

Empowering Motivation: The Role of Parental Involvement in Primary Education at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of parental involvement in fostering academic motivation among elementary school students at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo. Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving parents, teachers, and students. Thematic analysis revealed that parents serve as motivators, facilitators, supervisors, and emotional supporters each contributing uniquely to the development of students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Strategies such as verbal encouragement, structured study routines, and emotional affirmation significantly influenced students' learning enthusiasm and engagement. However, the study also identified critical barriers, including time constraints, limited parental knowledge, and weak school-home communication. These challenges hindered optimal parental participation, particularly among working-class families. The findings emphasize the importance of integrated school-parent collaboration models, such as Epstein's Six Types of Involvement and the Teachers Involving Parents (TIP) framework, to enhance engagement. Additionally, community-based interventions and flexible policy support were found essential in mitigating structural challenges. This research concludes that empowering parents through responsive and inclusive school practices can significantly enhance students' academic motivation and long-term development. The study offers valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to strengthen parental engagement in primary education, particularly in rural Indonesian contexts.

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1. Introduction

The early years of formal education mark a critical period in shaping children's academic foundations, behavioral patterns, and motivational frameworks. In this context, parental involvement has emerged as one of the most influential factors driving students' learning engagement, particularly in primary education settings. Children's home environments characterized by emotional support, structured routines, and learning encouragement play a pivotal role in stimulating both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Parental engagement not only provides the cognitive scaffolding essential for academic achievement but also nurtures self-regulatory learning behaviors that are indispensable for lifelong learning (Rochovská, 2024; Ronquillo-Elvina & Quirap, 2024). The presence of supportive parenting, where expectations are clearly articulated and educational efforts are praised, often correlates with heightened interest and perseverance in academic tasks.

Motivation in educational settings is generally categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic domains. Intrinsic motivation is fueled by internal desires curiosity, interest, and enjoyment whereas extrinsic motivation is prompted by external rewards such as praise, grades, or recognition (Dokhykh, 2021; Raisuli & Tharumaraj, 2024). While intrinsic motivation has been widely recognized as a strong predictor of sustainable academic success, extrinsic motivators can serve as important catalysts, particularly for children in structured schooling environments where goal-setting and measurable performance are emphasized. An optimal balance between these motivational types is shown to produce the highest levels of academic engagement, especially in early education (Hsieh & Maritz, 2023; Rahmi & Neviyarni, 2022; J. Zhang, 2023). Recognizing the nuanced interaction between these motivational forces is essential for parents and educators aiming to nurture resilient and self-motivated learners.

In Indonesia's rural educational landscape, particularly in contexts like SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo, parental involvement is shaped by socio-cultural factors that encompass socioeconomic status, local parenting philosophies, and community expectations. Studies have revealed that parents with higher education levels are more likely to participate actively in their children's education, often resulting in better academic outcomes (Diana, Chirzin, Bashori, Suud, & Khairunnisa, 2021; A. Y. Utami, 2022). In contrast, those from lower socioeconomic strata may encounter barriers such as limited time, educational resources, and systemic awareness of how to support children's schooling effectively. Cultural values such as collectivism, religious norms, and extended family structures also influence parental roles, particularly when education is perceived as a shared communal responsibility (Adawiah, Asmini, Umar, & Abdu, 2023; Mugumya, Karooro, & Mwesigye, 2023). These socio-cultural dynamics offer both enablers and constraints, affecting how learning is prioritized and how parental involvement is operationalized within households.

The family-based educational environment further reinforces learning behaviors by providing academic resources, emotional reinforcement, and daily structure. Homes that offer designated learning spaces, regular study times, and parental encouragement tend to foster stronger academic habits and a positive attitude toward education (Huang, Xiao-qian, Chen, & Straubhaar, 2018; Vadivel, Alam, Nikpoo, & Ajanil, 2023). Conversely, families that lack these conditions often witness diminished learning motivation among children, regardless of school quality. Research has consistently shown that the quality not just the quantity of parental involvement is critical. Parents who actively engage with school assignments, show interest in school activities, and encourage long-term educational aspirations contribute significantly to children's academic performance and self-efficacy (Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2019). Therefore, a harmonious alignment between home support and school expectations enhances students' capacity for sustained academic motivation.

The theoretical underpinning of parental involvement is supported by the Transformative Learning Model, which asserts that adults through reflective learning can undergo cognitive and behavioral shifts that impact their parenting roles. According to (Purnamawati & Pradipta, 2022), empowering parents through adult education and training can transform their engagement strategies, enabling them to support their children more effectively. This framework complements social constructivist views, which emphasize that knowledge construction is influenced by social interactions

and cultural tools. In this light, parental involvement is not merely a personal choice but a socially embedded practice, shaped by intergenerational norms and community expectations (Dong, Cao, & Li, 2020). The interplay between parental transformation and cultural constructs becomes particularly relevant in contexts where formal educational exposure among parents is limited, yet aspirations for children's success remain high.

Despite the acknowledged importance of parental involvement, working-class parents often grapple with unique challenges in fulfilling this role. The burden of extended working hours, irregular employment, and limited access to educational resources constrains their ability to participate actively in their children's learning (Hamilton, Roksa, & Nielsen, 2018). In Indonesia, many parents from rural or lower-income backgrounds must prioritize survival needs over educational engagement, often resulting in inconsistent or passive involvement in school-related matters. These challenges are further compounded by a lack of confidence in helping with academic content, particularly when parents themselves have limited formal education (Yıldırım, 2021). The dual demands of wage labor and caregiving create an environment of role conflict, where parental intentions to support learning are undermined by practical constraints (Chaudhry, Tandon, Shinde, & Bhattacharya, 2024) (Supratiwi, Yusuf, & Anggarani, 2021).

This research investigates the role of parents in enhancing students' learning motivation at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo, with a specific focus on how various parental functions motivators, facilitators, supervisors, and emotional supporters shape learning engagement. It seeks to illuminate both the strengths and limitations of parental involvement in a rural public school setting, identifying socio-cultural and logistical barriers that inhibit optimal engagement. By adopting a qualitative, descriptive approach, this study contributes novel insights into how local parenting practices interact with national educational goals and global research trends on academic motivation. The study also aims to fill a critical research gap by focusing on Indonesian rural school contexts, which remain underrepresented in the broader literature on parental engagement.

Ultimately, this paper positions parental involvement as an essential, albeit complex, component of educational success, particularly at the elementary level. It argues that fostering stronger partnerships between parents and educators grounded in mutual communication, cultural sensitivity, and practical support is vital for promoting sustainable motivation and holistic development in young learners.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the role of parents in fostering students' learning motivation at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo. Qualitative description was chosen due to its suitability in capturing the lived experiences, perceptions, and contextual behaviors of individuals within their natural settings. The design is particularly effective when the aim is to describe, interpret, and contextualize phenomena without the imposition of strict theoretical constructs or predetermined categories. In alignment with the nature of this inquiry, the research emphasized inductive reasoning, openness to emergent patterns, and sensitivity to the socio-cultural environment of the participants.

To frame the investigation, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was adopted as a guiding theoretical lens. This framework situates individual development within nested systems, ranging from the microsystem (e.g., home, school) to the macrosystem (e.g., cultural values, economic structures) (Islam, Haidoub, & Tarique, 2019). Within this perspective, parental involvement in a child's learning is understood as a function of proximal processes influenced by broader structural factors such as employment obligations, educational background, and community expectations. The ecological model was particularly relevant given the rural Indonesian context, where family, school, and community dynamics are interwoven in shaping children's educational trajectories.

2.1 Participants and Sampling

The research involved purposive sampling to select participants who were directly involved in or affected by children's learning processes namely, parents, classroom teachers, and elementary students at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo. The selection criteria focused on diversity in socio-economic backgrounds,

educational attainment, and occupational roles to ensure a nuanced understanding of the various factors influencing parental involvement. A total of 12 participants were included: four parents, four teachers, and four students from Grades IV to VI. This sample size was deemed sufficient to reach data saturation, a point at which no new insights emerged during analysis (Moreeng, Mbatha, Ntsala, & Motsoeneng, 2024).

2.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. The interviews, conducted in-person and audio-recorded with consent, explored themes such as parental support strategies, time management challenges, communication with children, and perceptions of academic motivation. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility while ensuring consistency across core themes (Manwedi-Thulo, Ifedi, Sunday, & Ogbeche, 2023). Observations were carried out in both home and school settings, focusing on parent-child interactions, the learning environment, and student engagement during homework or study activities. Complementing these, relevant documents such as student learning logs, academic report cards, and parent-teacher communication notes were reviewed to triangulate findings.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method well-suited for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative datasets (Byrne, 2021; Mason, 2017). The analysis followed a systematic six-phase process: (1) data familiarization, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) theme identification, (4) theme review, (5) theme definition and naming, and (6) report writing. Manual coding was initially applied to gain immersion in the data, followed by the use of NVivo 12 software to enhance organization, efficiency, and traceability of codes and themes (Alkahtani, 2022). Three major themes emerged: motivational roles of parents, structural barriers to involvement, and emotional-communicative strategies.

To ensure validity and trustworthiness, triangulation was used across data sources (interviews, observations, documents) and participant categories (parents, teachers, students). Member checking was also conducted, whereby participants were invited to review summarized findings for accuracy and resonance. Additionally, reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process, with the researcher keeping analytic memos and self-reflections to account for potential biases and positionality (Byrne, 2021). This helped ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' lived realities and not distorted by researcher assumptions.

3 Results

3.1 Parental Roles as Motivators and Facilitators

The findings of this study indicate that parents at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo play significant roles in enhancing their children's academic motivation through a variety of intentional strategies. These strategies include verbal encouragement, the establishment of structured study routines, and the use of incentive-based reinforcement for academic achievements. Such practices contribute to a home atmosphere that values discipline and persistence in learning (Damayanti, Zulkarnain, & Wahyuni, 2023; Famor, Arandi, Capangpangan, Naparan, & -, 2022; Maharani, Waty, Sumarni, & Raharjo, 2022). Parents in the study frequently accompanied their children during study sessions, provided direct assistance with homework, and engaged in discussions about school performance. These forms of involvement fostered a sense of collaborative responsibility and encouraged intrinsic motivation in students (N. K. N. M. Utami, Wibawa, & Astawan, 2023; Widayati, Khilmiyah, & Fauzan, 2022).

In addition to motivational dialogue, parents functioned as learning facilitators by establishing conducive learning environments at home. Organized spaces equipped with necessary educational tools, including books, stationery, and visual aids, were provided by some families to support their children's study habits. This physical and emotional scaffolding was shown to positively affect students' engagement with school tasks. Consistent with prior research, the quality of parental involvement particularly when tailored to the child's emotional needs as more influential than mere frequency of engagement (Hambala et al., 2023; Jiawen, Oh, Hyde, & Pomerantz, 2024). Children whose

parents nurtured their curiosity and integrated enjoyable learning experiences into daily routines reported higher enthusiasm for academic activities (Ahmed, Rönkä, & Perälä - Littunen, 2022; Muda'im & Shanie, 2023). The act of learning, thus, was reframed from a formal obligation to an enjoyable pursuit supported within the family domain.

3.2 Parental Supervision and Time Management Constraints

Despite the evident benefits of active parental involvement, the study also highlighted key constraints that undermine the effectiveness of such engagement. The availability of time emerged as a critical determinant of parental participation. Parents with flexible schedules or part-time employment were generally more involved in their children's academic life, resulting in improved study discipline and learning outcomes. Their engagement manifested through consistent homework support, participation in school events, and the monitoring of academic progress (Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2021; Montes & Montes, 2020). On the contrary, parents with full-time or irregular work schedules reported difficulty maintaining consistent involvement, often due to fatigue, time scarcity, or lack of academic confidence. This limited interaction occasionally led to a sense of neglect perceived by the children, subsequently dampening their motivation to engage in learning (Baroroh, Budiartati, & Fakhruddin, 2020).

To address these challenges, some respondents proposed adaptive school support mechanisms. Suggestions included more flexible communication systems such as digital progress reports, virtual parent-teacher conferences, and mobile apps to accommodate working parents' availability. Several parents expressed appreciation for asynchronous platforms that allow for engagement without strict scheduling. Additionally, there was a call for schools to provide parental empowerment workshops focused on guiding at-home learning, especially for those less confident in academic subjects (S. A. Murphy, Danaia, Tinkler, & Collins, 2023; Ruble, Paré - Blagoev, Cooper, Martin, & Jacobson, 2018). Community partnerships were also recommended as a means to provide educational support structures for families with limited resources, thereby broadening the responsibility for children's academic support beyond the nuclear family (C. Murphy, Matthews, Clayton, & Cann, 2021; Ralejoe, 2021). These findings suggest that effective parent-school collaboration must be both context-sensitive and operationally flexible to accommodate diverse parental circumstances.

3.3 Emotional Support and Communication Dynamics

Emotional reinforcement was identified as a central component of parental involvement that contributes significantly to student resilience and sustained motivation. The provision of emotional support manifested in forms such as affirming feedback, empathetic dialogue, and verbal recognition was reported to build children's self-esteem and determination in the face of academic difficulties (Fang, Akhter, & Aberash, 2025). Children whose parents routinely acknowledged their academic efforts demonstrated greater persistence and were more likely to recover from setbacks. These dynamics were particularly evident among students who experienced anxiety around academic performance, where emotional validation functioned as a stabilizing force in their learning processes (Tian et al., 2018).

Beyond emotional encouragement, the study also found that the quality of parent-child communication significantly influenced the extent of educational involvement. Families that prioritized open and regular conversations about school activities created relational environments where children felt safe to express their academic interests and concerns. Techniques such as setting daily check-in times, storytelling around school experiences, and co-participation in school-related discussions helped normalize academic talk within the home (Y. Zhang & Ren, 2025). These strategies, when consistently applied, cultivated a culture of mutual trust and academic accountability.

Moreover, schools were seen as crucial partners in enhancing these communication practices. Some teachers had implemented proactive methods to involve parents, such as hosting family engagement workshops and providing conversation starters through printed guides or digital media (Drolet, McDonald - Harker, Lalani, & Tran, 2020; Luo et al., 2022). These interventions aimed to bridge gaps in knowledge and confidence that many parents, particularly from low-literacy backgrounds,

faced when attempting to support their children's learning. The effectiveness of such programs was amplified when combined with cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to family-specific constraints.

4 Discussion

The findings from this study underscore the multifaceted nature of parental involvement in fostering children's academic motivation, particularly in rural primary school contexts such as SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo. The results confirm prior literature suggesting that motivational support from parents through encouragement, structured routines, and emotional reinforcement serves as a foundational mechanism for stimulating both intrinsic and extrinsic learning drives in children (Ahmed et al., 2022; Maharani et al., 2022). More importantly, this study adds to existing knowledge by highlighting how the efficacy of these motivational strategies is not solely dependent on parental intention, but also on contextual variables such as time availability, socio-economic status, and the quality of school-parent collaboration.

One prominent framework that helps contextualize the interaction between schools and families is Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement, which promotes comprehensive and collaborative efforts among families, schools, and the broader community (Pek & Mee, 2020). This model suggests that effective engagement occurs when schools create multiple entry points for parents to participate not only in homework supervision or academic discussions but also in school governance, volunteerism, and shared decision-making. At SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo, while parental involvement was largely concentrated in the home learning space, the absence of formal school-led structures to integrate parents more fully into educational processes limited the transformative potential of such engagement. Research has shown that expanding parental roles through inclusive school programs can strengthen motivation and learning resilience in students (Pirchio, Volpe, & Taeschner, 2023).

Complementary to Epstein's model is the Teachers Involving Parents (TIP) approach, which emphasizes the proactive role of educators in reaching out to parents (Malingumu, Kigobe, & Amani, 2023). The TIP model recognizes that many parents, especially those from under-resourced or low-literacy backgrounds, may lack the confidence or opportunity to engage unless explicitly invited and supported by schools. At SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo, several parents reported hesitation in communicating with teachers or understanding academic materials. This indicates a need for deliberate and sustained teacher outreach, consistent with research indicating that teacher-initiated communication enhances parental participation and ultimately boosts student motivation (Pirchio et al., 2023). Schools must view engagement not as a passive expectation of parents, but as a dynamic partnership requiring facilitation and mutual effort.

The Home-School Collaboration Model offers another lens through which to interpret the findings. This model advocates for flexibility in school programs to accommodate diverse parental needs, especially those constrained by time and economic pressures (Pasha, Shah, & Ijaz, 2021). The data reveal that many parents at SD Negeri 4 Wonoboyo desired to be more involved but were hindered by demanding work schedules or a lack of accessible school communication channels. Flexible solutions, such as asynchronous digital updates, weekend workshops, or community liaison officers, could alleviate these barriers. When schools make strategic accommodations, even time-pressed parents can meaningfully support their children's education reaffirming that equity in educational support requires structural responsiveness.

Beyond immediate academic benefits, sustained parental involvement is positively correlated with long-term developmental outcomes, including character formation and emotional resilience. Consistent with the findings of (Asanjarani, Kumar, & Kalani, 2022) and (Hour, Thayer, & Cook, 2019), students in this study who received emotional reinforcement and consistent attention from parents demonstrated greater perseverance, confidence, and interest in academic tasks. They were also better equipped to navigate frustrations, academic failure, and peer-related stress key indicators of resilience. These findings validate broader educational discourses that position the family not just as a site of knowledge transmission but as a vital ecosystem of emotional and psychological development

(Robinson, 2017). The value of emotionally attuned parenting in shaping adaptive learners cannot be overstated, particularly in early childhood education.

From a policy and intervention perspective, community-based initiatives play an essential role in addressing engagement barriers, especially in resource-constrained settings. Effective programs often include parenting workshops, home visitation programs, and school-community partnerships that facilitate trust-building between stakeholders (Alavi-Arjas et al., 2024; Mugumya et al., 2023). In rural Indonesia, where infrastructural and logistical limitations often prevent consistent school attendance by parents, outreach models that bring educational resources and communication strategies into homes may serve as powerful alternatives. Importantly, such interventions must be context-sensitive, culturally relevant, and inclusive of parental voices in their design and implementation.

Furthermore, policies that address systemic impediments to parental engagement such as inflexible work schedules, lack of childcare, or transportation difficulties are essential for inclusive educational reform. (Coatsworth, Hemady, & George, 2017) suggest that when governments or local authorities provide logistical support, such as community learning centers, subsidized transportation, or after-hours school events, parental engagement rates improve significantly. Implementing such measures in the context of SD Negeri 4 Wonobojo could mitigate the negative impacts of time poverty and create more equitable conditions for parental involvement. The intersection of educational policy, community development, and parental empowerment becomes a crucial arena for future research and practice.

Taken together, the findings of this study highlight the critical, yet complex, nature of parental engagement in primary education. It is not a monolithic process, but rather one shaped by multidimensional factors personal, structural, and institutional. The integration of theoretical models with empirical evidence from SD Negeri 4 Wonobojo affirms that when parents, schools, and communities function as collaborative partners, the educational motivation and overall development of children can be significantly enhanced. This calls for a shift in perspective from viewing parental involvement as supplementary to recognizing it as foundational to educational success.

5 Conclusion

This study investigated the role of parental involvement in enhancing students' academic motivation at SD Negeri 4 Wonobojo and revealed that parents play multifaceted roles as motivators, facilitators, supervisors, and emotional supporters in shaping children's engagement with learning. These roles significantly influenced children's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, learning behaviors, and emotional resilience. The findings demonstrated that parental strategies such as verbal encouragement, emotional reinforcement, and collaborative homework sessions positively affected students' enthusiasm for academic activities. Furthermore, a structured and supportive home environment emerged as a key factor in fostering consistent study habits.

Despite these positive impacts, several barriers constrained the full realization of effective parental involvement. These included time limitations due to work obligations, limited academic capacity, and insufficient communication between parents and schools. The study highlighted the need for systemic solutions, such as flexible school engagement models, digital communication tools, and community-based support programs to accommodate diverse parental circumstances. Moreover, sustained parental engagement was found to be closely associated with not only academic performance but also character development and emotional well-being.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of recognizing and institutionalizing parental involvement as a core component of educational strategies. Policymakers, educators, and communities must work collaboratively to reduce structural barriers and create inclusive frameworks that empower all parents regardless of socioeconomic status to participate actively in their children's education. Such integration is essential for ensuring equitable and sustainable academic outcomes, particularly in rural and under-resourced settings.

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