

## **Parental Involvement and their Children's Social Adjustment: Evidence from Jordanian Students**

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### **Abstract**

The present study aimed at exploring the relationship between parental involvement and their children's social adjustment. The study population was male and female elementary students in Amman city, Jordan. The participants selected through cluster random sampling method including 560 students. Parental involvement questionnaire and the social adjustment questionnaire utilized using SPSS software for data analyzing. Results showed that the level of parental involvement was high. Also, results showed that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and their children's social adjustment.

**Keywords:** Parental involvement, Social adjustment.

### **1. Introduction**

The behavior of children at school is a critical factor in their social adjustment. The consequences of their behavior at school can be harmful; students' inappropriate behavior at school can distract both the students themselves and those around them from their learning tasks. Moreover, research has shown that teachers' evaluation of students' academic performance is influenced by the students' behavior in the classroom (Igbinedion & Ovbiagele, 2012). In addition, students' adjustment and achievement are influenced by parent's involvement; parental involvement is strongly positively influenced by the students' level of attainment: the higher level of attainment, the more parents get involved. Parental

involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance.

## 2. Literature Review

The word “adjustment” means to fit, make suitable, arrange, modify, and harmonize corresponded. Social adjustment is an effort made by a person to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted. Psychologists use the term adjustment of varying conditions of social and interpersonal relation in the society. Social adjustment is the achievement of balance in social relationships usually aided by the appropriate application of social skills (Ray & Elliott, 2006).

In fact, one of the main purposes of education is to develop the students through providing proper conditions for them so to reach the highest levels of social adjustment. Researchers have always showed great interest to find out how factors affect social adjustment and progress and what role they play in this regard (Ybrandt, 2008). No doubt, a set of individual and environmental factors among many others influence the students’ social adjustment (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Undoubtedly, it is impossible to make research into all the affecting factors in one research study and to analyze all the related materials and variables. It seems social adjustment is a multi-dimensional variable, and it is affected by enormous factors.

Social adjustment as an important indication of psychology health is a topic attracting the attention of many psychologists. Social growth is the most important aspect of one’s development and it is acquired through the relationship with others especially with the parents, peers and the teachers, and it is the assessing of social growth related to the person’s adjustment with him/herself and others (Hartup & Rubin, 2013). On the other hand, living in a human society has stemmed from a set of values and expectations paradigm, and to meet one’s expectations and value frame work a person needs a sufficient amount of adjustment (yengimolki, Kalantarkousheh & Malekitabar, 2015). Without adjustment, the person isn’t able to meet many of his/her basic needs. If one is incompatible with the society properly, he will feel isolated.

Moreover, the national Commission on Education of 1993 believes that parents and other community members have valuable role to play within the public schools. Parents’ involvement does not happen in a vacuum. Parents’ involvement in the education of their children should highlight parents visit to the school, as much so that schools should have a coordinated relationship (Isaiah, 2013).

It is now widely accepted that parental involvement, in terms of interest and support for learning in the home, has a positive effects on a child’s achievement and adjustment (Hong & Ho, 2005).

Parent involvement has been described as the degree to which a parent dedicates resources of time and energy to his or her child in a given developmental or educational domain (Desiandes & Bertrand, 2005). In this study we focus on educational involvement, and use the term parent involvement to refer to a range of parental activities at school (e.g., participation in meetings, activities, and events) and in the home (e.g., keeping abreast of children’s educational experiences).

Parent involvement can be viewed as a form of social capital, contributing resources that support students' academic motivation and affirm the importance placed by their families on education (Hill & Craft, 2003).

In general, a review of related literature has revealed that parental involvement has been linked to a variety of learning outcomes, including social adjustment. Research on school adjustment also indicated that school adjustment relate to academic performance. Specifically, there is agreement among educators and researchers that when students are disengaged in school, they are likely to increase their inappropriate behavior whereas their academic success is decreased (Wang, Willett, & Eccles, 2011; Stewart, 2003). In addition, researchers showed that students, who involve highly in school, show increased attendance and fewer problematic behaviors (Martin & Marsh, 2006). On the contrary, students who less engage are expected to show inappropriate behavior, school failure, and dropout (Fall, & Roberts, 2012). Moreover, when students enter school, they encounter many important cognitive and behavioral challenges that prevent them to engage in school, so they gain low level of academic achievement (Archambault, Pagani & Fitzpatrick, 2013). To achieve good levels of academic performance, teachers are expected students to spend a great deal of effort during classroom activities, listening carefully, follow rules, participate, and work autonomously. As students vary in their ability to respond to such expectations; these expectations represent challenges for those students. Furthermore, parental involvement and social adjustment in schools as a solution for these challenges, generates more positive and spontaneous reciprocal from teachers, which can ultimately promote their achievement related outcomes. For many students, their engagement in school declines when enter adolescence (Fredriks & Eccles, 2002). There is much evidence that parental involvement in students learning during adolescence, as during other stages of development, facilitates students' engagement, adjustment and achievement (Gutman & Eccles, 2002). In spite of, most teachers believe that parents aren't working enough with their students at home, Delgado-Gaitan (2001) found that although 98% of teachers viewed parental involvement as critical. A research showed that 86% of the general public believes that support from parents is the most important way to improve the schools and lack of parental involvement is the biggest problem facing public school.

However, parental involvement and social adjustment has been the subject of extensive research for many years in Western countries; less has been done in non-Western countries. Jordan, in this respect, has a special position. Jordan spans the continent Asia and, therefore, has a socio cultural background differs from other nations. Also, previous research didn't study the relation among parental involvement and social adjustment together. Thus, the main purpose of the present study was to address these gaps and present a explaining the relations among parental involvement and social adjustment.

## **2.1 Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to examine the parents' level of involvement. The study also aims to determine if a relationship exists between parents' level of involvement and their children's social adjustment. More specifically, the present research addressed three questions:

1. What the parents' level of involvement?
2. Are there differences between students with high parental involvement and students with low parental involvement in social adjustment?
3. Are there relationship between parents' level of involvement and their students' social adjustment?

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

A sample of N=560 7th and 8th grade students (285 girls and 275 boys) participated in this study. The mean age of participants' was 13.89 years (SD=1.20). A sample represents 12 schools which were chosen randomly from 59 high schools in Amman Second Directorate of Education, Jordan at the academic year 2015/2016

#### **3.2 Parental Involvement Scale**

The Parental Involvement in Schooling Scale (PISS) was developed based on existing literature that describes the parent involvement in schooling (Chao, 2000; Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch & Darling, 1992). Following these researchers, parental involvement was assumed to assess the degree to which parents assist their child with homework, attend extracurricular activities, and help with class selection. A self-report scale which consists of 13 items with four-point Likert type (1= not at all true, 4 = very true) was developed. The scale was validated for language and time needed for completion with a group of 33 children aged 13 to 15 years old. These children were able to read and understand each item and all completed the scale within 10 minutes. Factor analysis exhibited a global factor model. All 13 items loaded over .54 in the unrotated factor matrix. The Cronbach's alpha for these 13 items was .86.

#### **3.3 Social Adjustment Questionnaire**

Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS): this questionnaire was designed by Sinha and Singh (1993) and standardized in Iran by Karami (2001). It has 60 questions and assesses the adjustment of high school students (13-18). Zero is assigned for who answered adjustment, and one for who answered maladjustment.

#### **3.4 Procedures**

Participants were given the scales in their classrooms during regular class time in the academic year 2015/2016. The first researcher explained the purpose of the study. They were then asked to complete the scales individually; all who were asked did so. Most students completed the scales in approximately 35 minutes.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1 Results Related to the Current Level of Parental Involvement**

The descriptive analysis for the thirteen items of the parental involvement scale. The median 2.0 was used as the cut- off criterion to set aside high level of parental involvement from low parental involvement. The data revealed an overall mean score of 2.43; indicating high parental involvement.

#### **4.2 Differences of Social Adjustment between Students with High Level of Parental Involvement and Students with Low Level of Parental Involvement**

To examine differences between students with high level of parental involvement and students with low level of parental involvement, a t-test was utilized to determine if

significant differences of students' social adjustment exist between students with high a high level of parental involvement and students with low level of parental involvement.

T-test as shown table 1 revealed that highly parental involvement (n=301) reported higher social adjustment (M=3.45, SD=.34) than low parental involvement (n= 259, M=2.32, SD=.45). This difference was found to be statistically significant,  $t(df=558)=3.42, p \leq .05$ .

**Table 1:** Means and Standard Deviations of social adjustment of High and Low parental involvement

Variable	Mean	SD	T	Df	p-value
High parental involvement	3.45	.34	3.42	558	.002*
Low parental involvement	2.32	.45			

\* $p \leq 0.05$

### 4.3 Relationship between Parental Involvement and their Student' Social Adjustment

As shown in table2, findings showed a significant relation between *parental involvement and social adjustment* ( $r=0.35, p \leq 0.05$ ). Specifically, high parental involvement was found to be significantly correlated with social adjustment ( $r=0.59, p \leq 0.05$ ). Also, there was no significant difference between social adjustment and low parental involvement.

**Table 2:** The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient between parental involvement and students' social adjustment

Variable	R	p-value
High parental involvement	.59*	0.00
Low parental involvement	.10	0.61
Total	.35*	0.002

\* $p \leq 0.05$

## 5. Discussion

The results concerning parental involvement were consistent with expectations that parental involvement affects students' social adjustment in school in many ways. First, when parents involve in school promotes better social adjustment and fewer problem behavior; their children conduct less disruptive behaviors, reduce levels of aggressive and absence from school, and compliance with school rules. Second, when parents involve in school, students' positive attitude about school often results in improved behavior in school and less suspension for disciplinary reasons. Third, parental involvement through participating in school activities, impact on the student's self-perception as a learner and on their motivation, self-esteem and educational aspirations. Finally, when parents remain involved usually make better transitions and are less likely to drop out of school. In general, when parents involved in school, their children become more responsible for their behaviors, and this affect their learning. This result consistent with previous studies (Hong & Ho, 2005; You & Sharkey, 2009) that indicated parental involvement encourages students' engagement in school activities and improves their learning. In addition, parent involvement in school affects their children's emotional engagement. This engagement affects students' feelings, interests, and attitudes

toward their school. These students are more likely to be fun and enjoy school time. Moreover, when parents visit children's schools, their child feels safe, and is more likely to engage in school.

The results of this study, suggest that when parents show interest in their children through praising their efforts, and contribute to community building within the school; they directly influence students' perception of self and nurture students' level of school engagement. In addition, when parents speak frequently with their children about school-related topics, they contribute to students' sense of identification with school, and their general perception of control. As control and identification with school are enhanced, these energizing internal mechanisms motivate students to be academically and behaviorally engaged in school activities. One of the critical influences of parental involvement is students' motivation to learn; specifically, their self-efficacy. Students who have high self-efficacy tend to spend more effort, attention, and participate in school activities. In addition, when parents monitor their children's homework, encourage them to participate in extracurricular activities.

The present findings suggest that focusing on parental involvement as a primary cause of higher social adjustment among Jordan children. Students who engage with their school are more likely to obey classroom rules and regulations.

In conclusion, Parental involvement in their children's learning, not only improves a child's morale, attitude, and academic achievement across all subject areas, but it also promotes better behavior and social adjustment. In all these ways, family involvement in education helps children to grow up to be productive, responsible members of the society.

Moreover, the results have some implications. First; parents could have to note that their involvement in schools of their children could bring a better social adjustment. Thus effort should be made by them to be positively disposed to schools of their children. Second; both the home and the school need to cooperate in making the students to be well adjusted as this could make academic performance. Third: effort at school program should focus on increasing parental involvement as a means to building a good social adjustment among students.

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