



Community Participation Towards Academic Performance at Primary Schools in Seremban

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Article Information

Keywords

Community Participation, Academic Performance and Primary Schools

Abstract

Community participation has increasingly been recognised as a key factor in enhancing students' motivation, behaviour, and academic achievement at the primary school level. This study examined the level of community participation in supporting academic performance at primary schools in Seremban. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed, with data collected from 101 respondents comprising parents, teachers, and community members using a structured, self-administered questionnaire distributed via online tools. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to analyse the data, while the internal consistency of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The findings revealed a high level of community participation, with an overall mean score of 4.08 (SD = 0.85). The instrument also demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.98 for the 10-item construct, indicating a high level of internal consistency. These findings suggest a strong consensus among respondents regarding the significant role of community participation in supporting pupils' academic performance. The study concludes that strengthening collaboration among schools, families, and the wider community is essential for fostering a supportive learning environment and enhancing academic outcomes for primary school pupils.

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance among primary school pupils is influenced by multiple factors, including individual abilities, the availability of school resources, family support, and community participation. Among these, community participation has increasingly been recognised as a significant contributor to students' educational success. According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, a child's development is shaped by interactions within interconnected environmental systems, particularly the family, school, and community. These systems work collectively to influence children's cognitive, social, and academic development. Consequently, meaningful collaboration among parents, teachers, and the wider community is essential for creating a supportive learning environment that enhances pupils' academic performance.

Community participation extends beyond parental involvement and encompasses the collective contributions of teachers, community leaders, local organisations, volunteers, and other stakeholders who support students' educational development. Such collaboration may include participation in school programmes, academic support initiatives, resource sharing, mentoring activities, and the promotion of positive learning environments. Strong partnerships between schools and the community have been associated with improved student motivation, greater school engagement, better attendance, and higher academic achievement.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive relationship between stakeholder participation and students' academic performance. For instance, Sujarwo and Herwin (2023) reported that parental participation significantly enhances students' learning outcomes. Similarly, Wang and Wei (2024) found that active parental involvement contributes positively to students' academic achievement, particularly in Mathematics. Furthermore, Park and Kim (2024) concluded that school participation strengthens students' academic performance by improving school adjustment and encouraging greater classroom engagement. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of collaborative support systems in promoting positive educational outcomes.

Despite these documented benefits, effective community participation remains challenging in many educational settings. Common barriers include time constraints arising from work commitments, socioeconomic limitations, inadequate awareness of the importance of educational involvement, and limited opportunities for meaningful participation in school activities. As a result, many parents and community members remain minimally involved in school affairs, leading to unequal levels of academic support among pupils. Such disparities may negatively affect students' educational achievement and widen existing educational inequalities. Baxter and Toe (2023) argued that strengthening school–community partnerships is essential for reducing educational disparities and ensuring equitable academic support for all students.

Although the existing literature has extensively examined parental involvement in children's education, comparatively little attention has been given to broader community participation. Most previous studies have focused primarily on parents while overlooking the contributions of other community stakeholders, including local organisations, community leaders, non-governmental organisations, and social support groups. Moreover, empirical evidence on community participation and its relationship with pupils' academic performance within the Malaysian context remains limited. To the best of the authors' knowledge, no published study has specifically examined community participation in relation to academic performance among primary school pupils in Seremban. This gap highlights the need for empirical research to provide context-specific evidence that can inform educational practices and policy development.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the level of community participation in supporting academic performance among primary school pupils in Seremban. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the level of community participation and examine its relationship with pupils' academic performance. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on school–community partnerships while providing practical insights for school administrators, educators, community stakeholders, and policymakers in strengthening collaborative efforts to improve students' academic outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community participation in education refers to the collaborative involvement of parents, families, schools, and the wider community in supporting students' learning and overall educational development (Kim,2022). It encompasses various forms of engagement, including parental academic support, home supervision, communication with teachers, participation in school activities, and collaboration with community organisations (Yang et al.,2023). Such collective involvement is widely recognised as an important determinant of students' academic success, particularly at the primary school level, where foundational knowledge, learning behaviours, and lifelong educational attitudes are established (Kim,2022; Yang et al.,2023).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for understanding the role of community participation in education (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Rosa & Tudge, 2023). The theory posits that children's development is influenced by interactions among multiple environmental systems, particularly the family, school, and community (Rosa & Tudge, 2023). Effective collaboration among these interconnected systems creates a supportive learning environment that promotes children's cognitive, social, and academic development (Rosa & Tudge, 2023). Consequently, community participation is not limited to parental involvement but also includes the contributions of teachers, community leaders, local organisations, volunteers, and other stakeholders who collectively support pupils' educational experiences⁹ (Yang et al.,2023).

A substantial body of research has consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between community participation and students' academic performance. Among the various forms of participation, parental involvement has received the greatest scholarly attention. Wang and Wei (2024) reported that parental involvement significantly improves students'

academic achievement, particularly in Mathematics, by strengthening learning motivation, self-confidence, and academic support at home. Similarly, Sujarwo and Herwin (2023), through a meta-analysis of Scopus-indexed studies, concluded that parental involvement has a consistently positive effect on students' academic achievement across different educational levels, subjects, and learning contexts.

Supporting these findings, Kim (2022) conducted a large-scale second-order meta-analysis encompassing five decades of educational research and identified parental involvement as one of the most consistent predictors of students' academic achievement. The study concluded that students whose parents actively participate in their education generally demonstrate higher academic performance than those receiving limited parental support, regardless of geographical or educational context. These findings reinforce the long-term educational value of sustained family engagement.

Beyond direct parental involvement, parental expectations also play a significant role in influencing students' academic outcomes. Jeynes (2022) argued that parents who maintain high yet realistic academic expectations foster greater student motivation, perseverance, and educational aspirations. Expanding this perspective, Jeynes (2023) proposed that family involvement should be understood as a relational process in which trust, communication, and emotional support between parents and children contribute substantially to academic success. This relational perspective suggests that the quality of parental engagement may be as important as the frequency of involvement.

Community participation also extends beyond the family to include collaborative partnerships between schools and the wider community. Baxter and Toe (2023) emphasised that effective school–family partnerships improve communication, strengthen mutual trust, and create more equitable learning opportunities, particularly for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Likewise, Park and Kim (2024) found that parental participation contributes indirectly to academic achievement by enhancing students' school adjustment, behavioural engagement, emotional readiness, and active participation in classroom learning. These findings indicate that community participation influences academic performance through multiple interconnected pathways rather than through direct academic support alone.

Overall, previous studies suggest that community participation affects students' academic achievement through several complementary mechanisms, including parental expectations, emotional encouragement, academic guidance, effective home–school communication, and collaborative educational support (Baxter & Toe, 2023; Kim, 2022; Park & Kim, 2024). Collectively, these dimensions create a positive educational environment that encourages sustained student engagement and academic success.

Despite its recognised benefits, achieving meaningful community participation remains a significant challenge in many educational settings. Existing studies have identified several barriers that limit active participation, including work commitments, limited time, socioeconomic constraints, inadequate awareness of the importance of educational involvement, and restricted opportunities to engage in school-related activities (Sujarwo & Herwin, 2023). These challenges may result in unequal levels of parental and community support, thereby contributing to disparities in students' academic achievement.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of community participation depends not only on the presence of involvement but also on its quality, consistency, and sustainability. Kim (2022) argued that continuous engagement and effective communication between schools and families are essential for maximising the positive effects of community participation on students' learning outcomes. Therefore, strengthening long-term partnerships between schools and community stakeholders remains a critical strategy for improving educational quality.

Although previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive influence of parental involvement on students' academic achievement, relatively few have examined community participation from a broader perspective. Most existing research has focused primarily on parents while giving limited attention to the contributions of community organisations, local leaders, volunteers, and other social support networks that also play important roles in children's educational development. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the collective influence of wider community participation remains limited.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the level of community participation in supporting academic performance at primary schools in Seremban. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate as it enables the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to describe respondents' perceptions and identify overall patterns within the study population. The study involved 101 respondents comprising teachers, parents, and community members associated with primary schools in Seremban. Respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. Although non-

probability sampling limits the generalisability of the findings, it is considered appropriate for exploratory studies involving accessible target populations. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire distributed electronically through Google Forms, with the survey link shared via WhatsApp and Telegram. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and items measuring community participation in supporting pupils' academic performance. All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analyses, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were performed to describe respondents' demographic characteristics and determine the overall level of community participation. In addition, the internal consistency of the measurement instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to establish its reliability. Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Respondents were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and that all information provided would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondent

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 101 respondents who participated in this study. The respondents comprised teachers, parents, and community members associated with primary schools in Seremban. In terms of gender, female respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion of the sample, with 52 respondents (51.5%), while male respondents accounted for 49 respondents (48.5%). The relatively balanced gender distribution indicates that the study captured perspectives from both male and female participants with minimal disparity. Regarding age, the largest proportion of respondents was between 25 and 34 years old, representing 30 respondents (29.7%). This was followed by respondents aged 35–44 years ($n = 25$, 24.8%), those below 25 years old ($n = 24$, 23.8%), and respondents aged 45 years and above ($n = 22$, 21.8%). The findings suggest that participants represented a broad range of age groups, providing diverse perspectives on community participation in primary education. With respect to respondents' roles, community members formed the largest group, comprising 39 respondents (38.6%). Parents represented 36 respondents (35.6%), while teachers accounted for 26 respondents (25.7%). The distribution reflects the inclusion of key stakeholders involved in supporting pupils' academic development and school-related activities. In terms of duration of involvement with the school or community, 45 respondents (44.6%) had participated for more than three years, followed by 34 respondents (33.7%) who had been involved for one to three years. The remaining 22 respondents (21.8%) reported less than one year of involvement. Overall, the majority of respondents had accumulated substantial experience in school- or community-related activities, indicating that they were well positioned to provide informed perspectives on community participation and its contribution to pupils' academic performance.

Table 1
PROFILE OF RESPONDENT (N=101)

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	49	48.9
	Female	52	51.5
Age	<25 years old	24	23.8
	24-34 years old	30	29.7
	35-34 years old	25	24.8
	>45 years old	22	21.8
Role	Parent	36	35.6
	Teacher	26	25.7
	Community Member	39	38.6
Duration of Involvement with School / Community	< 1 year	22	21.8
	1-3 years	34	33.7
	>3 years	45	44.6

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement instrument, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The community participation construct consisted of 10 measurement items designed to assess respondents' perceptions of community participation in supporting academic performance among primary schools in Seremban. According to Pallant (2016), Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 or above indicate acceptable internal consistency, values between 0.80 and 0.90 are considered good, and values exceeding 0.90 indicate excellent reliability. As presented in Table 2, the community participation construct achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.98, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency. The exceptionally high reliability coefficient demonstrates

that the 10 measurement items consistently assess the same underlying construct. This finding confirms that the instrument possesses a high degree of reliability and is appropriate for subsequent statistical analyses. Therefore, the questionnaire was considered sufficiently reliable for examining community participation in supporting academic performance among primary schools in Seremban.

Table 2
RELIABILITY TEST

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Assumed
Community Participation Towards Academic Performance Among Primary School in Seremban	10	0.98	Excellent

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the community participation construct. The findings indicate that respondents perceived a high level of community participation in supporting academic performance among primary schools in Seremban, with an overall mean score of 4.08 (SD = 0.85). Based on the interpretation in Table 3, mean scores ranging from 1.00 to 2.33 indicate a low level, 2.34 to 3.67 indicate a moderate level, and 3.68 to 5.00 indicate a high level of community participation. Accordingly, the overall mean score of 4.08 falls within the high category, suggesting that respondents generally agreed that community participation in primary schools is actively practiced. The findings further indicate that parents, teachers, and community members perceive community participation as an important component of the educational process. The high mean score reflects positive perceptions of collaborative engagement between schools, families, and the wider community in supporting pupils' academic development. These findings provide empirical evidence that community participation is well established among the participating primary schools in Seremban.

Table 3
LEVEL OF MEAN SCORER RANGE

Mean Score Range	Level
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.67	Medium
3.68 – 5.00	High

Table 4
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Community Participation Towards Academic Performance Among Primary Schools in Seremban	4.08	0.85	101

CONCLUSION

This study examined the level of community participation in supporting academic performance among primary schools in Seremban. The findings revealed a high level of perceived community participation, indicating strong agreement among parents, teachers, and community members regarding the importance of collaborative involvement in pupils' education. The results suggest that respondents recognise community participation as an essential element in creating a supportive learning environment that promotes students' academic development. The study further highlights the importance of strengthening partnerships between schools, families, and the wider community. Collaborative engagement among these stakeholders contributes to a positive educational environment that encourages student motivation, confidence, and active participation in learning. Therefore, schools should continue to implement programmes and initiatives that encourage meaningful community involvement as part of their efforts to enhance pupils' educational experiences and overall academic development. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on school–community partnerships by providing empirical evidence from the context of primary schools in Seremban. The findings offer useful insights for school administrators, teachers, parents, community organisations, and policymakers in developing strategies that promote stronger collaboration and support for pupils' learning. Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design and involved respondents selected through convenience sampling from primary schools in Seremban, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Future research should consider employing probability sampling techniques, including larger and more diverse samples from different types of schools and geographical locations. In addition, qualitative or mixed-methods approaches could provide a deeper understanding of how community participation influences pupils' academic experiences and educational outcomes.

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