The Relationship between Family Involvement and Students’ Daily Attendance in Kindergarten

by

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**Table of Contents**

List of Tables ii

Abstract iii

I. Introduction 1

Overview 1

Statement of Problem 2

Operational Definitions 2

II. Review of the Literature 4

Importance of School Attendance 4

Improving Student Attendance 5

Importance of Parent Involvement 8

Increasing Parent Involvement 9

Tracking Parent Involvement 12

III. Methods 15

Design 15

Participants/ Subjects 15

Procedure 18

IV. Results 19

V. Discussion 21  
 Threats to Validity 21

Relationship of This Study to Previous Research 23

Summary, Conclusions, and Directions for Future Research 24

References 26

**List of Tables**

Table A Pre and Post Results 17

Table 1 Measures of Central Tendency 20

Table 2 Dependent t test results for the entire sample 20

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine if parent communication and involvement have an impact on attendance of kindergarten students and their families to daily school and school events. The measurement tools were PowerSchool to track student attendance and a checklist for students whose parents checked off their weekly reading logs, homework packets, and if communication was made with the parents. During the study there were no statistically significant findings. Research in this area should continue as there is very little information and research available regarding the connection between parent communication and involvement on student attendance.

**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Overview**

There is a strong relationship between and among students’ school attendance, their academic achievement, their success in later life, and their social behaviors (Lamdin, 1996; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Parent involvement plays an important role in students’ attendance (Sheldon, 2007). Excessive student absences are a concern for schools as well as students and their families. Improving school attendance has become an important goal for educators at every level.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between parent involvement and student attendance. The researcher became interested in examining this issue in her role as a kindergarten teacher in Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Maryland (AACPS). She observed the effect of excessive absences within her classroom and her school, noting that these absences affected students’ learning and social behaviors. In AACPS, excessive absence is defined as six absences or more during the school year. Once six days or more are missed, a letter is sent home to the parents stating the importance of their child’s attendance, and how it affects children’s learning. According to Office of Pupil Personnel in AACPS, children who have positive school attendance are able to learn and grow into responsible and productive young adults who are prepared to enter the world (Office of Pupil Personnel Anne Arundel County Public Schools, 2013).

One of the steps to improving students’ attendance in elementary school, middle school, and high school is to focus on establishing positive attendance behaviors starting in kindergarten. To improve school attendance, it is important to develop a positive relationship with parents by having regular communication with them. This study was conducted to find ways to encourage parents and students to come to school on a regular basis to help improve the child’s social and academic growth.

**Statement of Problem**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of parent involvement and communication on kindergarten students’ school attendance.

**Hypothesis**

Parents who have regular involvement and communication with the school will have no effect on their child’s attendance.

**Operational Definitions**

**Parent Communication**

For purposes of this study, parent communication includes emails, phone calls, messages on ClassDojo, face-to-face conversations, and conferences. Parent communication can occur for positive reasons or for concerns. Parent communication is made whenever a student is absent or tardy to school at the beginning of the school day.

**Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement for purposes of this study includes parents signing off on students’ weekly reading logs and their weekly homework packets. Each week the students bring home four books on their reading level and the parents simply indicate each day that they read with their child. Students also bring home a homework packet that includes two reading activities and two math activities that the parents also have to help their child complete and sign off on.

**Student Attendance**

For purposes of this study, student attendance is defined as the daily record that documents whether the students are present or absent. If a student is absent, the school office is notified and communication is made with the parents.

**CHAPTER II**

**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This literature review explores the relationship between parent involvement and student attendance. The review begins with a discussion of the importance of school attendance. Improving student attendance is the focus of the second section, which also examines reasons for attendance issues. Improving family-school relations to boost attendance is discussed in the third section. Subsequent sections describe the importance of parent involvement, strategies to improve their involvement, ways to communicate with parents regarding student attendance, and tracking parent involvement.

**Importance of School Attendance**

Researchers have found positive correlations between students’ school attendance and their academic success and between their attendance and scores on standardized tests (Lamdin, 1996; Sheldon, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Students who excessively miss school have fewer opportunities to learn the material that will help them succeed in school and later in life (Lamdin, 1996). Lower attendance rates directly affect students’ academic achievement, social behaviors, and health (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002) and students with poor attendance have a higher dropout rate (McConnell & Kubina, 2014; Rumberger, 2011) Students who have poor attendance are more likely than those with positive attendance to be involved with delinquent and/or destructive behaviors. Poor attendance also can lead to an increased chance of students using tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs (Hallfors et al. 2002).

Attendance does not only affect the individual student but it also affects the entire school. Most schools’ funding is based in part on the number of students enrolled and the number of students who regularly attend. If the school’s attendance rates are low, that attendance rate affects the resources afforded the school. Fewer students in attendance means fewer resources, teachers, materials, and extracurricular activities. At some schools, student attendance is used an indicator of how well a school is functioning and may affect the school’s rating.

**Improving Student Attendance**

Students’ attendance is critical to their well-being. Schools cannot assume that only the students are responsible for their excessive amount of absences. To address the issue of absences, school personnel must find the reasons for the absences and identify solutions to improve student attendance (McConnell & Kubina, 2014). Therefore, the first step in helping to improve student attendance is to consider why students have low attendance rates.

**Reasons for Attendance Concerns**

Anxiety can contribute to an excessive amount of student absences. Some types of anxieties include school phobia, school refusal, and separation anxiety. School phobia occurs when a student avoids school because he or she fears something at school which may include being bullied or certain frightening sounds (Tyrell, 2005). Some signs of school phobia include children having frequent stomach aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, exhaustion, or headaches that cannot be attributed to a physical ailment. Signs of school phobia also include clinginess to the caregiver, throwing tantrums, and/or the occurrence of panic when the child is not with the caregiver. Children who experience school phobia may fear the dark or being alone, have trouble sleeping, have nightmares or exaggerated fears that include school experiences, or constant thoughts concerning the safety of others and themselves (Davies, 2005)

Another reason for student absences is school refusal. School refusal is a form of anxiety that includes general emotional distress or worry while that student is at school. This anxiety results in his or her refusing to attend school. (Suveg, Aschenbrand, & Kendall, 2005). Some signs of school refusal include many absences, crying every morning before school, purposefully missing school, or developing physical symptoms when it is time to go to or while at school (Mersch, 2017).

Separation anxiety is another reason for frequent student absences. Separation anxiety occurs when children feel stressed when they are away from their primary caregivers. This type of anxiety results in students not wanting to come to school (Hanna, Fischer, & Fluent, 1999). Separation anxiety is a major reason why students in primary grades are absent in the beginning of the school year. Many young children do not want to come to school because they experience separation anxiety from familiar and trusted caregivers. Often, parents respond to their young children’s distress by allowing them to stay at home.

There are also non-anxiety related reasons for school absences such as students wanting to avoid school for part of the day (Kearney & Silverman, 1993). Sometimes students do not have a choice regarding how much time they miss from school. They may be dealing with health issues or family-related matters. If a student is absent frequently due to health issues or other reasons, it is important that the school provides resources and learning materials for that child so the student does not fall behind and continues to be part of the school community. This outreach and contact enable an easier transition for the student when the student is able or willing to return to school. Additionally, it is important for the teacher to have a positive relationship with the students so the students know they have someone to talk with regarding any personal or family issues affecting their attendance or performance at school. The teacher also can provide the parents with referrals and connections to additional assistance and/or resources they might need to enable their child to attend school on a regular basis and help him or her to remain there.

**Improving Family-School Relations to Improve Attendance**

A key to improving student attendance is building a positive relationship between and among the parents, school, and the community. Sheldon’s research suggests that increasing family involvement will help increase students’ attendance rates (Sheldon, 2007). Schools can achieve this goal by inviting parents to school events and providing a warm and welcoming environment for them to come as they are able and interested in doing so. There are many ways teachers and schools can reach out to parents to solicit their involvement. For example, educators can mail postcards to families as a way of communicating with and welcoming these families (Spark, 2017).

Some states create systematic programs to address attendance concerns. For example, in Ohio, there is a National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) program that helps participating schools increase students’ attendance rates. NNPS provides supports to schools to enable them include the family and community members in becoming part of the students’ education and ensuring improvement in schools’ attendance rates (Sheldon, 2007). Sheldon suggests that it would be advantageous for schools across the nation to have similar support systems in place to provide schools and families with the strategies they need to help increase attendance rates, especially in Title I schools.

**Tracking Attendance**

It is important to keep track of school-wide and individual student attendance. Early identification of students who miss an excessive amount of school may help prevent the decrease of their attendance rate throughout the rest of the school year. McConnell and Kubina (2014) advise teachers to track students’ daily attendance and bring any attendance concerns to the school administration’s attention. If the school administration, teacher, and family build a positive relationship and detect the reasons for the student’s excessive absences, then hopefully, the problem can be addressed before the student experiences negative academic or social consequences. McConnell and Kubina further recommend that teachers encourage their students to attend school through such actions as calling home and emailing or sending postcards to establish positive communication. If the parent and child understand that the teacher is holding them accountable for the student’s school attendance and wants them to be at school, more positive attendance rates may result.

**Importance of Parent Involvement**

Involvement may be defined as “the act of taking part in an activity or event, or situation” (Rundell, 2009). Engagement may be defined as “the feeling of being involved in a particular activity” or “a formal arrangement to meet someone or to do something, especially as part of your public duties” ( Dictionary 2009–2012a pp. 399-400). Both involvement and engagement can be beneficial to the child. Parent involvement iscritical to their child’s attendance, academic performance, and views on school. Parent engagement can improve their child’s self-esteem and increase their motivation for learning. Parent engagement may increase their child’s engagement with learning and this increased engagement may lead to positive achievement outcomes for their children (Goodall & Montgomery 2014).

Parental engagement also can be defined as “parents’ engagement in their children’s lives to influence the children’s overall actions” (Kim & Bryan, 2017). This definition implies that the parent does not necessarily have to come to the school to be engaged with their child’s learning. Desforger & Abouchaar (2003) state that “to be most effective, parental engagement needs to be rooted in the home, in an attitude that fosters learning in the home, as this has been shown to be most positively related to children’s achievement” (p. 405). These authors advise that schools view parent engagement as something that can be done both at school and within the home. An example of parent engagement would be a parent participating in parent-teacher conferencing. Parent-teacher conferences could be conducted in person or remotely. This option benefits the teacher because he or she gets a more inclusive picture of the child’s life. The option benefits the parents because they learn what needs to be done to help the child succeed academically and socially.

When parents are involved and engaged with their children’s learning within and outside of the school, their children are more likely to be encouraged to want to come to school (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). If parents are involved and/or engaged with their child’s school whether by coming to school events, visiting their child daily or weekly at school, completing homework, or communicating with the teacher, it can benefit the child academically, socially, and behaviorally.

**Increasing Parent Involvement**

Due to the importance of parent involvement on students’ overall well-being, it is essential that parent involvement is encouraged and that their involvement is in matters that make a difference in students’ learning and success in school (Shirvani, 2007). As a first step, Shirvani advises educators at the school level to verify parents’ contact information, ensuring that it is up to date and that all parents have an effective way to become connected with schools and teachers. It also is important that schools and teachers are aware that they may accept all forms of parent and family participation. This means parents and families can be involved in and outside of the school. Some ways that parents and families can be involved and engaged with the school could be volunteering, helping with homework, attending school functions, visiting their child’s classroom, guest speaking, reading to a class, or taking a leadership role in the school. Shirvani encourages schools and teachers to recognize and value all of these types of support to students.

Since technology is a major part of current everyday life, it is important to use technology tools in a manner that supports parent communication with the school and helps parents become involved in their children’s school experiences (Kraft, 2017). Emails, phone calls, and mobile apps provide opportunities for teachers and schools to communicate readily and connect with parents and families of all backgrounds. Some examples of mobile apps that schools can use to communicate with parents are Bloomz, ClassDojo, Class Messenger, Edmodo, Livingtree, Remind, School CNXT, and SimplyCircle. These mobile apps provide a secure and reliable way for schools and teachers to communicate with parents about their child’s behavior, academic performance, and schedule for parent-teacher conference, remind parents about upcoming events or assignments, and share educational resources.

Montalbano (2014) advises teachers and schools to establish a warm and open environment in which parents and families feel welcomed. One way to create this atmosphere is to keep the lines of communication open and “keep the door open”. In such an environment parents are more likely to feel welcomed and comfortable coming to the classroom or reaching out to communicate. To build that strong communication with parents, it is important for teachers to initiate the contact. Teachers might do this through actions such as sending positive notes home, making phone calls, and sending emails (Sparks, 2017). To help promote communication between teachers and parents, Sheldon (2007) states that the school administration should clarify expectations to teachers regarding expected frequency of communication with parents. Sheldon advises that communication should include both positive and constructive messages about needs for improvement. Another way to create a connection is to make time to meet with parents of all students. This connection could be accomplished during parent-teacher conferences or before, during, or after school.

**Barriers to Communication with Parents**

Three major barriers to parent involvement are language, cultural differences, and physical (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). To address language barriers that may exist, Goodall and Montgomery emphasize that teachers and schools ensure that translators are available so the parent understands what is being said. If the parent is comfortable using another parent to help with communication, such support could enable that parent to feel more connected with the school community. Goodall and Montgomery advise that schools and teachers ensure they are considering cultural and economic differences of their students’ families. To learn more about their culture, it is important to have parents share or have their child share with the class information about their culture. It also is important for teachers to become familiar with different cultures so they understand more fully the background and priorities of their students and their families.

To address cultural differences, Goodall and Montgomery (2014) emphasize that teachers and families should exchange knowledge, values, and perspectives regarding their different cultural backgrounds. The authors advise teachers to set aside time at the beginning of the school year when parents and families are invited into the classroom to share something about their culture. Such sharing might include information such as their culture’s food, clothes, traditions, and holidays. If the parents and families are unable to come to the school, Goodall and Montgomery recommend that they be encouraged to have their child bring something to school that represents their culture to share with their classmates. It is important for teachers not to be culturally biased and for them to demonstrate mutual respect to all of the different families within their school community. Goodall and Montgomery advise that since there may be a language or cultural barrier, it is helpful for the teacher and school to set aside more time for parents to respond and ask for clarification during any form of communication.

To address the physical barriers to communication with parents, Kraft (2017) advises that teachers and schools encourage parents and families to be involved and engaged within and outside of the school building. For examples, teachers can invite parents to visit the school. However, Kraft cautions educators that they should not require the parents to come to the school building and emphasizes that educators understand that some parents are unable to come to school. Kraft advises that teachers and schools enable parents to participate in their child’s school experiences from their homes. This participation might include completing homework with their child and signing off on it. Parents of students in primary grades might volunteer to assist the teacher by helping to cut out or color materials. Additionally, Kraft and Monti-Nussbaum (2017) advises that teachers invite all parents to parent-teacher conferences. If the parent is unable to meet face to face, it is essential for the teacher to schedule a time to have a phone conference with that parent.

**Tracking Parent Involvement**

It is important for teachers and schools to track their communication with parents to document how and when the teacher and school are contacting the parents. Teachers can track phone calls, emails, parent-conference meetings, monitoring sheets, and progress reports sent home to the parents (Shirvani, 2007). By tracking communications, teachers and schools can determine which parents have received frequent contact and which families need additional outreach. Teachers also could track the quality of parent involvement. For example, when parents come into the classroom, the teacher can note how they are interacting and helping other students. The teacher can track if parent visitors are helping only their child versus helping a group of students. By tracking parent-school contacts, educators can ensure that they are making connections with all of the parents and families. Tracking the quality of parent involvement also will be useful in determining which parents might assist with various school events. Tracking how many times a parent is contacted will help determine if an effort was made to build a positive relationship with the parents and students that can increase their involvement with the school and more regular attendance for their child.

Montalbano (2014) recommends creating a survey to be sent to parents to learn their preferences regarding home-school communication. Questions such as the following might be included in the survey. How often did you meet with your child’s teacher in the past year? How often have you come to your child’s class? Who helps your child complete school work? In what ways would you want to be involved with the school? For example, would you prefer to come to class or have your child take things home? What days of the week work best for you to be involved in school events? What times work best for you to be involved in school events? What languages are spoken at home? What is the best way for the school to contact you (email, phone call, or letter)? Data from the survey could be used to determine how to increase parent involvement and teachers would have current information regarding parent preferences and availability. Data also could be used to create ways to involve parents at schools and at home as best fits a families’ needs and preferences.

**Conclusion**

Parent involvement and engagement are key factors in improving their child’s school attendance. When parents are involved and engaged with the school, the child is more likely to attend school on a regular basis. The child is less likely to drop out of school or use tobacco and illegal drugs. Parents who are involved with the school have children who are more likely to perform better on assessments than those of parents who are not involved. Educational researchers advise that teachers and schools be open to all forms of parent involvement (Shrivani, 2017). These communication strategies include actions such as both the parent being involved within the school and in ~~t~~heir home. Teachers and schools are encouraged to track their communication with parents and families to ensure all families are being contacted with both positive messages and needs improvement messages.

Future studies should gather information to determine the best ways to communicate with parents, such as noting the days and times parents are willing to come to school, materials to be sent home for parents to help their children, and any activities parents are interested in sharing with their child at home or school to support learning. Attendance and communications with parents could be tracked and homework and reading logs completed to determine if parents are supporting their children’s learning at home how that support, or lack thereof, relates to attendance.

**Chapter III**

**Methods**

The purpose of this study was to determine if communication with parents have an effect on attendance of kindergarten students and their families to daily school and school events.

**Design**

This study a pre-post measure and quasi-experimental design. All of the 17 kindergarten students who were selected for this study were in the researcher’s kindergarten class. It is a quasi-experimental study because there is no random sample or control group. Prior to the study, attendance data were collected for the second marking period for 46 school days which was for the period from November 13, 2017 to January 30, 2018. During the second marking period, attendance data were collected and the rates of students’ attendance were calculated by comparing the number of days they were present with the number of days in the second marking period (46 days).

**Participants/ Subjects**

Participants in this study were the researcher's 17 kindergarten students at a Title I school in Anne Arundel County, Maryland (AACPS). The class consisted of eight girls and nine boys. Their ages ranged from five to six years old. There were six Caucasian students, four African American students, one Asian student, and four Hispanic students. From the 17 students, four of the students were English Language Learners. There were no students with IEPs. Academically, 11 of the students were progressing at an average rate in the development of skills, five students consistently demonstrated skills, and one student needed development with skills. This Title I elementary school has full time pre-kindergarten as well as grades one through five. At the time the study was conducted, the school enrollment was 52% girls and 45% boys. Low income families comprised 89% of the school enrollment. From the 257 students 45% were Caucasian, 47% African American, 14% Hispanic, 12% Multi-race, 2% Asian, <1% Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander, and <1% American Indian/Alaska Native.

Data were recorded using PowerSchool which is the computer program in which daily attendance is recorded in AACPS. PowerSchool maintains records on how many days students have missed. Their attendance is then expressed as percentages by how many days of school they are present compared with how many days of school are included in a marking period.

**Pre and Post Results**

Table A

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student ID** | **Days present out of days possible as your pre from last marking period** | **Days present out of days in the study for post.** |
| 1 | 45/46 | 22/22 |
| 2 | 45/46 | 20/22 |
| 3 | 41/46 | 21/22 |
| 4 | 41/46 | 21/22 |
| 5 | 42/46 | 20/22 |
| 6 | 39/46 | 22/22 |
| 7 | 42/46 | 22/22 |
| 8 | 43/46 | 21/22 |
| 9 | 45/46 | 22/22 |
| 10 | 40/46 | 20/22 |
| 11 | 46/46 | 22/22 |
| 12 | 42/46 | 20/22 |
| 13 | 40/46 | 20/22 |
| 14 | 46/46 | 22/22 |
| 15 | 42/46 | 21/22 |
| 16 | 40/46 | 13/22 |
| 17 | 44/46 | 20/22 |

**Procedure**

The data were gathered daily on PowerSchool for each student’s attendance. The teacher created a chart for each student to track if parents signed off on the weekly reading log and homework packet. The researcher also recorded on the chart if the teacher (who also was the researcher) hadcommunicated with the parent. The communication chart also was compared to the attendance data to determine if communication had an effect on student attendance. Communication was made by the researcher through email, ClassDojo, face-to-face conversation, conferences, or phone. The manner of communication was documented on the chart. After the third marking period the researcher counted the number of days in the marking period and how many days each student had been present to compare these attendance rates to those from the second marking period.

**Chapter IV**

**RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to determine if communication with parents affects the school attendance of kindergarten students and the attendance of their families at school-sponsored events. Data were gathered on previous marking periods to establish a baseline prior to the intervention. Following the intervention new data on attendance were gathered. Since the total number of days possible for attendance differed between the number of days used to determine the baseline and the number of days involved in the intervention period, percentages of attendance were calculated.

A dependent t test was run comparing the baseline with the intervention period. The measures of central tendency are displayed in Table 1. No statistically significant findings were obtained as displayed in Table 2. However, there was one outlying student whose attendance in the intervention period was very different from the attendance of other students. Therefore, that student was excluded from the study and a further analysis was conducted using the dependent t test to determine if the findings would differ. Again, however, no statistically significant findings occurred.

Table 1

*Measures of Central Tendency*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation |
| Pair 1 | Pre Percentage Days Present | .924 | 17 | .0493 |
| Post Percentage days present | .933 | 17 | .0966 |

Table 2

*Dependent t test results for the entire sample*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|
|
|  | Pre Percentage Days Present - Post Percentage days present | -.396 | 16 | .697 |

**Chapter V**

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine if communication with parents affects school attendance of kindergarten students and the attendance of their families at school-sponsored events. Analysis of the data in Chapter IV indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the data obtained prior to the intervention and data acquired following the intervention.

**Threats to Validity**

            Several issues affected the internal and external validity of this research study. Internal validity refers to how well the study was run and how variables were measured. External validity refers to the extent to which the results of the study can be generalized to the target population.  With regard to internal validity, this study was conducted using a purposive sample, meaning participants were selected by the researcher and they were not randomly chosen. A purposive sample does not include a control group. Being unable to compare the study to a control group is a threat to internal validity. Another threat to the internal validity of the study involved the selection of students for the study, as the researcher used a convenient and small sample. The study was conducted using a sample size of 17 kindergarten students. The data may not be representative or comparable to other kindergarten classrooms. The researcher had no control over the number of students in the class who were involved in the study and had no control over the attendance of the students.

Another threat to the internal validity of the study relates to the reluctance of parents to communicate with the teacher during pretest and posttest components of the study. Yet another threat to internal validity of the study was experimental mortality where there is a possibility that students might transfer to different schools without notifying the school. For example, during the study, one student moved and another student was diagnosed with a medical condition. The student moving away resulted in having to drop one student from the study.  Another threat to internal validity was the short time frame of the intervention and data collection. This short time frame might have limited the overall effectiveness of the intervention. The pre-test was given over 46 school days and the intervention data was collected over a period of 22 school days. The intervention itself was limited to a five-week period.  A longer time period for implementation of the interventionwould provide a more accurate representation of student attendance, parent communication, and parent involvement. Parent communication and involvement constitute the ultimate threat to the internal validity of the study.  During the five weeks of the study, the intervention often was interrupted by school closures due to inclement weather and teacher professional development sessions which made it difficult to communicate consistently with the parents.

As stated above, external validity refers to the extent to which the results of the study can be generalized to the target population. External threats to validity in this study, as was the case with internal threats to the study’s validity, relate to the fact that this study was conducted using a purposive sample, meaning participants were selected by the researcher and they were not randomly chosen, thereby limiting the generalizability of the study to other populations.  Additionally, the sample of students was of similar background, age, and income levels of their parents and thus did not represent a diverse sample of students. The background and income levels of the students and parents in this study likely affected the outcome of the study. Another external threat to validity in this study was the interaction the students in the sample had with the researcher. The students likely would be more willing to come to school if the students and researcher had a positive relationship.  Means of communication parents have with the school can be an external threat to validity. Although the study resulted in increased communication with parents when their child was absent, the parents may not have had appropriate or available means of communication, the ability to take their child to school, or may have had a negative opinion of education. For example, if parents did not want to bring their child to school or communicate with the researcher about the child’s absence, they chose not to do so, thus affecting the outcome of the study.

**Relationship of This Study to Previous Research**

There is little available research regarding the relationship between parent involvement and student attendance. However, there has been research that found a positive correlation between students’ school attendance and their academic success (Lamdin,1996; Sheldon, 2007; (Epstein & Sheldon 2002). During the study, the researcher found that students who have positive attendance also have a higher rate of completing homework and reading logs. By completing these two activities at home with their parents, they were exposed to more words and were able to read more texts on their level than their peers who did not complete those activities. While analyzing the data and identifying the students who had excessive absences, the researcher examined the reasons why the students were absent. One student who was absent consistently did not want to come to school. When the mother was contacted, she said her son refuses to come to school today. This student’s school refusal relates to research findings of Suveg, et al. (2005) that one sign of school refusal includes many absences. The researcher continually tried forming a relationship with this child and the child’s their mother to make school a positive experience. This student also had behavior issues while at school which included refusing to complete work, bullying other students, and talking back to multiple teachers. According to Hallfor’s statement about poor attendance this behavior can lead to delinquent and/or destructive behaviors (2002).

Attendance of another student in the study decreased due to a medical diagnosis. The student was diagnosed with diabetes and was hospitalized for a week, subsequently missing multiple days of school for doctor appointments. Even though the researcher had consistent communication with the parent, the student was unable to attend school. A medical condition is a non-anxiety related reasons for school absences (Kearney & Silverman, 1993). In this case, the student and parent did not have a choice to come to school.

Through this study, barriers to parent communication were found. Communication with students whose parents spoke a different language or had different cultural backgrounds often was challenging. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) advised that to address language barriers, teachers and schools should use translators to communicate with parents who do not speak English to ensure that effective communication can occur. The researcher used Language Links to communicate with parents by telephone. Language Links is a service in which translators are on the phone with the school and the parents to help translate and facilitate the conversation. However, face-to-face conversations were limited and difficult to schedule.

**Summary, Conclusions, and Directions for Future Research**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of parent communication and involvement on student attendance. The results of this study suggest that parent communication and involvement do not make a significant difference with regard to student attendance. The researcher concludes that there needed to be additional time spent on the intervention. Examining each student’s attendance rates and parent communication and involvement assisted the researcher to identify students who had lower rates of attendance. Parent communication increased throughout the study. The researcher found that building a positive relationship with the parents is an essential part of building a positive relationship with students and their attitudes about coming to school.

Future studies might examine the effects on student achievement of their homework completion and completion of reading logs. Future studies based on attendance may be more effective if they were initiated at the beginning of the school year and if results were compared to attendance rates the following year to determine if parent communication and involvement make a difference in student attendance and continue to increase as the students enroll in higher grades. Future research also could address the limitations of this study. A larger, more diverse sample population would add validity to the research.

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