with the research process and may not have been exposed to being part of such a process. Their answers may reflect their unfamiliarity with questionnaires.

General Limitation

The results of this study are limited to greater Beirut and cannot be generalized to all of Lebanon. The results are also limited to private schools only, as no research was conducted on parents in public schools.

D. INSTRUMENT

The nine-item questionnaire, which is found in Appendix B, was adapted from the questionnaire developed by Watkins (1997). The seven questions which Watkins used were included as well as two other questions. The first additional question was: "How often do you check on your child when he/she is doing homework?" The question was added because a number of parents in the pilot study commented that they did not actually check their children's work, but that they did check to ensure completion of homework, and this is also part of being involved in the homework process.

The questionnaire was designed to measure parental involvement in two main areas: the first area was that of parents helping their child in the homework process—going over homework, answering questions the child may have had, giving suggestions—ensuring that the child was able to successfully complete the homework, which in turn supports the learning process at school. The parents' responses to the questions regarding their help in the homework process were totaled.

The second area of parental involvement which the questionnaire addressed was that of parental participation in the learning process through discussion and encouragement (as opposed to actually helping in the homework process). The discussions could be about homework or about other school related topics. Again, the parents were asked to respond to how often they talked with their child about what was happening in school.

The second additional question was: "How often do you encourage your child regarding how he/she is doing in school?" This question was added because the second hypothesis of this research addresses the relationship between talking with children and success in school. Aspects of discussion—homework and school—were already included in the questionnaire by Watkins, but the aspect of encouragement is an important element of parental involvement through discussion.

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic by two people who were fluent in both English and Arabic. The answers were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Not often" to "Very often".

At the end of the questionnaire were demographic questions for the parents to answer, including a question concerning their level of education. A request for permission to use their child's grades of the Second and Third Quarters was also found on the last page.

The questionnaire focused on English and Math, and only the English and Math grades were used for the following reasons: First, English and Math are foundational for all the other subjects taught in English. English in particular is extremely important for English language schools in Lebanon, as English is not the mother tongue of the vast majority of students, and it is therefore crucial for students to know it well in order to be successful in English and in other subjects.

Another reason for focusing on English and Math is that a number of researchers have found different results regarding parent involvement for each of the two subjects. This information could be used for future studies.

A third possible question was considered regarding helping with Arabic. However, for the purposes of this research, it was decided that this question should not be included in the analysis of the data. The question about Arabic was not included in the statistical tests because some of the students do not take Arabic (non-Lebanese students in grade one), many students throughout all six grades take "Special Arabic", while the majority take Arabic using the Lebanese national curriculum. The method of grading is different for the Lebanese and American systems and would have influenced the overall grade average.

The questionnaire was designed to measure parental involvement in homework (questions 1-5) and parental involvement through discussions of homework and other school work (questions 6-9). Parent educational level was measured using the question on the demographic information sheet.

E. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

H1 Students whose parents are involved with them in the homework process will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents are not involved.

Questions 1-5 of the questionnaire measured for **H1.** The score obtained as a measure of parental involvement in homework was the sum of parent responses on these five questions (a possible total of 25).

The students' grades in English and Mathematics for Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 were averaged to indicate student school success.

H1 was tested by:

1. Cross-tabulation tests.

2. Simple regression to test the nature and degree of the relationship between parent involvement in homework and student school success.

3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to ascertain if there was a relationship between parent involvement in homework and student school success.

4. Stepwise regression to find the most significant of the variables of the hypothesis

H2 Students whose parents talk with them about their learning will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents do not discuss school learning with them.

Questions 6-9 of the questionnaire measure for **H2.** The scores obtained as a measure of parent involvement in discussion were derived from

the last four questions. The score was the total score of the four questions (a possible total of 20).

The students' grades in English and Mathematics for Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 were averaged as a measure of student school success.

H2 was tested by:

1. Cross-tabulation tests.
2. Simple regressions to test the nature and degree of the relationship between parent involvement through discussion and student school success.
3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to ascertain if there is a relationship between parent involvement through discussion and student school success.
4. Stepwise regressions to find the most significant variable.

H3 Students whose parents have reached a higher level of education will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents have reached a lower level of education.

The question regarding parent education level in the demographic section of the questionnaire was used to determine if there is a relationship between student success and parent education level. Parent education level was measured on the following scale: **1** for those who did not complete high

school and for those who completed high school; **2** for those who completed some university; **3** for those who completed university; **4** for those who have a Masters; and **5** for those who obtained a PhD.

H3 was tested by:

1. Cross-tabulations

2. Simple regression to test the nature and degree of the relationship between parent educational level and student success.

3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to ascertain if there is a correlation between parent education level attained and student success at school.

4. ANOVA.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Prior to testing the hypotheses, descriptive statistics were found for the different variables used in the study such as the number of parents who responded by grade level, the means and standard deviations for students achievement, parent responses and parent education levels. Also included in the descriptive data was the breakdown of responses by grade level to test for any significant differences between the different grade levels.

After conducting the initial statistical analyses, cross-tabulations were run on each of the questions before running tests on the hypotheses.

A. Respondents' Profile

Of the 260 questionnaires sent, 183 were used in the research (a few parents did not give permission for their child's grades to be used, and some students had insufficient grades due to late entrance into the school, or because of being in special programs with different grading policies).

The results of the parents who responded were broken down by grade level first, to examine possible differences in response level between lower elementary and upper elementary parents.

Table 1.

Number and Percent of Parents Who Responded by Grade Level

Grade	Number who responded	Total Possible	Percent	Combined Lower and Upper
Grade 1	30	41	73	81%
Grade 2	39	41	95	
Grade 3	28	37	76	
Grade 4	28	36	78	72%
Grade 5	41	62	66	
Grade 6	31	43	72	

As can be seen from Table 1, the distribution by grade shows the greatest variation in Grade 2, with 95% of the parents responding, and Grade 5, with 66% of the parents responding. The results indicate a greater rate of return in the lower elementary grades. When averaged together, 81% of the parents in lower elementary (Grades 1-3) responded and 72% of the parents in upper elementary (Grades 4-6) responded, a 10 % difference. This difference in response, while not a great difference, is indicative of the trend in parents to be more involved with their children at younger ages and to be less involved as their children grow older.

Table 2 shows the means for student achievement, parent responses and parent education level.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Student Achievement, Parent Responses and Parent Education Level

Variable	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Child Achievement	183	59	99	84.97	9.6
Total Homework Involvement	183	9	45	33.52	7.07
Help with Homework	183	5	25	17.44	4.75
Talking with child	183	4	20	16.02	3.27
Parent Educational Level	183	0	4	2.24	1.11

Descriptive tests were run on responses of the parents and their educational level by grade level in order to observe if there were any differences between parents in the different grade levels.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Parent Education Level and Parent Responses

		Parent Ed Level	Total of Responses	HW Responses	Talk Responses
Gr 1	Mean	2.23	35.27	19.07	16.20
	StandDev	0.86	4.78	3.08	2.53
Gr 2	Mean	2.35	33.66	17.74	16.03
	StandDev	0.88	5.23	3.69	2.32
Gr 3	Mean	2.48	34.46	19.50	16.12
	StandDev	0.93	5.81	3.31	2.65
Gr 4	Mean	2.38	30.96	15.35	15.62
	StandDev	0.86	6.35	4.24	2.83
Gr 5	Mean	2.03	31.30	16.16	15.41
	StandDev	0.71	5.55	3.46	2.63
Gr 6	Mean	2.63	33.86	17.36	16.86
	StandDev	0.71	6.82	4.40	2.91

The data in Table 3 showed that there was not a great difference in the means of total parent responses or in parent responses separated into responses about homework and responses about talking among the different grade levels (grade 1 having a mean of 35 for total responses and grade 4 having the lowest mean at 31). There was also no major difference between the mean parent education levels between the different grade levels—the mean education level ranged from 2.03 in grade 5 to 2.63 in grade 6.

A frequency test was then run on the parent education level to have on overview of the education levels and to observe what level of education the majority of parents had attained.

Table 4

Frequency Table for Parent Education Level

Parent Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
1.00	51	27.9
2.00	50	27.3
3.00	60	32.8
4.00	17	9.3
5.00	5	2.7

The frequency data in Table 4 showed that the majority of parents completed some university or received a BS/BA degree (60%). Parents who had completed some high school or received a high school diploma made up 28% and 12 % of the parents surveyed had completed graduate or post-graduate studies.

Means and Standard Deviations were computed on the data relating to parent education level to check for any noticeable differences between the variables according to the parent education level.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Parent Education Level Groups

Some HS or Completed HS	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Student Achievement	51	81.10	9.21
Total Involvement	51	32.58	6.91
Homework	51	17.19	4.54
Talking	51	15.38	3.44
Completed Some University			
Student Achievement	50	84.07	9.78
Total Involvement	50	33.48	8.19
Homework	50	17.59	5.37
Talking	50	15.89	3.49
Completed BA/BS			
Student Achievement	60	87.75	8.49
Total Involvement	60	33.96	6.09
Homework	60	17.07	4.33
Talking	60	16.89	2.94
MA			
Student Achievement	17	86.95	9.95
Total Involvement	17	33.85	6.78
Homework	17	18.75	5.06
Talking	17	15.10	2.83
PhD			
Student Achievement	5	96.00	1.41
Total Involvement	5	35.00	1.15
Homework	5	17.00	1.41
Talking	5	18.00	2.16

In addition to showing that about 60% of the parents either had some university or had completed their university degree, Table 5 also showed that student achievement level increased as parent education level increased. Students of parents who completed some high school or finished high school had a mean achievement in English and Mathematics of 81% during the second and third Quarters. Students whose parent(s) had completed a MA degree had a mean achievement of 87%, and students whose parent(s) had completed a PhD had a mean achievement of 96% indicating that there was an improvement in a child's mean achievement when parents have a higher level of education. Not only was there a difference between the achievement among students whose parents had the least and most education, but the mean achievement improved almost steadily with the parent level of education.

In order to compare the difference between student achievement at the different grade levels, the mean achievement was found for each grade level. The table below compares the grade level of students on the mean and distribution of the child achievement variable. At each grade level, students were grouped according to their achievement: Group A was composed of students with an average score above 90, Group B was composed of students achieving 80-89, Group C, students achieving 70-79, Group D, students achieving 60-61, and Group E was composed of students who achieved less than 60. These groups correspond to the method used at the school to apply letter grades to achievement reported numerically.

Table 6

Comparison of Mean Achievement of Each Grade Level Child Achievement Group

Child Achievement Group													
	A		B		C		D		E				
Grade Level	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	M	SD
1	12	40	14	47	3	10	1	3	0	0	30	87.03	6.57
2	12	34	12	34	10	29	1	3	0	0	35	84.49	7.84
3	13	50	8	22	3	12	2	8	0	0	26	87.19	7.58
4	8	31	12	46	5	19	1	4	0	0	37	85.38	6.05
5	16	43	8	22	9	24	4	11	0	0	37	84.32	9.04
6	6	21	13	46	3	11	5	4	1	4	28	81.82	9.13

The results in Table 6 indicate that as students move up the grade levels, the mean achievement score is lower, but not substantially. The mean achievement for each grade level is in the 80's, which is considered above average achievement at most schools, including this particular school. The fact that the mean achievement drops from the high 80's in lower elementary to the low 80's in upper elementary is indicative of the fact that the subject matter becomes more difficult as the students progress through the elementary grades. Within each grade level, the distribution of child achievement was similar: most students achieved an average of A and B, but a number of students achieved averages lower than A or B.

B. Findings

The following findings are based on 183 respondents (70%) in a single elementary school (grades one through six).

H1 Students whose parents are involved with them in the homework process will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than those whose parents are not involved in the homework process.

Before running the tests on the first hypothesis, cross-tabulations were run on the individual questions for the hypothesis to see how each question related to student achievement.

Table 7

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Checking on Child While doing Homework

achievement categories * How often check on child while doing homework? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often check on child while doing homework?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	Very often	
achievement categories	D level			14.3%	21.4%	64.3%	100.0%
	C level		3.0%	30.3%	15.2%	51.5%	100.0%
	B level	2.9%	2.9%	21.7%	14.5%	58.0%	100.0%
	A level	1.5%	3.0%	23.9%	11.9%	59.7%	100.0%
Total		1.6%	2.7%	23.5%	14.2%	57.9%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.263[a]	12	.978
Likelihood Ratio	5.269	12	.948
Linear-by-Linear Association	.075	1	.785
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is

Table 8

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Checking Homework is Finished

achievement categories * How often check that child finished homework? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often check that child finished homework?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level			14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	100.0%
	C level	3.0%		24.2%	18.2%	54.5%	100.0%
	B level	2.9%	4.3%	18.8%	8.7%	65.2%	100.0%
	A level	1.5%		17.9%	9.0%	71.6%	100.0%
Total		2.2%	1.6%	19.1%	10.9%	66.1%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.688[a]	12	.643
Likelihood Ratio	10.657	12	.559
Linear-by-Linear Association	.395	1	.530
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23.

Table 9

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Help with Math

achievement categories * How often help with math? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often help with math?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level	7.1%	14.3%	35.7%	21.4%	21.4%	100.0%
	C level	21.2%	21.2%	21.2%	6.1%	30.3%	100.0%
	B level	31.9%	11.6%	13.0%	8.7%	34.8%	100.0%
	A level	44.8%	17.9%	20.9%	4.5%	11.9%	100.0%
Total		32.8%	15.8%	19.1%	7.7%	24.6%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.566[a]	12	.017
Likelihood Ratio	25.225	12	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.105	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 6 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.07.

Table 10

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Help with English

achievement categories * How often help with English Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often help with English?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level	7.1%	7.1%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	100.0%
	C level	21.2%	12.1%	36.4%	9.1%	21.2%	100.0%
	B level	36.2%	11.6%	13.0%	11.6%	27.5%	100.0%
	A level	46.3%	16.4%	22.4%	7.5%	7.5%	100.0%
Total		35.0%	13.1%	21.9%	10.9%	19.1%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.273[a]	12	.007
Likelihood Ratio	28.668	12	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.844	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 7 cells (35.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.53

Table 11

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Time Spent Helping with Homework

achievement categories * How much time spend working with child each day? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How much time spend working with child each day?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level	7.1%	7.1%	14.3%	21.4%	50.0%	100.0%
	C level		12.1%	42.4%	18.2%	27.3%	100.0%
	B level	8.7%	15.9%	26.1%	8.7%	40.6%	100.0%
	A level	20.9%	20.9%	23.9%	13.4%	20.9%	100.0%
Total		11.5%	16.4%	27.3%	13.1%	31.7%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.835[a]	12	.021
Likelihood Ratio	26.580	12	.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.336	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 7 cells (35.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.61.

The results of questions 1, 2, and 5, shown in Tables 7, 8, and 11 respectively, indicated that students achieved poor results (in the D category, 60-69) even though their parents checked on them while he/she was doing homework, or that he/she finished. Parents helping with Math and Science did not show a strong relationship between how often they spent time helping and higher achievement.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run on the five variables of **H1** in order to see the significance of each of them to student achievement (see Table 12).

Table 12

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Student Achievement and the Five Variables of **H1**

Correlations

		The student achievement
The student achievement	Pearson Correlation	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	183
How often check on child while doing homework?	Pearson Correlation	-.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.590
	N	183
How often check that child finished homework?	Pearson Correlation	.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.622
	N	183
How often help with math?	Pearson Correlation	-.268**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	183
How often help with English	Pearson Correlation	-.301**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	183
How much time spend working with child each day?	Pearson Correlation	-.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	183

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that variables concerning helping with Math, English and time spent all were significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The results also showed that three of the variables had negative correlations: checking while doing homework, helping with math and helping with English. According to the results, helping with English showed the strongest relationship (r = -0.301).

A stepwise linear regression was then run to see which of the variables was the most significant statistically for the hypothesis and also to see which variables would be excluded as being less significant.

Table 13

Stepwise Linear Regression for Student Achievement and Parent Involvement in Homework

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.371[a]	.138	.113	8.89

a Predictors: (Constant), How much time spend working with child each day?, How often check that child finished homework?, How often help with math?, How often help with English, How often check on child while doing homework?

Excluded Variables[b]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
1	How often check on child while doing homework?	.048[a]	.647	.518	.048	.922
	How often check that child finished homework?	.125[a]	1.705	.090	.126	.931
	How often help with math?	-.123[a]	-1.312	.191	-.097	.566
	How much time spend working with child each day?	-.126[a]	-1.529	.128	-.113	.731

a Predictors in the Model: (Constant), How often help with English
b Dependent Variable: The student achievement

The five questions which were related to **H1** were then combined into a single scale in order to run statistical tests. This was done to see the results of the combined questions for **H1.**

Under **H1** the Crobach alpha for the 5 independent variables testing each aspect of parental involvement in the homework process resulted in $\alpha = 0.7794$.

A linear regression analysis and Pearson product-moment correlation were performed to check the relationship between student achievement and parental involvement in the homework process, both by talking and by helping with homework. The results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Linear Regression and Pearson Product-Moment Regression for Student Achievement and Parent Involvement with Homework

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.255[a]	.065	.060	9.15

a Predictors: (Constant), help scale

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1057.221	1	1057.221	12.622	.000[a]
	Residual	15160.888	181	83.762		
	Total	16218.109	182			

a Predictors: (Constant), help scale
b Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	93.859	2.550		36.812	.000
	help scale	-.502	.141	-.255	-3.553	.000

a Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Correlations

		The student achievement	help scale
The student achievement	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	183	183
help scale	Pearson Correlation	-.255**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	183	183

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The regression equation for the effect of parent involvement in the homework process on student achievement was:

Student achievement = 93.859 – 0.502

As hypothesized, there was a relationship between student achievement and parent help with homework; however, it was a negative correlation. The correlation can be expressed as ($r = -0.255$, $df = 182$, $p < 0.001$). The negative aspect of this correlation will be discussed in the conclusion.

H2 Students whose parents talk with them about their work in school will achieve higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents do not talk with them about their school work.

For this second hypothesis, a cross-tabulation was also done on each of the questions which made up the whole of the hypothesis.

Table 15

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Talking with Child about What is Learned in School

achievement categories * How often do you talk to your child about school? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often do you talk to your child about school?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level			50.0%	14.3%	35.7%	100.0%
	C level		18.2%	39.4%	9.1%	33.3%	100.0%
	B level	2.9%	4.3%	26.1%	11.6%	55.1%	100.0%
	A level	3.0%	4.5%	26.9%	13.4%	52.2%	100.0%
Total		2.2%	6.6%	30.6%	12.0%	48.6%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.631[a]	12	.164
Likelihood Ratio	16.355	12	.176
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.722	1	.099
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .31.

Table 16

Cross-Tabulation for Student Achievement and Parent Reviewing Graded Assignments

achievement categories * How often review/discuss graded assignments? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often review/discuss graded assignments?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	Between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level		14.3%	35.7%	14.3%	35.7%	100.0%
	C level	6.1%	3.0%	42.4%	21.2%	27.3%	100.0%
	B level	4.3%	5.8%	26.1%	13.0%	50.7%	100.0%
	A level	3.0%	4.5%	22.4%	16.4%	53.7%	100.0%
Total		3.8%	5.5%	28.4%	15.8%	46.4%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.128[a]	12	.435
Likelihood Ratio	12.221	12	.428
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.464	1	.035
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .54.

Table 17

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Talking About Expectations

achievement categories * How often talk about expectations regarding homework? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often talk about expectations regarding homework?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level			42.9%	21.4%	35.7%	100.0%
	C level	6.1%	3.0%	45.5%	18.2%	27.3%	100.0%
	B level	2.9%	2.9%	23.2%	17.4%	53.6%	100.0%
	A level	4.5%	6.0%	32.8%	23.9%	32.8%	100.0%
Total		3.8%	3.8%	32.2%	20.2%	39.9%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.056[a]	12	.365
Likelihood Ratio	13.806	12	.313
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.982
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .54.

Table 18

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Encouraging Student about School

achievement categories * How often encourage child regarding how he is doing in school? Cross-tabulation
% within achievement categories

		How often encourage child regarding how he is doing in school?					Total
		Not often	between not often and often	often	between often and very often	very often	
achievement categories	D level		7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	42.9%	100.0%
	C level	3.0%	3.0%	24.2%	21.2%	48.5%	100.0%
	B level	2.9%		23.2%	17.4%	56.5%	100.0%
	A level		4.5%	22.4%	13.4%	59.7%	100.0%
Total		1.6%	2.7%	23.0%	17.5%	55.2%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.873[a]	12	.714
Likelihood Ratio	11.366	12	.498
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.038	1	.308
N of Valid Cases	183		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23.

The results of the cross-tabulations showed that students whose parents talked with them "very often" achieved a higher grade average than students whose parents talked "not often" with them.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to see the significance of each of the variables for **H2** on student achievement.

Table 19

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Student Achievement and the Four Variables of **H2**

Correlations

		The student achievement
The student achievement	Pearson Correlation	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	183
How often do you talk to your child about school?	Pearson Correlation	.112
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130
	N	183
How often review/discuss graded assignments?	Pearson Correlation	.161*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030
	N	183
How often talk about expectations regarding homework?	Pearson Correlation	-.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.885
	N	183
How often encourage child regarding how he is doing in school?	Pearson Correlation	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.297
	N	183

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Of the variables for **H2**, the only significant correlation was obtained between reviewing graded assignments and achievement ($r = 0.161$, $p < 0.05$). However, it was not a strong correlation.

A stepwise regression was also run to test which of the variables (questions) was most significant.

Table 20

Stepwise Linear Regression for Student Achievement and Parent Talking to Child

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	79.892	2.486		32.143	.000
	How often review/discuss graded assignments?	1.323	.604	.161	2.192	.030

a Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Excluded Variables[b]

Model		Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
1	How often do you talk to your child about school?	.024[a]	.265	.791	.020	.638
	How often talk about expectations regarding homework?	-.073[a]	-.935	.351	-.070	.888
	How often encourage child regarding how he is doing in school?	.022[a]	.277	.782	.021	.879

a Predictors in the Model: (Constant), How often review/discuss graded assignments?
b Dependent Variable: The student achievement

The results of the stepwise regression indicated that the strongest variable for the second hypothesis was parents discussing graded assignments with their child. The variable was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The other three variables had significance levels greater than 0.05 and were excluded from the results table.

The four questions related to **H2** were combined into a single scale in order to run further statistical tests. Under **H2** the Crobach alpha for the 4 independent variables testing each aspect of parent involvement through talking and encouragement resulted in $\alpha = 0.7362$.

A linear regression analysis and a Pearson product-moment correlation were run to test the relationship between student achievement and parental involvement through talking and encouragement.

Table 21

Linear Regression and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Student Achievement and Parent Involvement Through Talking

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.115[a]	.013	.008	9.40

a Predictors: (Constant), talk scale

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	214.704	1	214.704	2.428	.121[a]
	Residual	16003.406	181	88.417		
	Total	16218.109	182			

a Predictors: (Constant), talk scale
b Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	79.793	3.492		22.852	.000
	talk scale	.332	.213	.115	1.558	.121

a Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Correlations

		The student achievement	talk scale
The student achievement	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.115
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.121
	N	183	183
talk scale	Pearson Correlation	.115	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.
	N	183	183

The results showed a significant positive correlation. The regression equation for the effect of parent involvement through talking on student achievement was:

Student achievement = 79.793 + 0.332 and $p < 0.001$

As hypothesized, there was a positive relationship between student achievement and parental involvement through talking, although it is a small correlation (r = 0.121).

H3 Students whose parents have a higher level of education will achieve a higher grades in English and Mathematics than students whose parents have reached a lower level of education.

A cross-tabulation was run on the data and the results are shown below.

Table 22

Cross-Tabulations for Student Achievement and Parent Education Level

achievement categories * Parent Education Level Cross-tabulation

			Parent Education Level					Total
			finished High school	did some university	finished university	MA	PhD	
achievement categories	D level	Count	7	4	2	1		14
		% within achievement categories	50.0%	28.6%	14.3%	7.1%		100.0%
	C level	Count	14	12	6	1		33
		% within achievement categories	42.4%	36.4%	18.2%	3.0%		100.0%
	B level	Count	20	19	24	6		69
		% within achievement categories	29.0%	27.5%	34.8%	8.7%		100.0%
	A level	Count	10	15	28	9	5	67
		% within achievement categories	14.9%	22.4%	41.8%	13.4%	7.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	51	50	60	17	5	183
		% within achievement categories	27.9%	27.3%	32.8%	9.3%	2.7%	100.0%

The results showed that the parents of 50% of the students who achieved only a D level had an education to the high school level. On the

other hand, for students with C's and B's, approximately 50% of the parents had attended or finished university, supporting the hypothesis that when parents have a higher level of education, students will achieve better in school.

A linear regression and Pearson Product-Moment correlation were also run on the data.

Table 23

Linear Regression and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Student Achievement and Parent Education Level

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.326[a]	.106	.101	8.95

a Predictors: (Constant), Parent Education Level

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1726.110	1	1726.110	21.559	.000[a]
	Residual	14491.999	181	80.066		
	Total	16218.109	182			

a Predictors: (Constant), Parent Education Level
b Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	78.262	1.619		48.328	.000
	Parent Education Level	2.976	.641	.326	4.643	.000

a Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Correlations

		The student achievement	Parent Education Level
The student achievement	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	183	183
Parent Education Level	Pearson Correlation	.340**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	183	183

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) indicating a correlation between parent education level and student achievement ($r = 0.340$)

An ANOVA was also run on the data.

Table 24

ANOVA for Student Achievement and Parent Education Level

_Descriptives
The student achievement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
finished High school	51	81.10	9.72	1.36	78.36	83.83	59	98
did some university	50	83.98	9.58	1.36	81.26	86.70	60	99
finished university	60	87.78	7.94	1.03	85.73	89.84	63	98
MA	17	88.29	8.89	2.16	83.73	92.86	66	97
PhD	5	95.00	2.55	1.14	91.83	98.17	91	97
Total	183	85.13	9.44	.70	83.75	86.50	59	99

ANOVA
The student achievement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1974.907	4	493.727	6.170	.000
Within Groups	14243.203	178	80.018		
Total	16218.109	182			

The results indicate that the effect of parent education level was significant over all ($F(4,178) = 6.170$, $p < 0.001$).

Finally, a multivariate regression was run for the three hypotheses.

Table 25

Multivariate Regression for the Three Hypotheses

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.499[a]	.249	.236	8.25

a Predictors: (Constant), help scale, Parent Education Level, talk scale

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4033.339	3	1344.446	19.751	.000[a]
	Residual	12184.770	179	68.071		
	Total	16218.109	182			

a Predictors: (Constant), help scale, Parent Education Level, talk scale
b Dependent Variable: The student achievement

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	79.296	3.331		23.804	.000
	Parent Ed Level	2.889	.579	.325	4.989	.000
	talk scale	.825	.218	.286	3.793	.000
	help scale	-.810	.147	-.412	-5.503	.000

a Dependent Variable: The student achievement

The data shows that for each level increase in parent education, there is an increase on average of 2.89 grades in achievement, controlling for the other variables (helping and talking). Each increase in parental response on

the talk scale resulted in a 0.83 increase in student achievement, controlling for the other variables. For each increase in parental response on the homework scale the student achievement level decreased by 0.81, controlling for the other variables.

The results show that all three of the hypotheses are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The results also indicate that parent education level is the strongest predictor of student achievement and that parental help with homework has a negative correlation with student achievement.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of the current research was to investigate the effects of parent home involvement and parent education level on student achievement. The target subjects were elementary school parents and students at an elementary school in the suburbs of Beirut. Parent home involvement was defined as helping the child with homework and as discussing different aspects of school with the child. Parent education level was defined by the highest level of education attained by the parent.

The overall results of the questionnaire showed that in general, parents at this particular school were involved with their children, helping them in the homework process as well as talking with them about various aspects of school. The vast majority indicated a relatively high level of involvement. In addition, the fact that so many responded (70%) indicated that there was a genuine desire on the part of the parents to be involved in the learning process.

The three hypotheses were tested for the effects of parent home involvement and education on student achievement. On the one hand, results showed that parent home involvement did not significantly affect student

achievement. On the other hand, there was a negative correlation between parental help with homework and student achievement. However, the results indicate that parent education level was positively related to student achievement.

The results for the first hypothesis, which postulated that parent home involvement in the homework process would help students achieve better grades in school, seemed to indicate the opposite. That is that parent help with homework has a negative relationship with achievement. Of the five questions used for the first hypothesis, three of them were negatively correlated with student achievement (checking on the child while doing homework, helping with math and helping with English). Of these three questions, parents helping their children with English homework had the strongest correlation, but it was negative.

That helping with English showed the strongest correlation probably demonstrated the reality of the bilingual school setting in Lebanon. Students may need more help in English as this is not their mother tongue, and parents may be sure to provide help to their children especially for English. Whether the parents themselves help their child or whether they procure the help of a tutor, help is provided in this vital subject.

However, the negative correlation needs further explanation. Correlation studies do not indicate causality. It is very possible that the negative correlations are indicated because the students were already doing

poorly in school and therefore needed help. This would mean that poor student achievement is what caused parents to become involved.

The results of the second hypothesis, that parents who talk with their child about school related matters would have a positive effect on student achievement, also showed only a slight, though significant correlation. None of the four questions in the questionnaire relating to this second hypothesis showed any significant correlation with achievement.

The results of the first two hypotheses were surprising: the correlation between student achievement and parent help with homework **(H1)** was negative, and there was only a slight positive correlation between student achievement and parent talking **(H2)** which was statistically significant. The results were unexpected because so much research has been done which indicates a strong correlation between student achievement and parent home involvement. However, there are a number of factors which may have played a role in the differences in the results.

The first factor has just been mentioned above: students who are already doing poorly in school cause parents to be involved, but this involvement may be insufficient to positively affect student achievement. One researcher (Watkins) mentioned finding this same result.

The second factor is response bias, as mentioned in Chapter Three. The researcher doing this study was also the Director of the school in which the research was being conducted. The positive side of this was that because of the relationship established between the Director and many of the parents,

there was a good response. On the other hand, because of the necessity of knowing the names of the students and the parents in order to correlate the student grades with the parent responses, some parents may have felt compelled to answer in a way that they felt would be socially acceptable and especially to the administration of the school. In other words, they may have given answers that would have shown them to be positively and actively involved in the homework process and discussions, perhaps more than they normally are.

A third, and more important factor which could explain the difference in results is that the research conducted in the United States was all conducted in public schools. Public schools in all countries must accept all students and the parents of students in public schools come from a wide range of backgrounds, from those parents who are negligent and totally uninvolved in their child's education, to those who cannot communicate with school because of language barriers, to those parents who are involved in all aspects of their child's education and very supportive.

The present research, however, was conducted in a private school. The very fact that parents are willing to pay for their child's education indicates that they place a high emphasis on education and schooling. Some parents may have had to make significant financial sacrifices in order to place their children in a private school and therefore, they would take education seriously and emphasize its importance to their children. Even if the parents did not have to make any financial sacrifice, the fact that they chose to put

their child in a private school indicates the importance they place on education, and again, this emphasis would be transmitted to their child, whether directly or indirectly. The fact that parents have placed their child in a private school means that they are already more involved to a certain extent, than parents who do not use private schools.

Another side of the issue of private versus public schools is that while public schools must accept all students, private schools are able to be selective in their admissions policies. Private schools, in general, have students who are higher achievers than public schools. This does not mean that public schools do not have high achievers, but rather simply that the admissions process in private schools prevents many lower achievers from becoming part of the school. Public schools on the other hand, have students of all levels of achievement, and especially more students who are lower achievers, as well as parents who demonstrate all levels of involvement.

A fourth reason which is closely linked to the two previous reasons is that many parents in private schools in Lebanon will hire tutors for their child if they feel that their child is in need of help in any way, especially if that child is not doing well academically. This also has an impact on overall student achievement.

A fifth possible reason for the unexpected results is that as this is pioneer research, many parents may have been unfamiliar with the whole research/questionnaire process. They may not have understood the

importance of accurate responses and may have chosen to respond in a way that they felt was best for them.

The results for the third hypothesis, that parent education level would have a positive effect on student achievement, were very significant showing that there was a significant difference among the grades of the students, depending on the level of education that their parents had attained. The results showed that the higher the level of education obtained by the parent, the higher the level of achievement of the student, in general.

These results are significant both statistically and educationally, not only for the student, but also for the parents, the schools and for society as a whole. These results show the importance of encouraging all students, whether in private or public schools, to continue with their education for as long as possible, and to attain as high a degree as possible, not only for their own sakes, but also for the sake of their children in the future. This result has implications for SES, which was only touched on in this paper. In general, people of lower income are not able to attain as high a level of education as those who are from a higher income bracket. These results are important not only for the students, but also for parents: it is a reminder of how valuable it is for them to encourage their child to continue education to reach as high a level as possible. And of course, it is a reminder to schools of the importance of giving students the tools they need to continue their education. And finally, society as a whole benefits when more of its citizens have attained higher levels of education.

Based on the results and implications of the current research, the following recommendations are made for further research. First, it is recommended that the base of respondents be expanded to include a variety of schools, both private and public. There is a wide variety of academic standards among the various private schools in Lebanon and so it would be beneficial to include a number of different private schools. Including public schools is essential to providing a complete picture educationally. Such a research would reduce the bias of the present single, private school research and it would also provide opportunities to compare and contrast the responses from private and public schools. This is vital here in Lebanon where there are so many private schools and yet at the same time a large proportion of the population attends the public schools.

Second, a further research could be done on the significance of parent education level and student achievement, again using a broader base of respondents from both private and public schools. This would allow for a base of a broader cross-section of society and give a more accurate picture of educational attainment for all levels of society.

Third, research could be done on the effect of SES and student achievement. This was only mentioned tangentially in discussions of other research done on parent education level and SES. But as mentioned in an earlier chapter of this paper, SES plays a very important role in student achievement. A research on SES and student achievement would give important data for this vital area.

Fourthly, conducting a longitudinal study would be a great value. To follow the students involved in a research through their educational process and then to the second generation would provide invaluable insights into the whole process of student achievement and the level of education attained by parents and how that impacts their interaction with their children at home and how it affects the level of education their children ultimately attain.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLES OF THE LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE PARENTS

17 May, 2004

Dear Parents of Elementary Students,

I would appreciate your help. I am doing a study because I want to see how the school and home can work more closely together in order to help our students achieve better results in school.

Enclosed with this letter is a questionnaire about teacher communication and about the amount of time you are able to give to your elementary children. My goal is to help you and the school find ways to help our students continue to improve.

The study is completely confidential. No names will be used anywhere in the study (I need the names for the permission but no names will be used). I am only interested in seeing how we together can help our students. Once the study is completed, I will inform you of the results, with suggestions of what you can do to help your child/children in his/their school achievements.

I know you are busy, but the questionnaire is short and should only take a few minutes. It is in English and Arabic. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take the few minutes necessary to complete the form, and return in by Friday, 21 May.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation as we work together to help our students/children.

Sincerely

Mary Beth Cofsky
School Director

١٧ أيار ٢٠٠٤

حضرة الاهلين الأعزاء،

إنّني أحضّر دراسة هدفها معرفة كيفيّة العمل الدّقيق بين المدرسة والمنزل لمساعدة طلابنا على تحقيق أفضل النتائج في المدرسة. إنني أقدّر مساعدتكم أيّما تقدير لإنجاز هذه الدّراسة الخاصّة بطلاّب المرحلة الابتدائيّة.

تجدون مع هذه الرّسالة ورقة استطلاع للرّاي حول تعاون الاساتذة وحول الوقت الّذي تخصّصونه لتلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية. غايتي هي مساعدتكم ومساعدة المدرسة لإيجاد طرق تسهّل لأولادنا سبل التحسّن والتقدّم.

هذه الدّراسة هي سرّيّة تماماً . لن يذكر فيها أيّ اسم. ما يهمّني فقط هو إدراك كيفية العمل معاً لمساعدة أولادنا . وحين تكتمل هذه الدّراسة، سأعلمكم بنتائجها وبالاقتراحات حول كيفيّة مساعدة ولدكم/أولادكم في تحصيله/ تحصيلهم المدرسّي.

أعلم أن أشغالكم كثيرة ولكنّ هذا الاستطلاع قصير وبالتالي لن يتطلّب منكم سوى دقائق معدودة، وهو باللّغتين الإنكليزيّة والعربيّة.

سأكون لكم شاكرة وممتنة لو خصصتّم بعض الدقائق لملء هذه الاستمارة وإرسالها يوم الجمعة الواقع فيه ٢١ أيّار.

لا تترددّوا في الاتصال بي إذا كان لديكم أسئلة.

أشكركم على مساعدتكم وتعاونكم سلفاً، إننا نعمل سويّاً لمساعدة تلاميذنا/ أولادنا.

بكلّ احترام
ماري بث كوفسكي
مديرة المدرسة

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions regarding ways in which you are able to help your child at home. Remember that your answers will be confidential.

	Not Often				Very often
1. How often do you check on your child when he/she is doing homework?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How often do you check to make sure your child has finished his/her homework?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How often do you help your child with math?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How often do you help your child with English?	1	2	3	4	5
5. In general, how much time do you (or someone in your home) spend working with your child on school subjects each day?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How often do you talk to your child about what he or she is learning at school?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How often do you encourage your child regarding how he or she is doing in school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. How often do you review and discuss with your child the graded assignments or work he or she brings home?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How often do you talk with your child about your expectations regarding his or her homework?	1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible, and remember that no names will ever be used. I repeat that this is a general study, to give guidelines to all parents.

What level of education did you finish?

Bacc II Some University BA/BS MA PhD/MD

What language do you speak at home with your children?

_____

What language was the language of instruction in school?_____

What language was the language of instruction in university?_____

How many children do you have?_____

I give permission for my child's grades to be used in this study Yes No
(no names will be used)

الرّجاء الإجابة عن الاسئلة الآتية حول الطّرق التي من خلالها، تساعدون ولدكم في المنزل.
تذكروا أنّ إجاباتكم ستبقى سرّيّة.

	قليلاً		مرارًا	غالـ
١- كم تتحققون من أنّ ولدكم يقوم بواجباته/ها المدرسية ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٢- كم تتحققون من أن ولدكم قد أتم واجباته/ها المدرسية ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٣- كم تساعدون ولدكم في مادّة الحساب ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٤- كم تساعدون ولدكم في مادة اللّغة الإنكليزية ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٥- عموماً، كم تخصّصون (أنتم أو شخص آخر) من الوقت لولدكم للعمل على واجبات مدرسيّة؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٦- كم تتكلمون مع ولدكم عن الأشياء التي يتعلمها في المدرسة ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٧- كم تشجّعون ولدكم في أدائه / أدائها في المدرسة ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٨- كم تناقشون أو تراجعون الأعمال المصحّحة التي يحضّرها ولدكم الى البيت ؟	١	٢	٣	٤
٩- كم تتكلمون مع ولدكم حول توقعاتكم في ما يخصّ واجباته المنزليّة ؟	١	٢	٣	٤

الرّجاء الإجابة عن الأسئلة الآتية بالشكل الدّقيق الممكن، وتذكّروا انّنا لن نذكر أيّ اسم في هذه الدّراسة. أكرّر أنّ هذه الدّراسة هي دراسة عامّة هدفها توجيه الأهل ليس إلاّ .

ما هي الدرجة العلميّة الّتي حصلتم عليها ؟

بكالوريا قسم ثانٍ　　مستوى جامعي　　إجازة جامعيّة　　ماجيستير　　دكتوراه

مـــا هـــي اللغـــة المحكية في المنزل ؟ _____

أيّ لغة كانت لغة التّعليم في المدرسة ؟ _____

أيّ لغة كانت لغة التّعليم في الجامعة ؟ _____

ما هو عدد أولادكم ؟ _____

اسمح باستعمال مرتبة صفّ ولدي في هذه الدّراسة

نعم　　لا　　(لن يذكر أيّ اسم)