

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING LOSSES

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Abstract. This study proposes a conceptual model focusing on parental engagement to mitigate children's learning losses, particularly highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic's educational disruptions. Recognizing the pandemic's impact, including widespread school closures and a swift transition to online learning, this model underscores the critical role of parents in addressing learning gaps. It integrates the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement with the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parent Involvement, aiming to enhance children's academic recovery through effective parental participation. The model emphasizes the importance of various parental involvement dimensions, including expectations, educational background, socioeconomic status, and digital engagement, as vital for supporting children's learning and development. It suggests that a strategic approach to parental engagement, informed by an understanding of social and cultural contexts, is essential for overcoming educational challenges and improving academic outcomes. The paper calls for further empirical research to validate and refine the model, advocating for studies that assess the impact of parental engagement strategies on mitigating learning losses. This research could significantly contribute to educational practices by providing insights into the role of parental engagement in fostering resilience and academic success amid post-pandemic recovery efforts.

Keywords: *parental engagement, learning loss, academic achievement, children*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has globally disrupted education, leading to widespread school closures and a rapid shift to online learning. Learning loss, the decline in academic knowledge or skills, has become a significant concern, impaired by factors such as extended breaks and changes to distance learning (Kuhfield and Tarasawa, 2020). Mitigating learning losses requires a collaborative effort involving teachers, parents, and educational policymakers, addressing individual gaps and systemic issues. Parental involvement is crucial in mitigating learning losses in Malaysia, especially during school lockdowns (Pek and Mee, 2020). The significance of parental engagement in a child's educational journey, spanning both home and school environments, has been a focal point of research over the years. This engagement, crucial for academic progress, literacy, motivation, socio-emotional adjustment, and character development, involves parents in activities like reading, discussing moral values, and participating in educational decision-making. Highlighted by studies including those by Smokoska (2020) and Kamal et al. (2022), such involvement is pivotal for enhancing children's literacy and character development. Language development, recognized as a key communication tool, underscores the need for

parental support in building literacy proficiency among elementary school students. This development aspect is crucial for character building, embracing diversity, fostering interpersonal relationships, and adapting to different situations, with the family environment playing a significant role in these early stages (Sudartinah, 2022; Rahiem, 2021; Kasakula, 2016).

Research also draws attention to the synergy between character education and language development, advocating for their integration into the curriculum to significantly benefit children's character and linguistic skills. Mustoip et al. (2023) stress the importance of parental involvement in this integration, focusing on home-based activities that promote language skills and moral values. Parental involvement extends to the school environment, influencing academic tasks and decision-making processes critical for educational outcomes. Research by Shukia and Marobo (2024), Abd Algani (2023), Wang et al. (2023), Chai et al. (2022), Nihal Lindberg and Güven (2021) as well as Leander and Fabella (2020) highlight the fundamental importance of the home environment and parental presence in schools for educational success. Addressing the variability in parental engagement is imperative to prevent adverse effects on literacy, motivation, socio-emotional development, and character education. Insufficient parental involvement may hinder the development of crucial communication skills and academic proficiency, underscoring the need for concerted efforts to enhance parental participation in education. The focus on mitigating learning losses, particularly among disadvantaged students' post-pandemic, further emphasizes the critical role of parental engagement in fostering literacy development and academic success, underscoring its importance in achieving positive educational outcomes.

Literature review

The problem at hand is the unprecedented disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic in education, leading to widespread school closures and a sudden shift to online learning. This has resulted in significant learning losses characterized by a decline in academic knowledge and skills, posing a major concern exacerbated by factors like extended breaks and changes in distance learning modalities (Kuhfield and Tarasawa, 2020). This knowledge gap highlights the need for further exploration, as existing literature does not fully explain the extent of parental involvement in mitigating learning losses and its influence on literacy outcomes among primary school. However, a scoping review was carried out to identify the resources, and it was done so by using search strings made up of keywords related to parental involvement. Online databases such as Scopus, Web of Science (WOS), Semantic Scholar and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) were browsed using the search strings and keywords as shown in the *Table 1*. There were a few criteria to consider when filtering the studies presented in the databases. The articles that fit the requirement were considered suitable as a reference to assist the current study. The predetermined criteria are shown in the *Table 2*. Based on the search strings and criteria, this study managed to identify n=4 research articles on parental engagement in children's academic outcomes and literacy development. These collections of studies reflect on the various forms of parental engagement in children's education. The articles are presented in a literature matrix as shown below (*Table 3*).

Table 1. Search string/keyword.

Search directory	Search string
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SCOPUS	TITLE-ABS-KEY (parent*) AND (involv* OR engag*) AND (learn*) AND (educat*)
WoS	TS=((parent*) AND (involv* OR engag*) AND (learn*) AND (educat*))
ERIC	(parental involvement) AND (children OR kids) AND
Semantic Scholar	(educational success OR achievement)

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion Criteria.

Inclusion criterion	Exclusion criterion
Article published from 2022-Current	Article published before 2022
Related to parents and children	Not related to teenagers
Text in the English language	Other languages
Full text available	Without full text

Table 3. Literature matrix.

Distribution	Purpose	Parental involvement	Result
Kasakula (2016) Zambia	This study sought to establish what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was parental involvement in children's literacy learning.	Language and Skill Development	Parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in many schools was only achieved through the strategies.
Christophe and Olivier (2022) Rwandan	The study aimed to assess the parents' participation and English-speaking skill improvement in Rwandan primary schools in Musanze District.	Language and Skill Development	Students largely accept parental financial support as crucial for their success in English, and it found a significant positive correlation between parental involvement and improvements in English-speaking skills.
Hardiyanto et al. (2022) Indonesia	The focus of this research study discusses how parental interpersonal communication in increasing children's learning motivation in Medan City.	Academic Support and Learning Activities	Parental interpersonal communication and actions, such as involvement in learning activities, appreciation, and setting an example, significantly boost children's motivation to learn.
Abd Algani (2023) Arab	This paper focuses on examining the influence of parents' involvement in class on the students' performance in math, the way parents get involved with the school, and their effects on the pupil's success.	Decision Making	Parental involvement in their children's educational decision-making increases with the parents' educational level, indicating a correlation between higher parental education and greater school involvement.

The study by Kasakula (2016) focused on understanding the measures primary schools in Zambia are taking to facilitate parental involvement in children's literacy learning. It identified that parental involvement in the initial stages of children's literacy and language skill development was primarily achieved through specific school strategies in many schools. This research highlights the importance of active parental participation in enhancing children's literacy from an early stage. It examines the effectiveness of school-driven strategies in engaging parents in this educational process. Christophe and Olivier (2022) aimed to evaluate the extent of parental involvement in developing English-speaking skills among primary school students in Rwanda's Musanze District. It uncovered that students value their parents' financial support for English language success. Furthermore, the research identified a significant positive relationship between the degree of parental participation and the enhancement of students' English-speaking abilities. This highlights the crucial role that parents play in

supporting their children financially and actively contributing to their linguistic skill development and overall academic achievements in English.

Hardiyanto et al. (2022) focused on examining the impact of parental interpersonal communication on enhancing children's learning motivation in Medan City, Indonesia. The study revealed that methods of parental interaction, including active participation in learning activities, expressing appreciation, and serving as role models, play a significant role in elevating children's motivation towards learning. This underscores the importance of parental engagement and the positive influence of their communication and behaviour on the educational drive of their children, suggesting that fostering effective parental communication strategies can significantly contribute to improved academic outcomes.

Lastly, Abd Algani (2023) explored the dynamics of parental involvement in the academic sphere, particularly focusing on its impact on students' math performance within the Arab community. The research aimed to understand the extent and manner of parental participation in their children's education, specifically how this involvement influences student success. A notable finding from this study is that parental involvement in educational decision-making is closely linked to the parent's level of education; that is, parents with higher educational backgrounds tend to be more involved in their children's schooling. This involvement is shown to positively correlate with increased school engagement and, ultimately, student achievement in math. This study underscores parents' significant role in shaping their children's academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of parental education as a key factor in enhancing school involvement and student success.

Materials and Methods

A conceptual model has been established to address the complexity of children's learning loss, especially in the post-pandemic era. This model combines the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler parental involvement models with Epstein's parental involvement model. (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and cooperating with the community), this integration aims to maximize the impact of parental engagement. The model posits that effective parental involvement in educational activities, grounded in understanding these six key areas, can significantly mitigate learning losses. Through the lens of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model, this approach emphasizes the motivational aspects and the multifaceted nature of parental involvement. At the same time, Epstein's Model highlights the critical children's academic recovery and success. This combination offers a nuanced perspective on how parental engagement, supported by structured involvement and collaborative efforts, can enhance children's academic recovery and success. This model serves as a guide for developing strategies that leverage parents' structured involvement in educational processes and the organic, community-oriented interactions that support overall child development.

Epstein model of parental involvement

Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement shows a strong correlation between parental engagement and academic accomplishment. The model identified six parental involvement types: decision-making, parenting, volunteering, communicating, learning at home, and working with the community. These categories form a comprehensive

model advocating for partnerships between schools, families, and communities. Each type of involvement offers unique benefits to student performance, including improved attendance, a better understanding of school importance, enhanced communication skills, higher homework completion rates, and increased self-efficacy. The model suggests strategies for engaging parents in each area, such as providing educational resources at home, establishing clear communication between schools and parents, encouraging parental participation in school operations and decision-making, and leveraging community resources to support education. Epstein's work underscores the varied but consistently positive effects of parental engagement across different domains on students' academic outcomes (Smokoska, 2020).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parent involvement

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement outlines a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted role of parents in children's educational outcomes. This model is structured around five levels, starting with personal motivators, perceptions of invitations to be involved, and life context variables that shape parental involvement in education. It emphasizes that parental role construction, efficacy beliefs, and perceptions of invitations from schools and their children significantly influence their involvement. The model further delves into the forms of involvement, such as activities at home and school, and the importance of parent-teacher/school communication. At the heart of improving student achievement are the learning mechanisms parents employ encouragement, modelling, reinforcement, and instruction and how these are perceived by students, directly affecting their academic self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, self-regulatory strategies, and social self-efficacy to teachers. This layered approach provides a detailed understanding of how various aspects of parental involvement contribute to enhancing children's academic performance and highlights the critical role of parental engagement in supporting children's education (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Results and Discussion

Proposed conceptual model

The proposed conceptual model below shows the relationship between various parental factors and their influence on mitigating learning loss through parental involvement. Specifically, it put forward that a parent's expectations, educational background, socioeconomic status, and digital engagement are key elements that collectively shape the extent and nature of their involvement in their child's education. This involvement is presented as a pivotal mediating variable that has the potential to reduce learning losses in children. The model below suggests that by enhancing these aspects of parental contribution, it may be possible to positively impact students' academic performance and address educational setbacks (*Figure 1*).

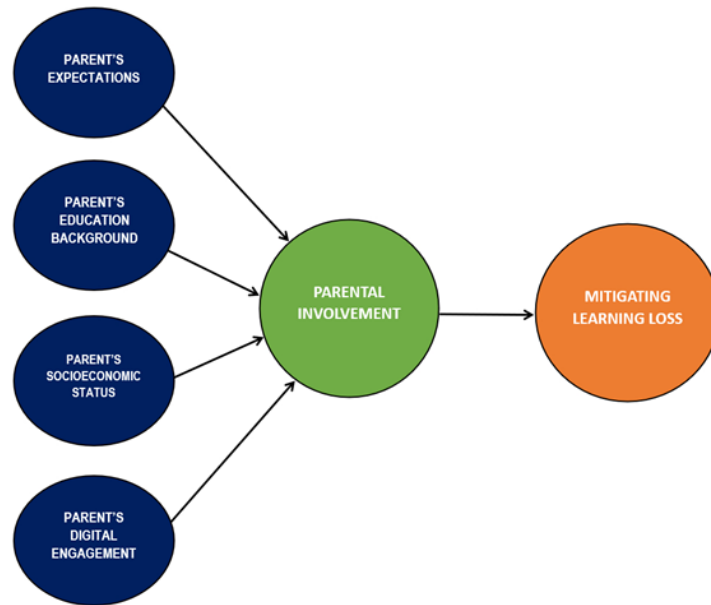


Figure 1. Proposed model.

Parent's expectations

The significance of parental expectations in shaping children's academic success is underscored through various scholarly works, demonstrating that high yet realistic expectations can lead to enhanced academic performance. Studies such as those by Al Noursi and Al Daheri (2021) emphasize the positive effects of high parental expectations on middle school students' achievement, suggesting that students often strive to meet these expectations. Complementing this, Nanda and Ganguli (2021) indicate that supportive parental expectations can act as a buffer against the adverse effects of external stressors, such as those experienced during a global pandemic. Abd Algani (2023), Wang et al. (2023) as well as Leander and Fabella (2020) collectively highlight the beneficial impact of appropriate parental expectations coupled with active involvement on student achievements, while also warning against the potential negative impacts of undue pressure from unrealistic expectations as examined by Bubic et al. (2021) as well as Nihal Lindberg and Güven (2021). This body of research collectively elucidates the nuanced role of parental expectations, advocating for a balance between high aspirations and the provision of a supportive and realistic framework to foster academic achievement and well-being in students.

Parent's education background

The level of parents' education plays a crucial role in family human resources, significantly influencing parental involvement in children's education. The educational background of parents will have an impact on their children's thinking and educational orientation. Parents with greater education levels tend to have broader views on education and how best to teach their children (Sari and Maningtyas, 2020). Mothers, often spending more time with their children, have a notable impact on their intellectual development, with their educational attainment being a key factor in the degree of this involvement (Brossard et al., 2020; Satar et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of mothers, particularly in online learning, became even more pronounced, underscoring the significance of a mother's educational background (Hapsari et al.,

2020). Similarly, fathers' education also positively affects parental involvement, with more educated fathers engaging in frequent play and activities with their children, a practice that extends to both parents determined to spend quality time with their children (Satar et al., 2020). The mindset and educational orientation given to their children will be influenced by the level of education of the parents.

Parent's socioeconomic

Parents from lower-income socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be less interested in their children's education, despite the benefits of parental involvement for lower-income groups (Cashman et al., 2021; Satar et al., 2020). Parental involvement in education is a multifaceted domain influenced significantly by socio-economic status (SES), which shapes the capabilities and opportunities parents must contribute to their children's academic journey. Din et al. (2023) suggest the moderating effect of SES on parental engagement, finding that students' performance is positively influenced when parents with varying SES levels actively participate in their children's school transition. This implies that while SES may pose certain limitations, its impact can be mediated by the extent of parental engagement. They indicate that conducive school environments and effective communication can enhance parental involvement across different socio-economic backgrounds, thereby benefiting children's early educational experiences (Achmad, 2020). Finally, Shukia and Marobo (2024) highlight the difficulties and changes in parental participation during the COVID-19 epidemic, with socioeconomic considerations being a major determinant of access to resources and support for children's at-home learning.

Parent's digital engagement

The ability to use digital tools, platforms, and devices efficiently is called digital literacy. It's significant because it gives people the tools to interact with, generate, evaluate, and access information in our increasingly digital world. Digital literacy is essential for children because it prepares them for a world where technology is used in everything from jobs and education to social connections and personal growth. By directing their interactions with digital technology, modelling appropriate digital behaviour, and offering chances for constructive digital engagement, parents play a critical role in helping their children develop their digital literacy. Studies by Ozturk and Ohi (2022), Barnes and Potter (2021) as well as Kumpulainen et al. (2020) emphasize the role that children's homes' sociocultural context plays in influencing their digital practices and stress the value of parental involvement in promoting digital literacy from a young age. Parents who actively engage in their children's digital learning can help prevent learning loss by ensuring they use digital technologies critically and creatively and consume digital content. This will improve their academic performance and equip them for the challenges of the digital age.

Parental involvement

Smokoska (2020) defines parental involvement as the degree of parents' involvement in their children's education at home and in their contact with the school. This involvement is fundamental to this educational system. Kamal et al. (2022) underscore its criticality, emphasizing its role as a fundamental component in a child's educational

journey, particularly in the early years. Research emphasizes the direct impact of parent involvement on children's development and academic excellence.

Mitigation learning loss

Mitigating learning loss in children is effectively achieved through strategic parental involvement. The interconnectedness of various influences, as depicted in the diagram, underscores that parents who actively engage in their children's education, drawing from their educational backgrounds and leveraging available resources, can significantly reduce learning setbacks (Brossard et al., 2020). Through motivation and collaboration with schools, parents can implement supportive practices at home that support continuous learning and academic strength (Bubic et al., 2021). This multifaceted approach to parental engagement is crucial in addressing gaps in children's education, ensuring they stay on track with their academic goals and fulfill their potential despite challenges that may arise.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the body of research considered in this conceptual study underscores the pivotal role of parental engagement in countering the learning loss experienced by children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies such as Kuhfield and Tarasawa (2020) have delineated the widespread disruption to education, necessitating a concerted effort from all stakeholders in the educational landscape. The literature highlights the power of parents' involvement in supporting and supplementing children's academic journeys, especially during school lockdowns as noted by Pek and Mee (2020). Parental involvement is a critical element not just for academic performance but also for literacy, socio-emotional development, and character education, which form the foundation for well-rounded individuals who can thrive in diverse circumstances. This involvement, fueled by parents' expectations, educational background, socioeconomic status, digital engagement, and partnership with schools, is essential for mitigating learning loss and fostering resilience in educational attainment. The proposed model combines the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement insights with the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parent Involvement, offering a holistic strategy to address the educational challenges wrought by the pandemic. It provides a framework for actionable involvement, suggesting that through sustained, supportive, and well-informed engagement, parents can significantly influence their children's capacity to recover from academic setbacks and excel in their learning outcomes.

This conceptual paper introduces a model centred on parental engagement as a key element in addressing the learning losses experienced by children, particularly accentuated by the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the scarcity of empirical studies focused specifically on this model, further research is essential. Future studies should explore the effectiveness of the various dimensions of parental involvement as outlined in the model, employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It would be beneficial to conduct experimental research to assess the impact of these parental engagement strategies from the perspectives of both educators and students. Such research could significantly contribute to the model's development and provide valuable insights into the role of parental engagement in mitigating learning loss, thereby underscoring its practical relevance in educational settings.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that no conflict of interest is involved with any parties in this research.

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