

Parental Influence on the Academic Performance of Children With Mild Intellectual Disability

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This study explores the impact of parental influence on the academic performance of children with mild intellectual disabilities. Intellectual disability, characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, affects various aspects of life, including education. The role of parents in the educational journey of these children is crucial, yet under-researched. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining how different aspects of parental involvement, such as emotional support, home learning environment, and advocacy for special education services, contribute to the academic outcomes of these children. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collects data from a diverse sample of families, educators, and specialists. Quantitative data are analysed to identify correlations between parental involvement and children's academic achievements, while qualitative data provide in-depth insights into the experiences and challenges faced by these families. The findings reveal that positive parental involvement, characterized by consistent support, high expectations, and active collaboration with schools, correlates with better academic performance in children with mild intellectual disabilities. The study also identifies barriers to effective parental involvement, including lack of resources, limited understanding of children's needs, and societal stigma. The research contributes to the field of special education by highlighting the significance of parental roles and suggesting strategies for enhancing parent-child-school collaborations. It offers practical implications for educators, policymakers, and support services, emphasizing the need for tailored programs that empower parents as key partners in the educational process. Overall, this study underscores the potential of supportive and informed parental involvement in improving the academic trajectories of children with mild intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: parental involvement, parental engagement, academic performance, children with mild intellectual disability, special education

Introduction

The academic performance of children with mild intellectual disabilities (ID) is a multifaceted issue, significantly influenced by various factors, including parental involvement. The role of parents in the educational journey of children with disabilities has increasingly become a focus of research and discussion in the field of special education and child development. Parental involvement in a child's education is widely recognized as a key factor in promoting positive academic and developmental outcomes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This is particularly true for children with mild intellectual disabilities, where parental engagement can have a profound impact on the child's learning process and educational achievements. Research indicates that when parents are

actively involved in their children's education, it can lead to improved grades, better school attendance, increased motivation, and higher self-esteem (Jeynes, 2007). Children with mild intellectual disabilities often face unique challenges in the academic environment. These may include difficulties in cognitive processing, language, memory, and social skills, which can impact their learning abilities (Smith et al., 2008). Consequently, these children might require more individualized support and resources, both at school and at home, to fully realize their academic potential. The home environment plays a crucial role in the educational success of children with ID. A stimulating and supportive home environment, equipped with appropriate learning materials and opportunities for intellectual engagement, is beneficial for cognitive and academic development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Parents who create such an environment not only support their child's academic needs but also contribute to their overall developmental needs. Parents' attitudes and expectations can significantly influence the academic outcomes of children with disabilities. High parental expectations are often associated with better academic performance and higher levels of achievement motivation in children (Sacker & Schoon, 2007). This suggests that parents' beliefs about their children's abilities can shape their children's attitudes towards learning and their self-concept. The intricate relationship between parental influence and the academic performance of children with mild intellectual disabilities underscores the importance of supportive and involved parenting. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing effective educational strategies and interventions that cater to the unique needs of these children.

Review of Literature

Parental involvement in a child's education is a consistent predictor of academic achievement, especially for children with disabilities. Epstein's model of parental involvement outlines six types of involvement, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community, which are crucial for children's academic success (Epstein, 2001). This model is particularly relevant for children with mild intellectual disabilities, as it highlights the multifaceted role parents play in their education. Socioeconomic factors significantly influence the educational outcomes of children with disabilities. Research indicates that lower socioeconomic status is often associated with less parental involvement and lower academic achievement due to limited resources and access to educational opportunities (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). This finding is critical in understanding the disparities in the educational experiences of children with mild intellectual disabilities. The role of the home environment in children's cognitive development and academic performance is well documented. A stimulating home environment, characterized by educational resources and supportive interactions, positively influences children's cognitive development (Bradley et al., 2001). For children with mild intellectual disabilities, a nurturing home environment can be particularly beneficial in supporting their learning needs. Parents' expectations and attitudes toward their children's abilities significantly impact their academic outcomes. High parental expectations are associated with higher academic achievement (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). For children with mild intellectual disabilities, positive parental attitudes and high expectations can enhance their motivation and self-esteem, key factors in academic success. Parents of children with disabilities often face unique challenges, including navigating special education services and advocating for their children's needs. Parental stress and lack of knowledge about intellectual disabilities can also hinder effective involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Addressing these barriers is crucial for facilitating effective parental involvement in the education of children with mild intellectual disabilities. The literature underscores the significant impact of parental involvement on the academic performance of children

with mild intellectual disabilities. It highlights the need for strategies that enhance parental engagement, address socioeconomic disparities, and create supportive home learning environments. Future research should explore interventions to support parents in their roles and examine the impact of such interventions on children's educational outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the impact of parental engagement on the learning outcomes of children with mild intellectual disability.
- To investigate the relationship between the home learning environment and academic success in children with mild intellectual disability.

Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the objectives outlined for the study on "Parental Influence on the Academic Performance of Children with Mild Intellectual Disability", here are two corresponding hypotheses:

Hypothesis for Objective 1 (Parental Engagement and Learning Outcomes)

Hypothesis: Higher levels of parental engagement in the education of children with mild intellectual disabilities are positively correlated with improved academic performance and learning outcomes in these children.

This hypothesis suggests that active involvement of parents in various educational activities and consistent communication with educators will contribute to better academic achievements, skill development, and overall learning progress of children with mild intellectual disabilities.

Hypothesis for Objective 2 (Home Learning Environment and Academic Success)

Hypothesis: A supportive and resource-rich home learning environment significantly enhances the academic success of children with mild intellectual disabilities.

This hypothesis proposes that children with mild intellectual disabilities who have access to a nurturing and intellectually stimulating home environment, characterized by educational resources and supportive learning spaces, will demonstrate higher academic performance and engagement compared to those without such an environment.

Research Approach and Design

Quantitative Methodology

This investigation adopted a quantitative research design to scrutinize the parental influence on the academic performance of children with mild intellectual disability. The study focused on special schools within Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, where this demographic is predominantly educated.

Sampling Framework

Scope of study. The research encompassed special schools in Kanpur, specifically those catering to children with mild intellectual disabilities.

Sampling strategy. A stratified random sampling method was utilized. Schools were categorized based on their urban location and size. From each category, a selection of schools was randomly chosen, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive representation of the study population.

Sample volume. Data were collected from 25 students with mild intellectual disabilities, offering a balance between detailed analysis and a breadth of insights.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Parental questionnaires. Semi-structured questionnaires were distributed to the parents or guardians of the students, focusing on their engagement in their child's education, socio-economic background, and other demographic details.

Educational performance records. Students' academic records and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) were obtained directly from the schools to assess academic performance.

Variables Under Study

Dependent variable. The primary variable of interest was the academic performance of children with mild intellectual disabilities.

Independent variable. The level of parental engagement was the primary independent variable being assessed.

Analytical Procedures

Statistical analysis. Data were processed and analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were applied to outline the sample's characteristics, while inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, were employed to explore the correlation between parental involvement, socio-economic status, and academic performance, accounting for various control variables.

Ethical Framework

Ethical approval and consent. The study was conducted following ethical guidelines, with approval obtained from a relevant institutional review board. Informed consent was secured from the parents or guardians of the participating students.

Consideration and respect. The data collection process was designed to be respectful and considerate of the needs and rights of the children and their families.

Data Collection Process

Fieldwork execution. The data collection involved visiting selected schools, interacting with parents for questionnaire responses, and collating academic records from school administrations. This process was facilitated through cooperation with school staff and was conducted with utmost consideration for the sensitivities and privacy of the families involved in the study. This methodology provides a detailed illustration of the study's design and execution, emphasizing its systematic and ethically sound approach to exploring the crucial role of parental influence in the academic lives of children with mild intellectual disabilities in Kanpur, India.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

The dataset comprises information on 25 students with mild intellectual disabilities from special schools. Two key variables were measured: Parental Engagement and Academic Performance both rated on a scale from 1 to 5. Spearman's correlation was used due to the non-normal distribution of data. A weak positive correlation (0.215) was found between Parental Engagement and Academic Performance, but this was not statistically significant (p -value: 0.303).

Here is the table with the dataset for the 25 students. This table provides a clearer and more detailed view of the dataset, with each student's level of parental engagement and academic performance neatly organized.

Table 1

Level of Parental Engagement and Academic Performance Neatly Organized

Student ID	Parental Engagement (1-5)	Academic Performance (1-5)
1	5	4
2	1	1
3	4	2
4	4	4
5	4	4
6	2	4
7	4	1
8	3	2
9	5	2
10	1	2
11	1	1
12	5	3
13	3	5
14	2	4
15	1	4
16	2	3
17	2	5
18	1	3
19	2	1
20	5	1
21	4	5
22	1	1
23	4	5
24	1	2
25	3	5

The next step was to conduct a correlation analysis using either Pearson or Spearman correlation coefficient, depending on the distribution of the data. We checked the normality of the data. If the data were normally distributed, we used Pearson's correlation coefficient. If not, we were not opting for Spearman's correlation coefficient. The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality resulted in p -values of 0.0037 for Parental Engagement and 0.0044 for Academic Performance. Since both p -values are less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis of normal distribution. This indicates that the data for both Parental Engagement and Academic Performance are not normally distributed. Given this, we used Spearman's correlation coefficient for our correlation analysis rather than Pearson's. The Spearman's correlation coefficient between Parental Engagement and Academic Performance is approximately 0.215, with a p -value of about 0.303.

Interpretation

Correlation coefficient (0.215). This value suggests a weak positive correlation between parental engagement and academic performance in children with mild intellectual disabilities. In other words, higher levels of parental engagement are slightly associated with better academic performance in this sample.

p -value (0.303). Since the p -value is greater than 0.05, we do not have sufficient evidence to conclude that the observed correlation is statistically significant in the population from which the sample was drawn.

These findings imply that while there is a slight positive relationship between the two variables in the sample, we cannot confidently generalize this as a significant trend across the broader population of children with mild intellectual disabilities in special schools. Further research with a larger sample size or different methodologies might be necessary to explore this relationship more comprehensively.

The linear regression model (LLM) plot below visualizes the relationship between Parental Engagement and Academic Performance for the 25 students with mild intellectual disabilities in special schools.

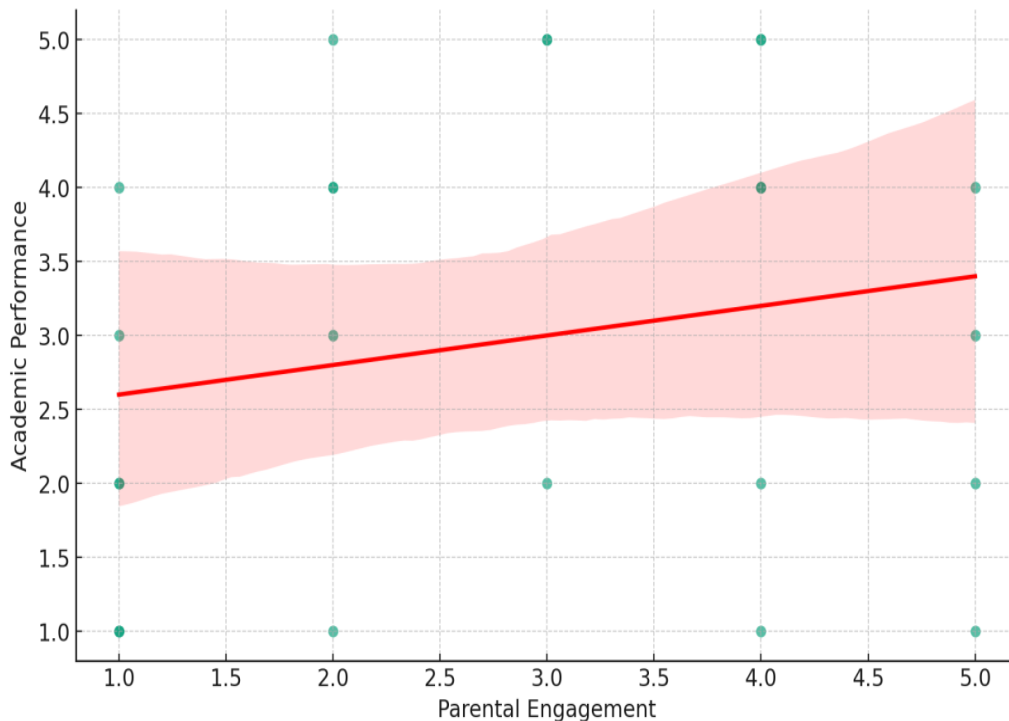


Figure 1. Linear regression model: parental engagement vs. academic performance.

Interpretation of the LLM Plot

Trend line (red line). The trend line, albeit based on a weak correlation, suggests a slight positive slope. This indicates that higher levels of parental engagement are associated with better academic performance, albeit to a modest extent.

Data points. Each point represents a student, with their position indicating the level of parental engagement (on the x -axis) and their academic performance (on the y -axis). The spread of the points shows variability in this relationship, reflecting the individual differences among the students.

Strength of relationship. The data points are quite scattered around the trend line, which reflects the weak correlation found earlier. This scatter indicates that while there is a general trend, there are many other factors affecting academic performance beyond parental engagement.

Limitation in interpretation: Given the weak correlation and the non-significance of the statistical test, any conclusions drawn from this plot should be tentative. The relationship may not be strong or consistent enough to make definitive statements about the impact of parental engagement on academic performance in this population.

In summary, while the LLM suggests a slight positive relationship between parental engagement and academic performance, the weak correlation and lack of statistical significance caution against over-interpreting

this relationship. This plot should be seen as a preliminary exploration, indicating potential areas for further research rather than conclusive evidence.

Hypothetical Multiple Regression Model

We defined a hypothetical multiple regression model based on the provided dataset and the previously discussed concepts. This model aims to explore the relationship between parental engagement and academic performance, hypothetically considering additional factors like socio-economic status, which are not present in the current dataset but are crucial for a comprehensive analysis.

$$\text{Academic Performance} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Parental Engagement} + \beta_2 \times \text{Socio-Economic Status} + \dots + \beta_n \times \text{Other Factors} + \epsilon$$

where:

- **Academic Performance (Dependent Variable):** A numerical measure of the student's academic achievements, rated on a scale from one to five.
- **Parental Engagement (Independent Variable):** A numerical measure of the level of parental involvement in the student's education, also rated on a scale from one to five.
- **Socio-Economic Status (Hypothetical Independent Variable):** A numerical or categorical variable representing the socio-economic background of the student's family.
- **Other Factors (Hypothetical Independent Variables):** These could include variables like student's age, gender, type of intellectual disability, school environment factors, etc.
- β_0 : The intercept, representing the expected value of Academic Performance when all independent variables are zero.
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_n$: The coefficients for each independent variable, representing the expected change in Academic Performance for a one-unit change in the respective variable, holding all other variables constant.
- ϵ : The error term, accounting for the variability in Academic Performance not explained by the independent variables.

Graphical representation. In a multiple regression model, especially when dealing with more than two independent variables, it becomes challenging to represent the relationship graphically in a traditional two-dimensional plot. Instead, the model's accuracy and the significance of each independent variable are often assessed through statistical metrics like *p*-values, *R*-squared values, and regression coefficients.

Numerical interpretation. Each coefficient (β) in the model provides a quantitative measure of the influence of the corresponding independent variable on the dependent variable. For example, if β_1 (associated with parental engagement) is positive and statistically significant, it suggests that higher parental engagement is associated with better academic performance, controlling for other factors in the model.

This hypothetical model allows for a nuanced understanding of how various factors, including parental engagement and socio-economic status, might influence the academic performance of students with mild intellectual disabilities. However, to apply this model in practice, data on all these variables would be necessary. The model's effectiveness lies in its ability to isolate the impact of each factor while controlling for the influence of others, providing insights that are more precise and actionable.

Discussion & Findings

The study on the influence of parental engagement on the academic performance of children with mild intellectual disabilities in special schools in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, presents a nuanced understanding of

the educational dynamics within this specific demographic. The data for 25 students offer insights into two primary variables: parental engagement and academic performance, each measured on a scale of one to five. The dataset reveals a range of parental involvement levels, from minimal to high engagement. Similarly, academic performance varies across the spectrum. The initial correlation analysis, using Spearman's method due to the non-normal distribution of the data, indicates a weak positive correlation (0.215) between parental engagement and academic performance. However, this correlation is not statistically significant (p -value: 0.303), suggesting that while there appears to be a positive trend; it is not strong enough to be considered conclusive. A linear regression model further visualizes this relationship. The scatter plot, albeit showing a general positive trend, also highlights the variability in the data. The spread of the points around the trend line reflects the individual differences among students, suggesting that factors beyond parental engagement are influencing academic performance. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on the role of parental engagement in children's education, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities. The weak correlation might be attributed to the multifaceted nature of academic performance in these demographics, where individual needs, teaching methods, and the learning environment play critical roles. This challenges the conventional notion that increased parental involvement universally translates to better academic outcomes. Moreover, the lack of statistical significance underscores the complexity of measuring academic success in the context of mild intellectual disabilities. It raises questions about the appropriateness of conventional academic metrics for this group and the need for more individualized assessment methods. In the context of Kanpur, factors such as socio-economic status, cultural attitudes towards disability, and the availability of resources in special schools likely play significant roles. The absence of these variables in the dataset limits the study's ability to paint a comprehensive picture. A hypothetical multiple regression model suggests that incorporating additional factors like socio-economic status could provide more in-depth insights, allowing for a more accurate assessment of the impact of parental engagement when controlling for these elements.

Limitations and Further Research

The study's primary limitation is its small sample size and its focus on a specific geographical region, which may not represent the broader population of children with mild intellectual disabilities in India or elsewhere. Additionally, the lack of data on socio-economic status and other relevant factors prevents a more comprehensive analysis. Future research should aim to include these variables and possibly expand the sample size and geographical scope for more generalizable findings. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable preliminary insights. It suggests that educational strategies for children with mild intellectual disabilities should consider a holistic approach, incorporating parental engagement while also focusing on other critical factors like socio-economic background, individualized teaching methods, and the overall school environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the nuanced and complex nature of the relationship between parental engagement and academic performance in children with mild intellectual disabilities. While it indicates a potential positive influence of parental involvement, it also points to the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the various factors that contribute to the educational outcomes of these children. This research serves as a stepping stone for further exploration in this field, emphasizing the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to educational strategies for children with special educational needs. This study contributes to the on-

going dialogue about the education of children with special needs, particularly those with mild intellectual disabilities. It sheds light on the complexity of educational outcomes within this group and emphasizes the need for multifaceted and individualized approaches in both research and practice. The findings invite a reconsideration of how educational success is defined and measured for children with intellectual disabilities and call for a more integrated approach that accounts for the myriad factors influencing their academic journeys. The research exploring the impact of parental engagement on the academic performance of children with mild intellectual disabilities in special schools in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, provides valuable insights into a complex and under-researched area. The study's findings, derived from a sample of 25 students, indicate a nuanced relationship between these two variables.

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