The Effects of Perceived Parental Involvement and Value of Achievement on Student

Achievement in Inner-City African American 7th Grade Males

by Heather Dempsey

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Abstract

This correlational study examined the relationships between perceptions parental involvement, beliefs about work and achievement, and students' academic achievement. Previous research indicates that parental involvement in   school activities benefits students' academic success. However, the definition of "parental involvement" varies between ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. Previous research has indicated that one program or type of "involvement" does not have the same effect for all students, and in fact, different populations require different levels and types of involvement to ensure success. The current study used a convenience sample and examined correlations between both students' and parents' perceptions of parental involvement, personal achievement values, and students' actual academic achievement, defined by their GPA's. No significant correlations were found between parental involvement, personal beliefs about achievement, and GPA. However, significant positive correlations were found between students' and parents' ratings of parental involvement and their beliefs about work and achievement, suggesting these perceptions were in accord with one another. While results of the study were inconclusive in determining the effectiveness of values and parental involvement on grades, they did yield some interesting findings and considerations for future research in this area.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In recent decades, the topic of student achievement in the United States has made frequent headlines. Repeatedly, we read reports of declining performance in schools, measured by standardized tests. In a country that once topped the global leader board of student achievement, academic performance has declined due to persisting and worsening social, economic, cultural, and political issues. Specifically, we see a discrepancy in student achievement between groups of various socioeconomic, geographic, ethnic, and/or racial backgrounds. Caucasian students are reported to perform significantly higher than their African American and Hispanic/Latino counterparts. Differences in socioeconomic backgrounds have also been connected with success or failure in the classroom. In general, academic achievement has been a greater challenge for African American students in low-income urban areas, than other subgroups. The National Center for Educational Statistics tracked student performance through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and reported on what we have come to know as achievement gaps. In 2007, eighth grade African American students across the nation performed 31 points below their Caucasian counterparts, in Mathematics. In Reading, a gap of 29 points existed, nationally, amongst these groups. Students in urban settings, such as Baltimore, appear to suffer even greater disparities. According to The Nation's Report Card, (2013) only 13% of Baltimore's 8th graders tested, scored at or above proficient in Mathematics. Amongst this same group, only 16% scored at or above proficient in Reading.

Many initiatives to address this issue have been designed implemented locally and nationally. Specifically, the Common Core Curriculum was designed to ensure that all students

would be equipped with the necessary skills for college and the workplace, and that all students across the country, would receive the same education. Still, in disadvantaged communities, additional supports at home are essential to ensure increased student achievement. Hayes (2012) notes that parental involvement has consistently been linked to a students' success in school, in areas such as attendance, achievement, behavior, and attitudes. However, previous research has discovered that parental involvement can take many forms. Groups of different ethnic and racial backgrounds have varying definitions of parental involvement. Also, different approaches to involvement are more successful amongst subgroups. African American students, for example, have demonstrated an increase in performance when parental involvement in school activities, took place in the home. Frequent communication between the parent and child about school expectations has been connected to student achievement, amongst African Americans. These differences are important for schools to note, when looking to develop programs to "involve" parents in school activities. Also, to measure the level of parental involvement, the schools must understand the family's definition of it.

Statement of Problem

The first goal of this study is to determine whether there is a relationship between parents' and students' perceptions of the degree of parents' involvement in school activities and whether either of these relate to actual student achievement.

The second goal is to determine whether parents' and students' values about school and work are related and whether either of these relate to actual student achievement.

Hypothesis

The null hypotheses below will be tested to determine whether student and parent perceptions of the levels of parental involvement and positive achievement values are related to

one another and whether any of them correlate significantly with student achievement

Concordance of Student and Parent Ratings

ho1: r (parent ratings of involvement, student ratings of involvement) = 0

ho2: r (parental achievement values, student achievement values) = 0

Parent ratings

ho3: r (parent involvement, achievement) = 0

ho4: r (parental achievement values, achievement) = 0

Student ratings

ho5: r (student rating of involvement, achievement) = 0

ho6: r (student achievement values, achievement) = 0

Relationship between Perceived Parent Involvement and Achievement Values

ho7: r (student rating of involvement, student achievement values) = 0

ho8: r (parent involvement, parental achievement values) = 0

Operational Definitions

Student achievement is being measured by the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA expressed in a percentage) in all given subjects, from the 1st quarter to the end of the 4th quarter of the school year.

Parental involvement at home is being defined as engaging in behaviors that have been identified as beneficial to middle school children's academic success. Parents and students will each complete a survey rating the frequency of parent involvement in activities intended to support achievement. The surveys are located in Appendices A and B.

Achievement values are being defined as attitudes about the importance of effort and academic success. These are rated on the surveys mentioned above.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is widely understood that parental involvement in education can positively affect student achievement. Parental involvement appears to have both direct and indirect effects on student performance. Studies indicate several parental involvement programs have had success in increasing student performance, to varying degrees. Other studies note the indirect effects involvement has on student performance. Parental involvement contributes to increased student performance by influencing the students' beliefs and behaviors that lead to achievement, such as motivation and persistence (Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008). While it is widely agreed that parental involvement in education is beneficial, researchers are still examining which programs are most effective.

Defining Parental Involvement

Parental involvement bears many forms, and often differs amongst various cultures. As defined by the United Code of Law (USCS 7801 (32), parental involvement is "the participation of parents in a regular, two-way, and meaningful communication, involving student learning and other school activities" (Jeynes, 2012, p. 707). Less formal definitions describe home and school activities. Volunteering at school, communicating with teachers, assisting with homework completion, and attending school events and parent/teacher conferences, are common types of involvement. As defined by this scope, it is often perceived that African American and Latino families are less involved in their children's education. However, both groups traditionally engage in activities that are not widely acknowledged by schools as involvement. Amongst African American families, attending church, setting behavioral and academic expectations, assisting with homework, and encouraging independence are the most common family

involvement behaviors. Because many of these behaviors are home-based, it is difficult for schools to measure (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Families of different races, of low-socioeconomic status, have also been perceived to participate less frequently in school activities. However, such families tend to informally drop in children's schools, to check on student progress. Again, since these behaviors are not aligned with the school's traditional views on involvement, they are often overlooked.

The Effects of Parental Involvement in a Child's Education

Parental involvement, with various forms, has been observed to have positive effects in several areas. Most notably, parental involvement has been connected to improved student achievement. Previous studies have connected parental involvement to improved school attendance, higher graduation rates, fewer retentions, and higher student achievement scores in Reading and Math (Townsend, 2010). Other studies note, specifically, that parental discussions with children about school expectations were positively associated with increased student achievement, in those students. Zhang, Hsu, Kwok, and Benz (2011) note similar findings from Henderson (1987). That study indicated that a positive home learning environment was highly associated with student grades and homework.

Parental involvement in education has positive social and emotional effects on students as well as parents. Studies have observed that parents who reveal positive attitudes about school with their children are more likely to have children with positive attitudes and characteristics, such as increased persistence and attention to tasks, and responsibility for school learning outcomes. (Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008) Successful parental interventions also have positive effects for the parent. Bower and Griffin (2011) explain that such programs increase a parent's social capital, and access to resources and supports that will benefit student success.

Previous studies indicate that such interventions have led parents to develop stronger perceptions about their ability to influence their child's academic success. They have also led to increased parental satisfaction in the quality of the child's education.

Parental involvement in education benefits all students, but has varying impacts on special populations. Hampshire, Butera, and Bellini (2011) note the effects of self-management strategies combined with parental participation on students with emotional and behavior disorders. Previous research indicates the combination led to increased motivation and levels of social and academic task completion, in such students. Hampshire et al. researched the effects of self-management strategies paired with parental interventions in homework completion for a student with autism spectrum disorder. Their study revealed increased homework accuracy and completion, as well as increased levels of student self-management and independence in completion of tasks.

Other studies looked specifically at parental involvement in low-income families. Zhang et al. (2011) noted Henderson's (1987) study in which low-income families attended school-based training programs. Such programs were associated with improved language skills, test performance, and behavior in the children of participants.

Lack of Parental Involvement

There are several factors that hinder parental involvement in a child's education. Some of those factors have roots in the family, while some are generated by the schools. Jeynes (2012) notes some obvious factors such as increased family dissolution and parental work obligations, as leading to decreased involvement in school activities. Walker and Hoover-Dempsey (2008) note some social and psychological factors that limit parental involvement. Hardships such as poverty, low income, and/or limited education leave affected families feeling inadequately

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equipped to partner with schools or provide home based support for their children's academic success. Other cultural differences in language, values, and practices, perceived or realistic, often lead to limited understanding between schools and families.

Teachers and administrators often, unintentionally, create barriers for parental involvement in children's academic success, as well. Practical reasons, such as time constraints, prevent some teachers from planning and executing programs that will engage parents in homework, or encourage them to participate in school conferences or social events. Also, if there is a low level support from administrators for such programs, they are placed low on the priorities list. Personal and psychological reasons may also limit parental involvement programs in schools. When teachers are not confident in their abilities to teach, interact with parents, or provide helpful strategies, they are less likely to initiate parental involvement programs (Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008).

Cultural and economic differences can limit parental involvement in school activities, as well. Bower and Griffin (2011) cite previous studies which indicate that most schools utilize parental involvement strategies, which are largely based on middle-class, European-America norms. Consequently, families of other racial and ethnic backgrounds may not participate in such programs as frequently as their Caucasian counterparts. Bower and Griffin describe a study of low-income African American, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander parents. A survey revealed that this group believed it was the school's responsibility to provide academic education, while parents provide the moral training. Such beliefs may keep parents from recognizing the need to participate in school based activities. In a similar light, culturally, Latinos tend to have a high level of respect for the role of the teacher, which in turn may prevent them from contacting schools about potential problems. When English is not the parent's primary language, these

language barriers reduce communication with schools as well. In families of low socioeconomic status, more practical issues such as lack of transportation and/or childcare, often prevent parents from attending school events or volunteering.

Existing Parental Involvement Programs

Despite schools' efforts to promote participation in school-based activities, research indicates that home-based activities are most effective in increasing student achievement. However, many programs exist, to serve various purposes, throughout schools. Jeynes (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of different parental involvement programs. He studied the effects of home-based parental involvement programs, such as shared reading and homework checking programs. He also looked at programs that emphasized communication or partnerships between parents and teachers. Other school-based programs, such as ESL teaching programs, aimed to empower parents while increasing levels of participation. The results of his study indicated a positive association between the length of programs and positive academic outcomes. The study also found the most significant results came from parental involvement programs that asked parents to read or complete homework with their child, as well as school-home partnership, and communication programs. The researchers noted that the shared reading programs may have yielded the most academic success, because they promote parent involvement with teacher guidance. Providing parents with specific questions to discuss throughout shared reading, results in a more beneficial experience.

Another study by Hong and Ho (2005) looked at several components of parental involvements and questioned whether they had varying effects across several ethnic or racial groups. The study examined different dimensions of parental involvement and the direct and indirect effects on students and student achievement across four ethnic/racial groups. The results

concluded that different forms of parental involvement were more successful for some groups than others. For Asian American students, parental aspirations for education had a direct effect on students' initial achievement scores. Parental participation in school events and communication with the student about school activities, had a direct effect on achievement growth, over the course of four years. For African American students, parental aspirations for education had a direct effect on their initial achievement scores, and supervision of home activities had a direct effect on student growth in achievement, over time. However, increased supervision of home activities had a negative effect on academic growth over time. With regard to Hispanic students, communication about school activities had a direct effect on initial achievement scores, but no factor proved to have a direct effect on students' academic growth. Finally, for White students, communication and parental aspirations for education had a direct effect on both students' initial achievement scores and academic growth. In regards to indirect effects of parental involvement, communication about school activities and parental educational aspirations were, in all four groups, key to improving educational aspirations in students, and improved student aspirations are key to enhancing student academic achievement. Amongst African Americans, parental participation in school events had a positive indirect effect on academic achievement, by enhancing students' academic aspirations. However, supervision of home activities had a negative impact on adolescents' educational aspirations. The results of the study conclude that high educational expectations in parents, coupled with communication about school activities, increases all students' personal aspirations and performance. Also, it is important to note that different forms of parental involvement are most effective amongst the different ethnic/racial groups.

Summary

The previous research confirms that parental involvement is beneficial to students' overall academic success. Future parental involvement programs should take into account the various levels of parental involvement, and how definitions of parental involvement vary amongst parents of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and socioeconomic status. Also, it is important to note that cultural differences may cause some forms of involvement to be more or less effective for different groups. Schools should take all these factors into account when designing or evaluating parental involvement programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

The current study used a correlational-design, using a convenience sample. Surveys regarding perceptions of parental involvement in school activities and personal achievement values were distributed to parents and students to complete. Results were correlated with academic achievement data (yearly cumulative average) to determine whether student and parent perceptions of parent involvement or achievement-related values related to either each other or to actual achievement.

Participants

Participants were selected using a convenience sample of a class of 7th grade African American males, and their parents. All of the students were of similar socioeconomic backgrounds and attended public school in Baltimore City. Although 25 parent/guardian surveys were distributed, only eleven parents returned surveys about their levels of involvement and personal achievement values. Therefore, in order to have a matched sample, only 11 of the 25 students' surveys, or 44% of those administered were considered for this survey.

Instrument

The instruments used were two parallel surveys for students and their parents (or a parent) to complete. Each survey contained ten total statements to which ratings were assigned. Six of those statements related to perceptions of levels of parental involvement in school activities at home. The remaining four statements related to personal achievement values. Students rated their perception of their parents' level of involvement in school activities, and their own personal achievement values. Parents rated their own involvement and values.

The six questions about parental involvement, in the second section of the surveys, were

developed using well-known information about the habits of successful students. A copy of the student version of the survey and these questions may be found in Appendix A. Questions asked students to rate how frequently their parents engage in the helping habits, using a five-point scale ranging from 0 being "never" to 4 being "daily". The questions about parental involvement asked students to rate how often parents discussed school activities and expectations, assisted with homework, assisted with organizational skills, taught or discussed time management, and helped or taught study skills at home.

The four survey items reflecting achievement values asked students to rate, on a five-point scale, with 0 being "strongly disagree" and 4 being "strongly agree", their own levels of agreement with four given statements about values. Statements pertained to their beliefs about hard work, good grades, completion of high school, and setting and achieving goals.

Parents were given a parallel survey, inquiring about their perceptions of their level of involvement in school activities, and their own personal achievement values. This survey can be found in Appendix B.

Procedure

Students were asked to take the parent surveys home to their parents with a letter explaining the study. Parents were asked to complete the survey as honestly as possible, as there would be no negative consequences for any responses, and results would be kept anonymous. Each student-parent pair was assigned a number (1-25), for later comparison and to match data from the same family. Parents were told that students would receive a pizza party as an incentive for participation in the study. After sending the parent surveys home, students completed their surveys in school, in order to avoid being influenced by their parents' opinions. The parents' survey return rate was 44%. Eleven of the 25 surveys sent home were returned. These 11

student-parent pairs were then included in the study.

To analyze the data, initially correlations were computed to determine the level of consistency between parent and student perceptions of involvement and values. Next, results were correlated with students' cumulative averages to determine whether significant correlations existed between parental involvement and achievement values and grades. Correlations were also computed to assess whether student or parent achievement values and perceptions of involvement were significantly related.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The first six null hypotheses below test whether the students' and parents' perceptions of the levels of parental involvement and positive achievement values are related to one another and whether each correlates significantly with student achievement.

Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics for survey each item, which were rated by students and parents in terms of degree of agreement from 0 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree for the achievement values measure (Part 1: Personal Beliefs section of Surveys) and from 0 = never to 4 = daily for the parent involvement (part 2 section of Surveys). Copies of the student and parent surveys are available in appendices A and B, respectively.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Student and Parent Ratings of Achievement Values, Parental

Involvement and GPA

	N	Mean	Range	Std. Dev.
Student data				
Personal Beliefs (Achievement Values)				
1. I believe it is important to work hard in and outside of school.	11	3.9091	3-4	.30151
2. I believe it is important to get good grades.	11	3.9091	3-4	.30151
3. I believe it is important to finish high school.	11	4.0000	4-4	.00000
4. I think it is important to set and achieve goals in life.	11	3.8182	3-4	.40452
TOTAL Student Achievement Values	11	15.6364	14-16	.67420
Involvement				
1. My parents or guardians discuss my school activities with me	11	3.2727	1-4	1.00905
2. My parents or guardians discuss their expectations about my performance in school, with me.	11	3.2727	2-4	.64667
3. My parents or guardians assist me with completing	11	3.3636	2-4	.67420

homework.

	N	Mean	Range	SD
4. My parents or guardians teach me organizational skills, or help me to become better organized.	11	3.3636	2-4	.67420
5. My parents or guardians teach me time management skills.	11	3.4545	2-4	.68755
6. My parents or guardians help me or teach me how to study.	11	3.4545	2-4	.68755
TOTAL Student Parent Involvement	11	20.1818	15-23	2.52262

Parent data

Personal Beliefs (Achievement Values)

	N	Mean	Range	SD
1. I believe it is important to work hard in and outside of school.	11	3.9091	3-4	.30151
2. I believe it is important to get good grades.	11	3.8182	3-4	.40452
3. I believe it is important to finish high school.	11	4.0000	4-4	.00000
4. I think it is important to set and achieve goals in life.	11	4.0000	4-4	.00000
TOTAL Parent Achievement Values	11	15.7273	15-16	.46710

Involvement

	N	Mean	Range	SD
1. I discuss my child's school activities with him/her.	11	3.4545	3-4	.52223
2. I discuss my expectations about my performance in school, with my child.	11	3.6364	3-4	.50452
3. I assist my child with completing homework.	11	3.2727	3-4	.46710
4. I teach my child organizational skills, or help him/her to become better organized.	11	3.6364	3-4	.50452
5. I teach my child time management skills.	11	3.2727	3-4	.46710
6. I help or teach my child how to study.	11	3.1818	3-4	.40452
Total Parent Parent Involvement	11	20.4545	18-23	1.69491
GPA	11	75.7091	68.2-89.2	6.44817

Based on this data, it can be seen that both parents and students gave relatively high ratings to most survey questions. Parents' and students' perceptions of level of involvement and personal achievement values were relatively consistent and high. The ranges of scores were very small and the greatest deviation pertained to the question about the students' perception of how often parents discuss school activities with them), and student GPA.

The following hypotheses were then tested by computing Pearson Product Moment

correlations between students' and parents' total values and involvement scores and those scores

and students' cumulative GPA's. The results follow in Table 2.

Concordance of Student and Parent Ratings

ho1: r (parent ratings of involvement, student ratings of involvement) = 0

ho2: r (parental achievement values, student achievement values) = 0

Parent Ratings

ho3: r (parent involvement, achievement) = 0

ho4: r (parental achievement values, achievement) = 0

Student Ratings

ho5: r (student rating of involvement, achievement) = 0

ho6: r (student achievement values, achievement) = 0

Relationship between Perceived Parent Involvement and Achievement Values

ho7: r (student rating of involvement, student achievement values) = 0

ho8: r (parent involvement, parental achievement values) = 0

Table 2

Correlations between Ratings of Achievement Value, Parent Involvement, and GPA

		Student Achievement Value	Student Parent Involvement	Parent Achievement Value	Parent Parent Involvement	GPA
Student Achievement Value	r	1				
	Sig. (2 taile d)					
Student Parent Involvement	R	.513	1			
	Sig.	*.106*				

		.606*	.471	1		
Parent Achievement Value	R	.606*	.471	1		
	Sig.	.048	.144			
Parent Parent Involvement	R	.247	.727*	.425	1	
	Sig.	.465	.011	.193		
GPA	R	-.356	-.097	-.241	-.034	1
	Sig.	.283	.776	.474	.920	

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

Hypothesis 1 (ho1: r (parent ratings of involvement, student ratings of involvement) = 0) was tested by correlating the student and parent ratings of how involved the parents are in their students education. The correlation coefficient of .727 was statistically significant (p<.011), suggesting parents and students viewed the degree to which parents were involved in their schooling similarly. Thus, null Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Hypothesis 2 (ho2: r (parent achievement values, student achievement values) = 0) was tested by correlating the student and parent ratings of how much value they place on educational and life achievements. The correlation coefficient of .606 was statistically significant (p<.048), suggesting parents' and students' values of achievement were similar or that parents who value achievement more tended to have children who also valued achievement more (and vice versa). It should be noted, however, that the range of responses on the achievement value/personal beliefs sections of the parent and student surveys was very small and all rated the values quite highly for each item (range was 3-4 for both parents and students) and overall (range was 14-16 for students and 15-16 for parents). Given these results, null hypothesis 2 was also rejected.

Four correlations were calculated to determine whether student and parent perceptions of the degree of parental involvement in their child's education or students' or parents' degrees of

value of achievement was significantly related to students' actual academic achievement (measured by the students' GPA (percentage)). Results indicated that that neither student nor parent ratings of degree of involvement, nor either group's value of education correlated significantly with actual performance as measured by grades. Therefore null hypotheses 3-6 (listed below with their test statistics and significance levels) were retained.

Parent ratings

ho3: r (parent involvement, achievement) = 0 (r= -.034, p <.920)

ho4: r (parental achievement values, achievement) = 0 (r= -.241 , p<.474)

Student ratings

ho5: r (student rating of parent involvement, achievement) = 0 (r= -.097 , p<.776)

ho6: r (student achievement values, achievement) = 0 (r= -.356 , p<.283)

Finally, null hypotheses 7 and 8, below, were tested to determine whether the ratings of the constructs of parental involvement and degree of value placed on achievement were significantly related. While it seems intuitive that parents who value achievement more would be more involved in their children's education, the results in Table 2 indicate that the relationship based on student data (hypothesis 7) was not significant (r=.513. p<.106) and the relationship based on parent data was not either (r=.425, p<.193). Therefore, hypotheses 7 and 8 were retained.

Relationship between Perceived Parent Involvement and Achievement Values

ho7: r (student rating of involvement, student achievement values) = 0

ho8: r (parent involvement, parental achievement values) = 0

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Several hypotheses were tested in this study. Null hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected as the correlations were significant. The data for hypothesis 1 indicated that there was a statistically significant correlation between the parents' perceptions of involvement and that of the students' perceptions of parental involvement. The same was true for hypothesis 2. The data indicated that there was a significant correlation between parents' personal achievement values and students' personal achievement values. This conclusion is not surprising, as children tend to mirror their parents' attitudes and beliefs. The last 6 null hypotheses were retained as no significant correlation was determined between perceived parental involvement, by either parents or students, and the students' GPA. The same was true for personal achievement values of parents and students and student GPA, indicating that, in this study, the level of parental involvement was not significantly related to the student's GPA. It is interesting to note, although there was no statistical significance, the data indicates a slight negative correlation for hypotheses 3–6. Finally, the relationships between both parents' and students' personal achievement values and perceived degree of parental involvement was not significant, resulting in retention of null hypotheses 7 and 8 which stated the correlations would not differ significantly from zero.

Implications

The results of the study have mixed implications. With regard to the first two hypotheses, results have positive implications for student success. Perceptions of parental involvement were consistently high for both parents and students. This indicates that the parents surveyed, most likely, are engaging in activities and fostering the habits that are known to promote student achievement. The fact that parental involvement was high but did not have a significant effect on

students' GPA could have several causes. It is possible that students with higher averages are doing well with the assistance from parents, which they receive from home. It could also imply that students with lower averages need extra assistance to succeed, so their parents show more involvement at home. In fact, while it is not a statistically significant correlation, the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement appears to be negative, supporting the idea that the lower performing students here require or receive more attention to school activities from their parent or guardians. The findings regarding hypothesis 2 support the idea that students' personal beliefs about hard work and achievement will be relatively consistent with those of their parents. Again, this is an area where all participants gave high ratings to values supporting achievement and the range of responses amongst participants was only two points for students and one for parents. This supports the idea that children will adopt their parents' beliefs about hard work and education. It also reaffirms that thoughts and behaviors that parents have a significant impact on those of their children.

The fact that hypotheses 3 through 6, which measured the relationship between perceived parental involvement and student GPA, and personal achievement values, of both parents and students, with student GPA were retained could have several implications for this group. Consistently high parental involvement alone may not be enough to ensure a child's achievement. It may be possible that parents need assistance in effectively teaching study, organizational, and time management skills to their children. Also, in order to ensure maximum academic success, it may be necessary for children to master and perform the previously mentioned tasks, independently. As previously stated, responses regarding values of hard work and achievement were high, from parents and students. The lowest GPA amongst the subjects was 68.2%. In the given school district, an average of 60% is passing. It is possible that each

student does truly value hard work and good grades, and their grades are reflection of their current effort and also ability.

While it seems intuitive that parents who value achievement more would be more involved in their children's education, the results in Table 2 indicate that the relationship based on student data (hypothesis 7) was not significant (r=.513. p<.106) and the relationship based on parent data was not either (r=.425, p<.193). This may indicate, as noted above, that the reasons for parental involvement are likely complex and related to more than just values and grades.

Threats to Validity

Several potential threats to the validity of this survey should be noted. First is the sample selection. The researcher used a convenience sample from one school, which could not accurately represent the targeted population as a whole. Also, the size of the sample was quite small and may only reflect the views of a small or select group of parents and students. The fact that these parents were among the 44% who actually completed and returned surveys may reflect their higher levels of involvement in school activities, as noted by the high ratings on the involvement surveys. A final possible concern is the method of reporting. Self-reports tend to be less accurate than those made by an objective observer. However, considering the given subject matter, it would be unlikely for researchers to make direct observations about activities that occur in a student's home.

Connection to Previous Studies

The current study supports findings from previous similar studies. Research by Walker and Hoover-Dempsey (2008) concluded that a high level of parental involvement can influence their child's beliefs and behaviors that lead to achievement. Although there was not a significant correlation between parental involvement and student achievement in the current study, either

using student or parent responses, both relationships were positive. Students with high levels of parental involvement were also noted to have high personal values about achievement.

The current findings are also similar to those of Hong and Ho (2005). In their study, they concluded that increased supervision of home activities had a negative correlation with academic growth for African American students. This study had similar results, although none of the correlations with GPA were statistically significant. This is not to imply that supervision has a negative effect on these students. Instead, perhaps these students have not mastered the positive habits and activities for academic success (studying, time-management, organization, etc), and parents feel the need to be more involved.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should investigate the effects of parental involvement on the achievement of students of more varied ages.   Perhaps parental involvement is more crucial at a younger age. Also, researchers should consider that lower levels of involvement in certain areas may not cause or be associated with lower achievement, but instead the opposite. It is possible that higher achieving students are more independent and require less assistance with homework and studying. Future researchers may also want to be cautious about relying on self-reported data. It is possible that parents gave what they believed to be socially acceptable responses, instead of what was most accurate.

Conclusion

While the current study was inconclusive in establishing a direct relationship between parental involvement and values on student achievement, it did not negate the importance of parental involvement and provided interesting comparison between parent and student perceptions of involvement and values. As previously noted, future researchers should study

students of various age groups or consider longitudinal studies to clarify what values and types

of involvement best foster achievement in various areas. It may be important for parents to help

students establish good study habits, organizational and time management skills at an early age.

Also, the study highlights the importance of parents modeling and discussing their own values

and beliefs about work and education with their children. As observed in the current study,

children will tend to mirror those beliefs.

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Name_____

Student Survey

Part 1. Personal Beliefs

Rate each statement 0-4, by your level of agreement with the statement.

0=strongly disagree,   1=disagree,   2= neutral/doesn't matter,   3=agree,   4= strongly agree

Ex: I believe that elephants are awesome. If you strongly agree, write "4".

1. I believe it is important to work hard in and outside of school.____

2. I believe it is important to get good grades. ___

3. I believe it is important to finish high school. ___

4. I think it is important to set and achieve goals in life. ___

Part 2. My Parents or Guardians

Rate each statement 0-4, indicating how often each activity occurs with your parent or guardian.

0= never,   1= once a year,   2= once a month,   3= once a week,   4= daily

Ex: My guardian reminds me to brush my teeth. If this happens daily, write "4".

1. My parents or guardians discuss my school activities with me.___

2. My parents or guardians discuss their expectations about my performance in school, with me._

3. My parents or guardians assist me with completing homework. ___

4. My parents or guardians teach me organizational skills, or help me to become better organized.

5. My parents or guardians teach me time management skills. ___

6. My parents or guardians help me or teach me how to study. ____

Parent Survey

Name_____

Part 1. Personal Beliefs

Rate each statement 0-4, by your level of agreement with the statement.

0=strongly disagree,   1=disagree,   2= neutral/doesn't matter,   3=agree,   4= strongly agree

Ex: I believe that reading at home is important. If you strongly agree, write "4".

1. I believe it is important to work hard in and outside of school._____

2. I believe it is important to get good grades. ____

3. I believe it is important to finish high school. ____

4. I think it is important to set and achieve goals in life. ____

Part 2. Involvement in School Activities

Rate each statement 0-4, indicating how often each activity occurs with your parent or guardian.

0= never,   1= once a year,   2= once a month,   3= once a week,   4= daily

Ex: I remind my child to brush his/her teeth. If this happens daily, write "4".

1. I discuss my child's school activities with him/her.____

2. I discuss my expectations about performance in school, with my child._

3. I assist my child with completing homework. ____

4. I teach my child organizational skills, or help him/her to become better organized.

5. I teach my child time management skills. ____

6. I help or teach my child how to study. _____