



## **Examining the Impact of Parental Involvement on English Language Development among Elementary Students: A Case Study of Select Schools in West Bekaa, Lebanon.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Numerous research studies consistently underscore the crucial role of parental involvement in shaping children's academic success from early childhood through adolescence and adulthood. Parental engagement encompasses various activities, such as homework supervision, attending parent-teacher conferences, and creating a supportive learning environment at home. This research examines the relationship between parental involvement in their children's English language learning and overall language proficiency, with a specific focus on Lebanon's West Beqaa region, known for its linguistic and cultural diversity. The study relies on quantitative data collected through questionnaires from parents of elementary students and English teachers. Findings show that a majority of parents actively support their children's English language proficiency, while some exhibit reduced engagement due to factors like socio-economic status, parental education, and linguistic background. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of parental involvement in English language education and suggests collaborative efforts among school administrators, educators, and the community to enhance engagement, particularly in diverse, multicultural contexts.

### **Introduction:**

English language has been considered a global Lingua Franca, which is the common language adopted between speakers whose native language is not English. It is a leading international language for business, technology, and communication. Lebanon is renowned for its diverse and multicultural composition, where English, alongside French, which was previously established as an official language alongside Arabic, the native tongue, has found its place within the educational institutions. Some economical, sociocultural, and political factors in Lebanon have motivated people to learn English as a foreign language (Diab, 2000). Indeed, most schools around Lebanon are trying their best, with the support of parents, to help students learn English as a second language. This quantitative research study highlights the impact of parental involvement in their children's learning, especially their English language development, at several private and public schools in West-Beqaa, Lebanon.

### **Purpose of the study:**

Upon the birth of children, they automatically become their parents' foremost concern and the central point of their care and attention. Indeed, parental duties in their children's lives commence right from day one. In actuality, parents can significantly influence their children's outcomes, whether for success or failure. As children embark on their educational journey, the role of parents begins to intersect with that of teachers. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as parental involvement, wherein parents actively participate in their children's education to enhance their academic performance.

Over the course of years of education, research findings consistently highlight a robust correlation between parental involvement and students' academic achievements. Goodall and Vorhaus elucidate the significant role played by parental involvement in students' academic success (Vorhaus, 2010). As demonstrated by Kathleen V. Hoover-Dempsey and Howard M. Sandler (HOOVER-DEMPSEY, KATHLEEN V., and SANDLER, HOWARD M., 1995), active parental engagement in their children's school lives has a positive impact on their acquisition of crucial learning skills and contributes to overall student success.

The primary objective of this quantitative study is to elucidate and exemplify the extent to which parents engage in their children's English language development within the Lebanese educational context. Furthermore, this study aspires to raise awareness among Lebanese parents about their children's English language learning and to encourage their active participation in both home and school-based English language activities, ultimately aiming to enhance student outcomes. Additionally, this research serves as a reminder to schools and educators to allocate dedicated time for parents to support their children's English language learning and to offer practical suggestions that facilitate parental involvement in their children's English language practices.

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### Statement of the Problem:

The concept of parental involvement has been studied as a serious topic by educational researchers for many years. Actually, parents who care about their children's learning are the ones who mainly get involved in their education. They believe in their parental duties toward their kids, and they also believe in their abilities to improve their children's learning. Other than that, involved parents supervise their kids' assignments on a daily basis and have a collaborative relationship with teachers. Parental involvement is considered a main reason for students' achievements, especially in elementary levels. Children at this stage need their parents to guide them successfully in learning and advocate for the effectiveness of schools. Also, children at this age need their parents to encourage them to become autonomous learners. In the Lebanese context, students maintain strong connections with their parents, and this bond is especially significant in the Beqaa villages, which are the central focus of our study. Consequently, they may rely more on their parents' engagement in their education to excel in their learning.

As previously mentioned, the process of learning the English language in Lebanon has seen significant growth since the Lebanese government introduced a new curriculum in the 1990s (Esseili, "English Language Teaching in Lebanese Schools," 2014). Initially, schools primarily incorporated English instruction from the sixth grade onward, alongside separate sessions for pure English language learning. However, in recent times, particularly in private schools, many subjects are taught predominantly in English. This approach is known as Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), where English serves as the medium of instruction and is acquired in the context of the subject matter. Furthermore, there has been a notable increase in the percentage of students studying English as a second language, rising from 30.5% in 1997 to 58.7% by the end of 2009 (Esseili, "English Language Teaching in Lebanese Schools," 2014). Consequently, English is now extensively utilized within Lebanese schools, necessitating support from both parents and teachers to help students attain high levels of proficiency in the language.

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### Significance of the study:

The main significance of this study is to provide further information and shed more light on the importance of parental involvement in their children's English language learning. We will demonstrate that parental involvement is equally crucial as that of teachers and schools, and that language teaching at school will not be as efficient if not complemented by home learning. Once parental involvement is correctly applied at both homes and schools, students will be more motivated to learn the English language. The study is expected to result in a significant improvement in children's English language development, as well as providing substantial assistance to teachers in educating their kids in collaboration with parents. This, in turn, will significantly contribute to raising the general academic standard at all levels.

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### Research Question:

The forthcoming research inquiries are designed to assess the extent of parental engagement in students' English language education across a range of public and private schools in West Bekaa, Lebanon. More specifically, our investigation will delve into the impact of parental interest in the English language on their children's language proficiency. To explore this phenomenon, we will put to the test the following hypotheses:

*H<sub>0</sub>*: There is no statistically significant level of parental involvement observed in various aspects of their children's English language learning.

*H<sub>1</sub>*: There is a statistically significant level of parental involvement observed in various aspects of their children's English language learning.

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### Review of the Literature:

#### i. Parental Involvement in English Language Development:

The English language holds a prominent position as one of the most widely spoken languages globally. Across many nations, English is either spoken or comprehended, establishing itself as a global lingua franca. Presently, parents are increasingly cognizant of the imperative to introduce English to their children at a young age, recognizing its paramount importance in both education and career prospects. English has undeniably evolved into a universal medium of communication, fostering connections among people worldwide. Consequently, the responsibility for acquiring proficiency in English commences with parental awareness.

In certain scenarios, parents may solely depend on educators, regarding them as the primary instructors responsible for imparting the English language to their children. A study conducted among Omani male students divulged that they encounter difficulties in mastering English due to a dearth of parental engagement in this sphere (Harthy, "Investigating Omani Parental Involvement in Their Children's English Language Learning," 2020). In nations like Brazil, where a mere 5% of the populace can converse or comprehend English, institutions offering English as a second language are scarce and often accompanied by substantial costs. This situation frequently dissuades parental participation in nurturing their children's English language proficiency. However, one could posit the opposite; parents possess the potential to actively facilitate their children's language acquisition within the home environment. In contrast, in Lebanon, the acquisition of English as a second language thrives, with contemporary parents displaying a greater inclination towards instructing their children in English compared to earlier generations.

Parental involvement encompasses a multifaceted concept, encompassing affirmative elements intertwined with school pedagogy and institutional perspectives (Sharabi, Moshé; Cohen-Ynon, Gilad; Soskis, Marina, 2021). The nexus between parental engagement and the relationship between school

and family significantly influences children's educational accomplishments and their prospective triumphs. Numerous studies advocate that schools boasting a substantial number of high-achieving students often exhibit robust home-school connections (O'Toole). For instance, within the United States, certain parents of Spanish origin exhibit diminished levels of parental engagement, thereby impacting their children's academic performance (Sharabi, Moshe; Cohen-Ynon, Gilad; Soskis, Marina, 2021).

#### ii. **The relationship between parents and their children in elementary school:**

During elementary years, children experience substantial cognitive and psychosocial development, transitioning from concrete to abstract thinking, marked by improved problem-solving abilities (Piaget, 1952), while concurrently forming unique perspectives (Erikson, 1963). Piaget's theory delineates developmental stages, with the concrete operational stage being particularly critical during these years as it facilitates abstract thinking (Piaget, 1952). Erikson's psychosocial theory emphasizes the "industry vs. inferiority" stage in elementary years, wherein children cultivate competence and industry through feedback from parents and teachers, with active engagement fostering these qualities and neglect potentially leading to feelings of inferiority (Erikson, 1963). Notably, parental involvement significantly influences elementary students' education, positively impacting academic achievement and life skills (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jaynes, 2012).

#### iii. **Education system in Lebanon:**

Lebanon's education system is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), encompassing various directorates, such as the Directorate General of Education, Directorate General of Higher Education, and Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education (Bryce Loo, Jessie Magaziner, 2017). The Lebanese education system consists of two primary sectors: private and public schools, with a significant distinction being that private schools emphasize preschool and elementary education. Before the 1990s, public schools did not admit students under the age of five, whereas private schools welcomed three-year-olds, for two to three years of kindergarten. Consequently, public school enrollment has significantly increased, prompting the government to expand public schools nationwide. The Ministry of Education has standardized private and public schools by mandating that all students, regardless of school type, must take unified official national exams after completing the secondary cycle, aligning private schools with government-mandated curricula. Notably, the Lebanese curriculum has not been updated since 1997, and the Ministry of Education has outlined key characteristics of the Lebanese educational system, including the primary level (pre-school), a six-year elementary cycle, a three-year intermediate cycle offering academic or technical/vocational paths, and a three-year secondary cycle requiring a Brevet certificate for enrollment (Bryce Loo, Jessie Magaziner, 2017).

#### vi. **English language learning in Lebanon:**

During the period of French occupation (1920-1943), the Lebanese government adopted an education system closely mirroring that of France. Notably, in addition to Arabic, the Lebanese government officially recognized French as an official language, on par with Arabic. This meant that all public and private schools were mandated to include French in their curriculum, and native French teachers were appointed in Lebanese schools to provide instruction in the French language. This historical influence is the root cause of why many families in Lebanon today boast a strong educational foundation in French, enabling them to speak the language fluently and accurately.

Following Lebanon's attainment of independence in 1943, the French language retained its status as the second official language. However, over subsequent decades, it gradually lost prominence to English, which was introduced as another foreign language in some educational institutions (Lebanon-HISTORY-BACKGROUND). Despite the establishment of the American University of Beirut in 1866, English did not initially serve as the primary language of instruction across Lebanon. Its significance grew progressively, and it was not until 1997 that the government officially acknowledged English as an additional language to be integrated alongside Arabic and French in educational contexts.

#### v. **Theoretical Framework:**

Parental involvement's impact on elementary students' academic achievement can be understood through Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which posits that human development is shaped by diverse environmental systems (Mahoney, 2017). Bronfenbrenner classified these systems into five interconnected levels: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Guy-Evans, 2020).

The microsystem, the first level, comprises direct influences on a child's development, including parents, teachers, and siblings. Strong parent-child relationships within this microsystem have a positive impact on overall development.

The mesosystem, the second level, encompasses interactions between microsystems, such as parent-teacher relationships. Research indicates that increased parental involvement in elementary education leads to improved academic performance (Guy-Evans, 2020).

The exosystem, the third level, includes indirect influences like parents' workplaces, neighborhoods, and social circles.

The macrosystem, the fourth level, involves cultural factors like socioeconomic status, which can significantly affect a child's development (Urie Bronfenbrenner and Gary W. Evans, 2000).

Lastly, the chronosystem, the final level, considers environmental changes over time, such as relocations, which can impact individual development.

In summary, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory emphasizes the importance of considering various environmental factors when studying children's development within these interconnected ecosystems.

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## Research Design:

This study aims to delve into the extent of parental involvement in their children's English language development among elementary school students in both private and public educational institutions. Employing a quantitative research design, the investigation scrutinizes the practices that parents undertake to support their children's English learning within the home and school environment. The research is conducted through the administration of questionnaires distributed to parents and teachers of elementary-level students across various public and private high schools situated in the West Bekaa region of Lebanon. This approach enables a comprehensive examination of the roles played by parents in fostering their children's proficiency in the English language. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into the collaborative efforts between parents and teachers in facilitating effective language acquisition and development. The utilization of both public and private schools in the study's scope ensures a diverse representation of educational contexts, offering a nuanced understanding of parental involvement dynamics within distinct educational settings.

### i. Population and Sample Selection:

This research project involved parents of elementary school students from fifteen private and public schools situated in the West Bekaa region of Lebanon. Additionally, English teachers from the same schools were included in the study, selected through random sampling methods.

A total of 116 parents, including fathers, mothers, and legal guardians, voluntarily took part in the study by completing a questionnaire. In the teachers' group, there were 24 English teachers, with one or two teachers chosen from each school to participate in the study by completing a questionnaire focused on parental involvement. These selected teachers possessed prior experience in teaching English as a second language.

Despite the students sharing a common cultural background and learning environment, it's important to acknowledge that potential differences may exist in their home environments and communities.

### ii. Instrumentations or Sources of Data:

The quantitative research data collection process involved the utilization of two distinct questionnaires, one designed for parents and the other tailored for teachers. These questionnaires were specifically crafted to assess parental involvement in students' English language development. The inquiries encompassed various aspects, including the active engagement of parents in their children's educational journey, the dynamics of the relationship and communication between parents and teachers, and the extent to which parents remain conscientious about their active roles in their children's English language learning process. Additionally, the questions sought to gauge parents' receptiveness to potential improvements and their willingness to embrace novel support strategies aimed at enhancing students' English language learning experiences. Both questionnaires were instrumental in elucidating the level of parental involvement and the quality of the home-school relationship, offering insights into their influence on students' English language development.

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## Data Presentation and Analysis

In the following section, we present the results obtained from data gathered from elementary school students' parents and teachers in the West Bekaa region, encompassing both public and private educational institutions. These participants willingly participated in an extensive survey, which delved into the multifaceted factors influencing parental engagement in students' English language development. Furthermore, this survey sought to ascertain the extent of parental involvement in students' English language activities. The primary objective of this study was to address our research inquiry by empirically evaluating the alternative research hypothesis denoted as  $H_1$ .

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## General results of the parents' questionnaires:

### Descriptive Findings:

#### i. General information about the parents:

In the survey, 116 parents took part, slightly below the initially anticipated count of 150 parents contacted. This section now presents the demographic information collected from the parents' survey, aligning with the research objective: Assessing parental involvement in English language activities among students in both private and public schools in West Bekaa, Lebanon.

The demographic data of the surveyed parents reveals that their age and sex were unspecified but generally indicated they were adults. The marital status distribution showed that the majority were married (94.8%), with a small percentage being divorced (5.2%) or widowed (0.9%). In terms of educational level, 31% had attained a bachelor's degree, 25% completed high school, around 27% had not progressed beyond primary school, while 8.6% attended vocational schools and another 8.6% had a master's degree. Financially, 60.3% had low annual incomes, 31.9% had average incomes, and 7.8% reported high incomes. Regarding employment, 72% had one working parent and one stay-at-home parent, 19% had both parents working, and 9% had neither parent working. Additionally, 74% of single parents were employed. In terms of language spoken at home, 38% did not speak English, and the rest had varying degrees of English language usage. Furthermore, 83% of parents did not speak languages other than English or Arabic at home, while 17% spoke other languages like Spanish, Portuguese, or French. Finally, with regard to the number of children, most parents (42%) had three or more children, and 79% had one or two children in elementary school, which could potentially impact parental involvement.

## ii. Parental contribution to children's English language development:

The second part of the parent's questionnaire described parents' contributions to their children's English language development. This section utilized a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 signifying "never," 2 for "rarely," 3 for "sometimes," 4 for "often," and 5 for "always." The survey statements remained entirely relevant to the research question: "To what extent do parents become involved in students' English language practices?"

In questions 18 and 23, the researcher inquired about the time parents devoted to enhancing their children's English language skills and their involvement in creative activities. The average response to the first question slightly exceeded 3.1. Notably, 74% of the responses fell between "sometimes" and "often," suggesting that parents usually invest time in improving their children's English language abilities. However, in the second question, the average responses were notably lower, ranging between "rarely" and "sometimes" at 2.6. This indicates that parents do not allocate much time to assist their children in engaging in creative English activities.

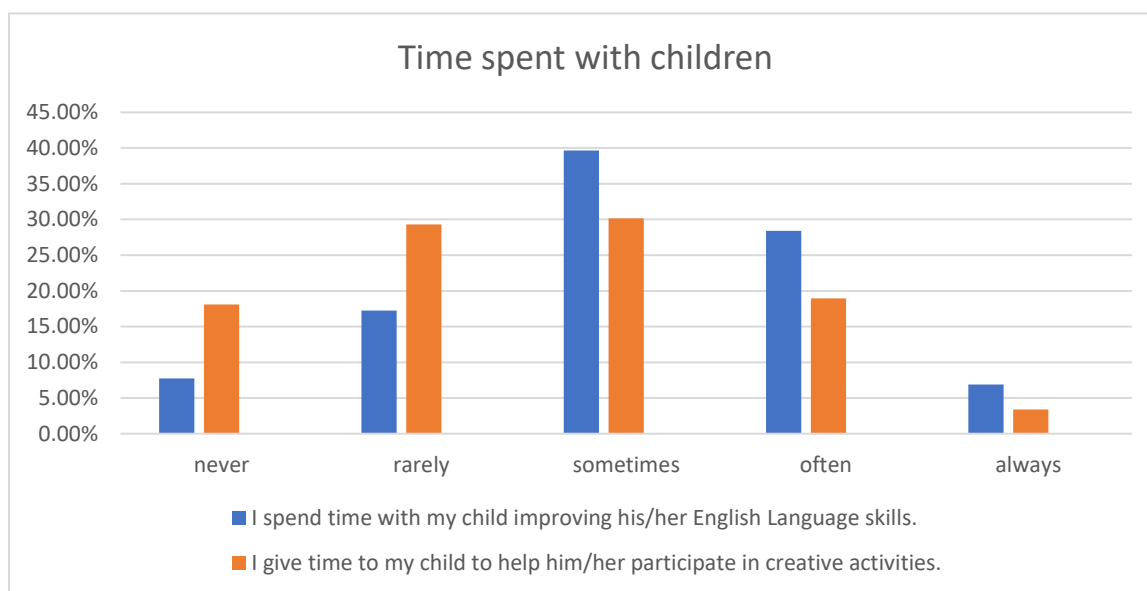


Figure 1. Time spent with children

In question 19, the researchers inquired about the extent to which parents demonstrate their enthusiasm for learning new things about the English language to their children. Most of the answers fell into the categories of "sometimes," "often," and/or "always," totaling 87%. Meanwhile, approximately 13% of the responses indicated "never" or "rarely."

Question 20 involved the researcher asking whether parents provide materials to assist their children with English language practices and assignments. Roughly 71.5% of responses indicated "sometimes," "rarely," and/or "never." Conversely, about 28% responded with "always" and "often." One type of material that could be provided is books. In question 21, parents were asked if they read English language books to their children. A total of 77.5% responded with "sometimes," "rarely," and/or "never." However, only 22.4% replied with "often" and "always."

Question 24 inquired whether parents establish clear rules for their children when they are completing English homework and assignments. Approximately 74% of responses indicated "always" and "often."

In questions 25 and 26, the researcher asked parents whether teachers simply suggest that they observe their children while doing their English assignments or if teachers ask parents to assist their children with their English homework. The average answers to both questions were 2.1 and 1.9, respectively. This suggests that, on average, parents receive little to no requests from teachers to help or observe their children's English assignments.

Questions 22, 27, 28, 29, and 30 focused on the practice and use of the English language in the home environment. For instance, the researcher asked whether parents engage in English conversations with their children, establish family routines using the English language, take their children to places where they can use English, participate in English game-like activities, or watch movies together. The majority of participants responded with "never," "rarely," or "sometimes," averaging at 87%. Conversely, a smaller number of participants responded with "often" or "always," averaging at 13%.

The SPSS statistics program was used for analyzing the variables in this part of the questionnaire. The mean value represents the average of responses, ranging from a minimum value of 1 for "never" to a maximum of 5 for "always." Values of 1 and 2 indicated negative responses such as "never" and "rarely," while a value of 3 represented a "sometimes" response. The theoretical value was determined as 3.5, which is closer to the positive values 4 and 5. The null hypothesis would be accepted if the mean value was equal to or less than 3.5. The total mean for the above questions was recorded as 2.64, which is close to 3 but less than 3.5. This validates the fact that parents are not fully involved in various aspects of their children's English language learning.

## Statistical Analysis:

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the results, we used descriptive statistics to investigate the connection between different variables in part one (pertaining to general information) and part two (focused on Parental contribution to children's English language development) of the parental survey. In this analysis, the variables in parts one and two served as independent variables, while "parental involvement" was the dependent variable. Our goal was to understand how specific factors in the two parts influence parental involvement.

## Theoretical Part

From the inception of data collection through to its subsequent presentation, analysis, and synthesis, this study has diligently employed a repertoire of sound statistical techniques. These methodologies have been instrumental in scrutinizing score distributions, encompassing both normal and skewed distributions, while facilitating the comparison of mean outcomes across diverse groups. Notably, we have leveraged the Cronbach's alpha test to ascertain the reliability and internal consistency of our data. Furthermore, a suite of parametric tests, including regression analysis, correlation analysis, Student t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA), was meticulously conducted. These tests were predicated on the underlying assumption of data conforming to a normal distribution, a presumption validated through the assessment of skewness and kurtosis via z-scores.

## Experimental part

The aim of this analysis is to assess whether there exists a distinction among parents in terms of their interest in their children's English language learning. The scale comprises various indicators pertaining to the time parents invest in teaching their children the English language, including activities such as reading books and stories, engaging in creative and educational pursuits, assisting with homework, watching TV programs and movies, and communicating with their children in English.

The interest score is calculated as the sum of each participant's responses to ten questions. Each question is rated on a scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (always). For instance, if a participant answers "1" (rarely) to all ten questions, the interest score will be 10, indicating a low level of interest. Conversely, if the responses to all ten questions are "3" (sometimes), the interest score will be 30, signifying a moderate level of interest. In contrast, if all answers are "5" (always), the maximum interest score attainable is 50, indicative of a high level of interest.

In general, a low interest score, close to 10, suggests that the participant tends to spend minimal time with their children (low interest). A score around 30 indicates an average amount of time spent (moderate interest), while a score approaching 50 signifies a significant amount of time invested in their children's learning (high interest).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the ten items demonstrated excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.882 > 0.7$ ), indicating strong coherence among the ten questions.

Out of the one hundred and sixteen (116) participating parents, the average interest score was 26.60. Scores varied between 14 and 44, with half of the participants scoring below 26, and three-quarters scoring below 33.

In summary, the level of interest displayed by parents towards their children's English language learning was generally moderate, bordering on the lower end of the spectrum. This suggests that parents tended to allocate relatively limited time to enhancing their children's proficiency in the English language.

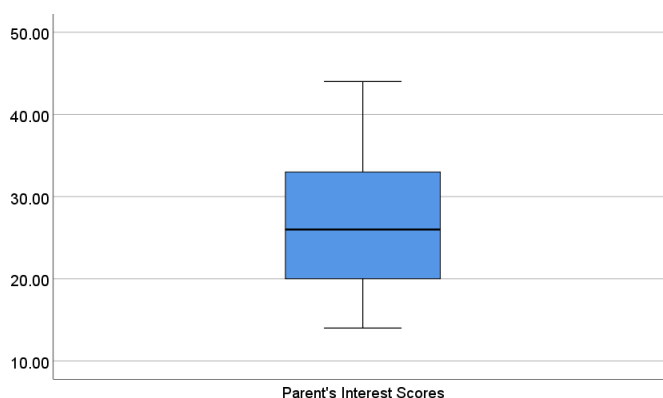


Figure 2. Parents' interest scores

## Teacher's Questionnaire:

Teachers were selected randomly from both public and private schools, with the goal of involving 35 to 40 elementary English teachers. Nevertheless, the study encountered a limitation as only 24 teachers took part. The majority of these English teachers were female, and they had accumulated more

than five years of experience in instructing English as a second language to elementary students. Furthermore, the teacher's questionnaire was segmented into three primary sections, and the findings are organized and presented according to each respective section.

### **1- Teacher – Parents communication:**

In this section, there were nine questions posed to the teachers. The first question sought to ascertain the frequency of parental communication with teachers, revealing that 41.7% (approximately 42%) of teachers noted that parents typically reach out once a month when their child is encountering academic difficulties, indicating a tendency for parents to initiate contact primarily in response to such issues.

The second question delved into the focus of communication between parents and teachers. Results showed that 41.7% of parents communicated with teachers at least once a month when their child faced academic challenges, while 25% reached out only in the presence of specific problems. Consequently, it emerged that, in general, parental communication with teachers is more likely to occur when their child is experiencing difficulties. Furthermore, a substantial portion, accounting for three-quarters of teachers (75%), indicated that teacher-parent communication predominantly centers on the overall progress of the students, with a smaller fraction of 12.5% reporting discussions related to student misbehavior. Similarly, 12.5% of teachers acknowledged engaging in conversations concerning specific areas of improvement, while none reported that communication revolved around general class news.

The third question explored the frequency of sending educational materials home to aid parents in supporting their children's English language development, including homework assignments. Results indicated that 50% of teachers send such materials home on a weekly basis, with 33% dispatching assignments or homework daily. In contrast, 8.4% (2 teachers) send assignments once a month or as needed based on students' progress. Approximately 8.3% of teachers either rarely or do not send any materials to facilitate parents' involvement in their children's English language practices. Notably, 83% of teachers send English-language materials home with students during the week, a factor significantly influencing parental engagement in their children's English language development, as home assignments typically encourage parental involvement.

Regarding the sharing of contact information with parents, 79.2% of teachers confirmed that they do share contact details, while 20.8% (approximately 24%) indicated otherwise. Of those who shared contact information, 57.9% (approximately 58%) provided phone numbers, 15.8% (approximately 16%) shared alternative social media channels, and 26.3% shared all available contact information. When asked about the frequency of contacting parents, 45% of teachers responded with "once a month," 25% opted for "once a week," 25% indicated "rarely," and 5% selected "every three days." Sharing contact information emerged as another influential factor affecting parental engagement, with 75% of teachers choosing to share their contact details, potentially facilitating increased parental involvement.

Teachers were also asked about the most effective means to ensure that information reaches parents. Results indicated that phone calls were the most effective method, chosen by 21% of teachers, followed by teachers' notes in students' agendas at 20.8%. Conversely, school newsletters and emails were perceived as the least effective means of communication.

The final two questions in this section addressed the content of communication between teachers and parents. Approximately 20.8% of teachers reported that parents commonly voiced concerns about assignments and grades. A nearly equal percentage, 33.3%, stated that parents offered both suggestions for enhancing their child's English language proficiency and complaints about grades and assignments. However, none of the parents specifically requested more English language assignments.

Furthermore, when asked about topics of discussion with parents, teachers could choose multiple responses. A significant majority of 87.5% of teachers stated that they recommended ways for parents to bolster their child's English language skills, such as reading stories and watching movies. Additionally, 58.3% suggested methods for using the home environment to stimulate their child's interest in learning English. Moreover, 45.8% encouraged parents to engage more actively in their child's English language practices, while 12.5% indicated addressing concerns related to student assignments and grades during conversations with parents.

### **2- Parental contribution to child's education**

In the second segment of the teacher's survey, three questions were posed to ascertain teachers' perspectives on parental contributions to their children's education.

In the first question, teachers were queried on how they discern if parents are actively assisting their children in English language practices. The majority, comprising 62.5% of teachers, indicated that they gauge parental involvement through students' participation in class, while the remaining 37.5% rely on students' grades as an indicator.

The second question aimed to identify which parents, based on specific factors, tend to be more engaged in their children's English language practices in both private and public schools in West Beqaa, Lebanon. Teachers were presented with four multiple-choice options, and the consensus among the teachers was that educated parents who possess English language proficiency are the ones who exhibit higher levels of involvement in their children's English language development.

In the third question, teachers were asked to pinpoint circumstances or factors that negatively impact parental involvement. A significant portion, constituting 79.2% of teachers, attributed the lack of parental involvement to problems within the home environment. Additionally, 70.8% of teachers identified uneducated parents as a potential factor hindering parental engagement. Furthermore, an equivalent percentage of 62.5% (15 teachers) cited busy parents and parents with limited English language proficiency as contributors to diminished involvement in their children's English language development, while 41.7% of teachers acknowledged that financial hardships might also play a role in this regard.

### Statistical results

The scores of answers to all individual questions in parts 1 and 2 of the teachers' questionnaire, were checked for normalcy, according to the z-scores of skewness and kurtosis of each question. All scores range between 0.17 and 1.56 (averaging 0.9 and all well below 1.96, allowing us to conclude that the scores of interests of all groups were normally distributed and The Welch's t-test and Welch's ANOVA were the appropriate test to compare the means of all groups.

The analysis on the directly relevant Questions 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the *Teachers – Parents communication* part revealed a statistical significance on questions 1, 2, and 8 with p-values of 0.011, 0.036, and 0.027 respectively, indicating an existing significant difference in the teachers-parents communication scores across the various groups meaning we can reject the null hypothesis. However, the p-value of question 9 was 0.089 well above 0.05 indicating a significant difference between the various groups and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Similarly, analysis on the directly relevant questions 2, and 3 of the *Parental contribution to child's education* part revealed a statistical significance on both questions with p-values of 0.038, 0.021, respectively, indicating an existing significant difference in the teachers-parents communication scores across the various groups lead to accept the alternate hypothesis.

### 3- School/teacher/society support to parents:

In the first question of the final segment of the teachers' survey, teachers were prompted to provide suggestions for schools to aid parents in facilitating their children's English language learning. Teachers' responses encompassed a range of recommendations, including the provision of additional books, stories, workshops, supplementary activities, parent-teacher meetings, increased telephone communication, the dissemination of advice, encouragement for parents to utilize English at home, and the provision of instructional videos corresponding to each lesson.

In the second question, teachers were requested to suggest forms of assistance they themselves could provide to parents to bolster parental engagement in their children's English language development. Their responses closely mirrored the prior question, encompassing elements such as the distribution of books, stories, workshops, activities, encouragement to engage with English through songs, movies, reading, and speaking, the recommendation of websites and YouTube channels, the provision of CDs containing vocabulary words and exercises, communication of students' strengths and weaknesses, and active guidance to ensure that children comprehensively study each lesson rather than delaying preparation until examination periods.

In the third question, teachers were tasked with proposing initiatives that society could offer to support parents in promoting their children's English language acquisition. Teachers articulated various ideas, including the organization of workshops highlighting the significance of English language proficiency, the establishment of specialized centers, the facilitation of communicative activities enabling both parents and children to engage in English conversations, the provision of cost-effective or free English courses for parents, the implementation of role-playing activities that incorporate English within learning centers, the development of educational programs, the delivery of training sessions, and the potential provision of financial support.

Collectively, the responses obtained from these three questions in the final section underscore the necessity for enhanced support for parents from the tripartite stakeholders comprising schools, teachers, and society, aimed at augmenting parental involvement in the English language development of elementary students.

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## Discussion

This quantitative study was aimed to explain and show the extent to which parents are involved in their students' English language development. In addition to that, the study did explore the factors that influence whether or not parents are involved in their children's English language learning. Moreover, the study aims to give suggestions and recommendations for parents, teachers and schools to cooperatively work with each other in order to strengthen and develop the students' English language learning. Quantitative data was collected and interpreted to help the research answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

To sum up, this study tackles the initial research question posed earlier, establishes links between the findings and existing research, provides a succinct summary of the conclusions, presents recommendations, and charts pathways toward diverse avenues of future research exploration.

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### Answers to the research question:

To what extent do parents get involved in their children's English language learning?

Many of the questions in the teacher's survey were aligned with the primary research question. The initial two questions in the teacher's survey were directly related to the research question and revealed that parents frequently engage in their children's English language learning. This conclusion was drawn as more than half of the teachers affirmed that parents reach out to them when students encounter difficulties or issues in their English language development. Questions 8 and 9 in the teacher's survey were also pertinent to the research question. Both of these questions demonstrated that parents and teachers often converse about providing suggestions to enhance students' English language acquisition, such as reading stories and books. Nevertheless, teachers indicated that parents primarily engage in these dialogues to make inquiries or express concerns about their children's English assignments or grades, potentially indicating a less productive form of communication. In essence, complaints may not necessarily signify positive involvement. Question 10 revealed that teachers typically gauge parental involvement in their students' English language learning by examining disparities



between homework grades and in-class quiz grades and by assessing students' participation in class. If students consistently achieve high grades, actively participate in class, and exhibit performance beyond the teacher's expectations, it suggests that their parents may be actively assisting them. This observation aligns with a similar study conducted in Sultanate Oman, which was discussed in the literature review. During this study, the researcher visited schools and interviewed English teachers who confirmed that "underachievement" was linked to a lack of parental involvement (Harthy, investigating Omani parental involvement in their children's English language learning, 2020). Therefore, teachers generally possess insights into whether parents are actively engaged in their students' English language development.

In general, the responses collected from the teacher's survey, which are directly relevant to the research question and discussed in the statistical results section of the teacher's questionnaire, suggest that parents are actively participating in their students' English language development. However, considering that not all questions carry equal weight and cannot be treated as a single entity leading to a single p-value, we chose not to pursue the calculation of individual p-values for the relevant questions. Instead, since 4 out of 5 questions yielded a p-value of less than 0.05, we confidently reject the null hypothesis:

***H<sub>0</sub>***: There is no statistically significant level of parental involvement observed in various aspects of their children's English language learning.

And accept the alternative hypothesis:

***H<sub>1</sub>***: There is a statistically significant level of parental involvement observed in various aspects of their children's English language learning.

On the other hand, within the parental survey, participants were tasked with responding to various inquiries pertinent to the research question: "To what extent do parents get involved in elementary students' English language development?" The second part of the survey, titled "Parental Contribution to Children's English Language Development," was directly aligned with the research question. The mean was calculated for this section since it utilized a Likert scale ranging from a maximum of 5 to a minimum of 1. The mean was recorded as 2.6, which falls below 3. This result supports the acceptance of the null hypothesis: Parents do not significantly engage in their children's English language development. All questions in this section pertained to how parents assist their children in enhancing their English language skills. The findings indicate that parents do not dedicate substantial time to help their children improve their English language proficiency. For instance, when it comes to activities like reading books, creating an English language-rich environment, engaging in English conversations, watching English movies, and participating in English game-like activities, parents' responses predominantly fell under "never," "rarely," or "sometimes." A study conducted in Turkey on parents' perceptions of parental involvement yielded similar results, indicating that parents do not believe they can contribute more effectively to their children's English language learning compared to teachers (Gülce Kalaycı, Hüseyin Öz, 2018). In this study, parents appear to be less proactive, relying on teachers to facilitate their children's English language development.

Consequently, based on the insights gained from previous studies, the teacher's survey, and the parent's survey in this study, it can be inferred that parents do not invest significant effort in assisting their children in improving their English language skills. While they do communicate with their children's teachers, not all of these interactions are geared toward collaborative efforts that foster enhanced parental involvement, English language development, and academic achievement.

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## **Recommendations:**

Drawing upon the earlier presented and discussed findings, the following recommendations are suggested for schools, English educators, parents, and the broader community to consider for future studies and further research.

### **Schools:**

As schools serve as the cornerstone of parental involvement in elementary students' English language development, they should take these steps to foster support: Organize periodic parent-school visits, gather their feedback, create a clear annual calendar of events, meetings, exams, and holidays for parents, promote parental attendance at special events and school activities with their children, and maintain student portfolios with cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

### **English teachers:**

English teachers, as key stakeholders interacting with both parents and students, should assume a vital role in promoting parental involvement in students' English language learning. To this end, English teachers are advised to actively engage parents by facilitating regular communication, organizing and extending invitations to tailored language workshops for parents and students, promoting English reading, viewing, and listening activities for parents and their children, and providing guidance to parents on effective ways to support and monitor their children's English language progress at home.

### **Parents:**

Parents are encouraged to collaborate closely with school faculty to support their students effectively. This includes maintaining regular communication with both the school staff and English teachers to stay informed about their children's overall progress. Additionally, parents should seek guidance from teachers to identify strategies that empower them to monitor and assist their children's learning at home. To further enhance their children's English language development, parents can actively engage in activities such as reading English stories, incorporating English into daily routines, and creating an English language-rich environment at home.

### Community:

Society plays a crucial role as an external supporter for both schools and families, significantly influencing parental involvement. Therefore, it is essential for society to facilitate the connection between schools and parents by conducting workshops highlighting the significance of the English language, coordinating interactive activities that enable parents and children to practice English conversation, offering cost-effective or free English courses for parents, and providing community spaces for events that encourage family engagement in their children's education and English language development.

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### Conclusion

In summary, this quantitative study on Lebanese parental involvement highlights the crucial role parents play in their children's educational journeys. The issue investigated has received considerable attention in the literature, affirming that school administrations encounter challenges related to parental engagement, particularly in supporting their children's English language development. While the collected and analyzed data confirmed this challenge, it is worth noting that parental involvement varies based on influential factors. This study, in alignment with previous research, identifies two primary constraints on parental involvement in elementary students' English language development: limited parental education and a lower level of English language proficiency. Despite these hindrances, parents have demonstrated a genuine concern for their children's English language learning in various ways.

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