

Effects of Parent-Children Communication on Academic Performance of the Children: A Study of Southern Punjab, Pakistan

Muhammad Bilal Bhatti*
Noshina Saleem**
Hanan Ahmed Mian***

Abstract

This research was carried out to find the effects of parents-children communication on the academic performance of the children across Southern Punjab. This research investigated the relationship between parental-children communication, gender, and educational performance of the children. The researcher applied Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura (1977) and Emotional Security Theory (EST) by Cummings and Davies (1995). The researcher adopted quantitative research based on self-reported survey questionnaire from the school going students of 6th grade. The researcher used multistage sampling. Finally, the study was carried out on the sample of 1000 school children with a balanced sample of both male and female students. It was found that the unfriendly parent children communication effected the academic performance negatively and more than friendly parent children communication furthermore the male children were more affected by unfriendly parent-children communication than female children in context of their academic performance. The study concluded that academic performance of Southern Punjab children could be improved by increasing friendly parent-children communication and discouraging the unfriendly parent-children communication through awareness to the parents, however the socioeconomic status and low literacy levels of the parents remained one of the major factors which should be controlled.

Keywords: *education, parent-children communication, gender, children, southern Punjab*

* PhD Scholar, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
Email: erodedwoods@gmail.com

** Professor & Director, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Email: noshina_2001@yahoo.com

*** Professor, School of Media and Communication Studies, University of the Central Punjab, Lahore. Email: hanan_mian@hotmail.com

Introduction

The parent children communication plays a vital role in the development process of children. Hou, Kim, & Wang (2016) examined parental experiences on academic performance of adolescents during emerging adulthood and high school through parent-child and inter-parental relationship processes. The mass media as the partner of every family have mentored the parents towards better ways of bring up and helping in education to the children by their parents. But still, there are families where parents do not know the importance of parent child communication and its importance in their children's overall performance in general and academic in particular.

Education

The development, knowledge, and skill gained through study or training at college, school or university is education (Dictionary, M.W. 2014). The act of acquiring or imparting general knowledge, reasoning powers development, judgment, and preparing intellectually oneself or others for a mature life (Dictionary, 2016). The knowledge and understanding of something an individual acquired after experiencing and studying life lessons and particular subject matters subsequently (Dictionary, B. 2016). Dictionary, O. (2016) defined education as a process of giving or receiving systematic instructions, especially at university or a school. If we minus the education from the children; it will turn them into a useless crowd in the future putting the development of any country at the stake. The good education may lead towards good decisions in life particularly in the career selective perspective by the children afterwards. The "personal choice" factor had more impact on career choice by the students than their parents' profession (Saleem N. et al., 2014).

Communication

Communication plays a basic role in our lives and success of relationships is built upon the good communication skills (Burgoon, J. K., Floyd, K., & Guerrero, L. K., 2016). The communication takes place when information available at one place or person and we want to get it to another place or person (Miller, 1951). Baird (1977, p.352-361) says communication as the process of reception and transmission of symbols to elicit meanings in minds of participants on the basis of their common life experiences. The

family functions could not be operationalized without communication; it builds and maintains effective and fair relationship between parents and their children; and helps parents identifying, knowing and addressing the needs of the children and resulting into creation of effective and fair relationships (Runcan et al. 2012).

Interpersonal Communication

The communication which takes place between two persons is called interpersonal communication. The person to person communication through various systems that affect meanings; all communication parts and systems are interdependent to affect each other; and lastly all systems of communication contain noise, which could be psychological, physical, physiological or semantic called as interpersonal communication (Wood, 2015).

Verbal and nonverbal parent-children communication.

The parent-children communication is driven from inter-personal communication. The use of words for conveying and creating meanings is verbal communication (Abigail, Lane & John, 2016). Any gesture or action or using body to communicate information devoid of the use of speech as well as body language such as using hands, eyes facial expressions and the body positioning is non-verbal communication (Mukherji, & O'Dea 2000). During face to face interaction, the entire nonverbal channels also interplay. Appearance, body, distancing, face, voice, surroundings, touch and timing every one contribute to create the totality of communication (Burgoon et al. 2016). The parent-children communication occurs in form of both nonverbal and verbal communication.

Role of communication in interactions

The communication plays a middle role in the interactions of human beings. Relations between parents and children represent some significant communication interactions, it involves more than just simple expression which helps parents to intelligible their children both in terms of specific and general contents of communication (Runcan et al. 2012). The verbal part of communication contributes very less than other two parts in the process of communication. The verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal parts of a communication play their requisite parts in an entire communication process. Communication is done on the levels of logical, nonverbal and paraverbal. The logical level of communication is related words with only 7% of total

communication whereas the paraverbal level (speed of speech, tone, volume) occurs 38% and rest is comprised of non-verbal level (clothing, facial expression, movement, position etc.) of communication spanning on 55% of the total communication process (Pracsiu, 2008).

Southern Punjab

The 32% of 93 million population of the Punjab province lives in the southern region called Southern Punjab (Zia, 2012). It has three divisions, i.e. Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan; 11 districts and 40 tehsils. Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan are the lowest literacy rate regions having 30% and 40% subsequently (Iftikhar & Mahmood, 2017). As the literacy rate is low, the population per school is low as well. The Bahawalnagar and Layyah districts are lowest at per school population whereas district Muzaffargarh has the highest one (Iftikhar & Mahmood, 2017).

Literature Review

The researcher carried out literature review to build his research work on the previously done studies in the relevant area. The literature review focused upon parent child interactions, parents' emotional responsiveness, child maltreatments and their effects on academic performance. Maltreated children could not perform well at school and their personality was also affected. Such children received more discipline referrals and suspensions (Eckenrode, Laird, & Doris, 1993). Furthermore, such children were more dependent upon their teachers (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1992). Such children performed worst on their standardized test and achieved fewer grades and mostly repeated the grades (Barahal, Waterman, & Martin, 1981). This was not only the case; even maltreated children felt insecurity and less interest in education. Those who were maltreated by the parents, felt insecure going school and less confident. The education and development of children go hand in hand. McLanahan and Astone (1991) integrated children development ideas to sociological models related to educational attainments. They monitored the relationships between children achievements at school and family structure. They found children living with single or stepparents got less encouragement and help in school work in contrast to the children living with both natural parents. They found that parent involvement effects positively on the children's achievements at their schools. Furthermore, those parents who gave due time, monitored and helped them in their education resulted into higher

grades. They got skills to enhance their achievements through parents' involvement in their education. The involvement of parents' in their children's education increased the educational outcomes positively. The friendly or unfriendly relationship of parents affected the children's education. Hou, Kim, & Wang (2016) examined academic performance during high school and the emerging adulthood through parent-child and inter-parental relationship processes. The conflicts in both relationships positively related to adolescents' lower academic performance and continued till emergence of adulthood. Their performance at school was affected adversely of particularly those with low socio-economic status. The maltreated children with low socioeconomic status found at high risk of maladjustment (Egeland & Abery, 1991). The maltreated children were less socially competent and less accepted by their peers because they externalized behaviors and had higher disturbance level in behaviors (Cicchetti & Cohen, 2006). Williams & Sui-Chu (1996) introduced four dimensions of the parental involvement. The literature revealed that parent-children relationships had deep effects on educational performance of the children. Conclusively the parents, who were involved keenly in the academic activities of their children, helped and monitored them, resulted into higher academic performance at schools. So, parents' involvement in the academic activities of the children was found an affective variable. Interestingly a study revealed that low socioeconomic status affected less the academic performance than high and the average socioeconomic status (Farooq et al., 2011). Maltreated children avoided going to school because they felt insecure over there. They remained less confident, social and achieved less educational grades as well. Therefore, the maltreatment of children by their parents was found more affecting variable than less socioeconomic status. Hence being critical and acknowledging the children both variables found most affecting. Making grounds on reviewed literature, the researcher found that parents' involvement in the academic activities of the children, maltreatment of the children by their parents, acknowledging the children and criticizing the children were found most effected variables in this regard. Whereas low socioeconomic status was found as not most affecting variable in this debate. Finally, the research focused on parent-children communication variable because the above mentioned all most affecting variables might be found connected through parent-children communication to study academic performance.

Significance of Study

The study would help raising awareness and understanding about the importance and sensitivity of parent-children communication followed by their profound effects on children educational performance and will ultimately help in reduction of unfriendly parent-children communication and increase in educational performance of children of Southern Punjab, Pakistan.

Research Problem

The incidents of violent behavior by male family members against children and women found common in Southern Punjab. The violence against female spouse and marital conflicts were very common. The ratio of divorce remained highest over there. There was very less school going rate and children were obliged to involve into child labor, irrigation and local businesses instead of going to school. Foregone in view, it was most compelling for the researcher to study the effects of parent children communication on the children academic performance from Southern Punjab region.

Study Objectives

1. To examine the effects of parent-children communication on the children education.
2. To study the difference of effects of parent-children communication on the children education based upon their gender.

Hypotheses

1. Children with friendly parent-children communication achieve high educational grades than children with unfriendly parent-children communication.
2. Female children with unfriendly parent-children communication achieve high educational grades than male children with unfriendly parent-children communication.

Methodology

The researcher applied following methodology to systematically study the research problem.

Variables

Following variables were considered in research and divided into Independent variables and in Dependent variables.

Construct: Parent-Children Communication

The Parent-Children Communication is a broad concept/construct which covers the phenomenon of communication between parents and their children.

Independent Variables

The researcher further sub-divided the construct (parent children communication) into two main variables for the ease of research process.

Friendly parent children communication

The verbal and nonverbal communication with no signs of aggression and violence, helping in studies, bringing gifts for children, talking softly and playing with them, listening their problems, taking care of their needs by parents and feelings sharing by children with their parents were considered as friendly parent children communication.

Unfriendly parent children communication

The communication having violence and aggression; least talking with children, beating, imposing decisions upon them, becoming angry on demands by the children, ignoring and blaming them for the problems, considering them less important than their other siblings in addition to children's feeling of being insulted by their parents while interacting was considered unfriendly parent children communication.

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

The educational grades achieved by the children in their last terminal (5th grade) exam were considered to measure the academic performance as dependent variable of the study.

Data Collection Tool Preparation and Testing

The researcher developed a self-reported survey questionnaire to measure Friendly & Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication. The initially pilot study on a sample of 100 children was carried out to assess the internal

Population of the Study

The children of Southern Punjab were study population whereas sample was comprised of 6th grade students of government schools.

Sampling and Data Collection

The multistage sampling was applied. Firstly, Southern Punjab was divided into 40 clusters. On second stage, a sample comprised of 10 clusters was taken through simple random sampling. After formulating the complete sampling frame of government schools (government elementary schools, government high schools, and government higher secondary schools) within 10 selected clusters, the researcher had 1405 schools in the sampling frame, the sample of 40 schools were taken through simple random sampling without replacement by consulting the table of random numbers at third stage. At fourth stage the researcher took a sample of 6th grade 30 students from each selected school in the sample by applying simple random sampling method. Finally, the researcher considered a sample of 1000 school going children after extracting the respondents' mortality rate from entire sample of 1200. It would be pertinent mentioning that only mainstream Government schools were included into the sampling frame whereas Danish schools and private schools were not added due to the time constraints.

Data Analysis

The researcher used SPSS version-26 for the systematic analysis and interpretation of the data into results according to the developed codebook.

Results

Table 1
Gender of children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	501	50.1	50.1	50.1
	Female	499	49.9	49.9	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 demonstrated the children on the base of gender, which showed that there were 50.1 % male children and 49.9 % were female children who filled the questionnaire.

Table 2
Age of children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10-12 years	806	80.6	80.6	80.6
	More than 12 years	194	19.4	19.4	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 illustrated the age of the children, in which 80.6% were of 10-12 years old while 19.4% of the children were aged more than 12 years.

Table 3
Monthly family income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25000 or less	733	73.3	73.3	73.3
	More than 25000	267	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 showed the income of the children's family, in which 73.3% families' income was 25000 or less than it while the remaining 26.7% family income was more than 25000 in a month.

Table 4
Educational grades achieved in previous exam

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 40%	7	.7	.7	.7
	From 40% to below 50%	56	5.6	5.6	6.3
	From 50% to below 60%	169	16.9	16.9	23.2
	From 60% to below 70%	304	30.4	30.4	53.6
	From 70% to below 80%	246	24.6	24.6	78.2
	80% and above	218	21.8	21.8	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 showed that .7% of the children secured E grade, 5.6% D grade, 16.9% C grade, 30.4% B grade, 24.6% A grade and 21.8% A+ grades in their study.

Table 5
Correlations

			Educational Grades	Friendly Parent-Children Communication
Spearman's rho	Educational Grades	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.139**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	1000	1000
	Friendly Parent-Children Communication	Correlation Coefficient	.139**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	1000	1000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test found significant between friendly parent-children communication and educational grades of the children with a positive relationship (Sig 2-tailed = .14). The results explained that 14% of the variation about the positivity towards achievement of educational grades by children on the basis of friendly parent-children communication (Coefficient = .14).

Table 6
Correlations

			Educational Grades	Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication
Spearman's rho	Educational Grades	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.230**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	1000	1000
	Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication	Correlation Coefficient	-.230**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	1000	1000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test found significant between unfriendly parent-children communication and educational grades of the children with a negative relationship (Sig 2-tailed = -.23). The results explained that 23% of the variation about the negativity towards achievement of educational grades by children on the basis of unfriendly parent-children communication (Coefficient = -.23).

Table 7
Correlations

		Gender of the student		Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication	Educational Grades
Spearman's rho	Male	Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.244**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
			N	501	501
		Educational Grades	Correlation Coefficient	-.244**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
			N	501	501
Female	Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication	Unfriendly Parent-Children Communication	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.104*
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.020
			N	499	499
		Educational Grades	Correlation Coefficient	-.104*	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.
			N	499	499

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test found significant between unfriendly parent-children communication and educational grades of the male children with a negative relationship (Sig 2-tailed = -.24). The results explained that 24% of the variation about the negativity towards achievement of educational grades by the male children on the basis of unfriendly parent-children communication (Coefficient = -.24). The correlation test further found significant between unfriendly parent-children communication and educational grades of the female children with a negative relationship (Sig 2-tailed = -.10). The results explained that 10% of the variation about the negativity towards achievement of educational grades by male children on the basis of unfriendly parent-children communication (Coefficient = -.10).

Discussions

The study revealed a positive but negligible relationship between friendly parent-children communication and high educational grades secured by the children. It was found that by increasing the friendly parent-children communication; the academic performance of their children would not increase. It was an interesting outcome that the friendly parent children communication would not affect the academic performance, because multiple other factorial variables were influencing their life. It would not be negated that friendly parent children communication exist over there but because of low literacy level less socioeconomic status the academic activities could not be prioritized with respect to child labor in city areas and working in the irrigation in village lands. The low socioeconomic status could be considered as one of the major contributing factors such as table. 3 displayed that 73.3% of the sample had less than RS 25000 as their monthly income. One more study conducted in 2015 revealed that only 10% population of Southern Punjab region earned RS20,000 monthly incomes whereas 69.0% remained up to RS10,000 per month (Bhutta, et.al, 2015). Most of the parents indulged their children into child labor due to literacy rate in them and the low-income level. In Southern Punjab had 27% of labor force based upon children, who worked in agro fields and the other areas (NRSP., 2018). Whereas in comparison to the effects of friendly parent children communication; unfriendly parent children communication had negative and weak relationship with achievement of educational grades. It revealed that increase in unfriendly parent children communication would have adverse and negative effects on the academic performance. The children who witnessed marital violence were at the increased risk of poor performance at schools (Bhutta, et al, 2015). So, first alternate hypothesis was accepted on the basis of the study results because the unfriendly parent children communication effected the academic performance negatively and more than friendly parent children communication. Furthermore, the study showed that unfriendly parent children communication affected negatively to academic performance of both genders, but in case of male students its relationship remained weak whereas in case of female students remained negligible with the academic performance. It revealed that the effect of unfriendly parent-

children communication was found less on female children in achieving high educational grades than on the male children of the region. So, on the basis of study results second alternate hypothesis was accepted as well. The behavior of inaccessible parents and pre divorced familial stress affected the boys' behavior more than of girls (Block & Gjerde 1986).

Conclusions

The study concluded that academic performance of Southern Punjab children can be improved by increasing friendly parent-children communication and discouraging the unfriendly parent-children communication. It was also concluded that female children were less affected by unfriendly parent-children communication than male children in context of their academic performance.

Limitations

The emotional support systems, resilience factors and degree of maltreatment were not covered in this research due to the time constraints.

References

- Astone, N. M., & McLanahan, S. S. (1991). Family structure, parental practices and high school completion. *American Sociological Review*, 309–320.
- Baird, J. E. (1977). *The dynamics of organizational communication*. Harpercollins.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-hall.
- Bandura, A., (1974). *Social learning theory*. The University of Michigan, Prentice Hall, 247.
- Barahal, R. M., Waterman, J., & Martin, H. P. (1981). The social cognitive development of abused children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 49(4), 508.
- Bhutta, R. N., Warich, I. A., Bhutta, A., Bhutta, N. I., & Ali, M. (2015). Dynamics of Watta Marriages in Rural Areas of Southern Punjab Pakistan. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(12), 166.
- Block, J. H., Block, J., & Gjerde, P. F. (1986). The personality of children prior to divorce: A prospective study. *Child development*, 827-840.
- Burgoon, J. K., Guerrero, L. K., & Floyd, K. (2016). *Nonverbal communication*. Routledge.
- Cicchetti, D., & Cohen, D. J. (2006). *Developmental psychopathology. volume 3: risk, disorder and adaptation* (pp. 129-201). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (1995). The impact of parents on their children: An emotional security perspective. *Annals of child development*, 10, 167–208.
- Dictionary, B. (2016). Education. Retrieved from *Business Dictionary*: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/education.html>

- Dictionary, O. (2016). Education. Retrieved from *Oxford English Dictionaries*: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/education>
- Dictionary. (2016). Education. Retrieved from Dictionary: <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/education>
- Eckenrode, J., Laird, M., & Doris, J. (1993). School performance and disciplinary problems among abused and neglected children. *Developmental Psychology*, 29(1), 53.
- Egeland, B., & Abery, B. (1991). A longitudinal study of high-risk children: educational outcomes. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 38(3), 271–287.
- Farooq, M. S., Chaudhry, A. H., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. (2011). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: a case of secondary school level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, 7(2), 1–14.
- Hou, Y., Kim, S. Y., & Wang, Y. (2016). Parental acculturative stressors and adolescent adjustment through interparental and parent–child relationships in Chinese American families. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(7), 1466–1481.
- Iftikhar, S., & Mahmood, H. Z. (2017). Human capital development and food security nexus: An empirical appraisal from districts of Punjab province. *Journal of Food and Drug Research*, 1(1).
- Lane, S. D., Abigail, R. A., & John, G. (2016). *Communication in a Civil Society*. Routledge, p-384.
- Lynch, M., & Cicchetti, D. (1992). Maltreated children's reports of relatedness to their teachers. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 1992(57), 81-107.
- Miller, G. A. (1951). *Language and Communication*. McGraw Hill. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11135-000>.
- Mukherji, P., & O'Dea, T. (2000). *Understanding Children's Language and Literacy*. Nelson Thornes.

- NRSP. (2018). Child labor in cotton seed farming: A rapid assessment in district Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan and Rajanpur. Available on: nrsp.org.pk/Publications/Baseline-Studies/Child-Labor-in-Cotton-Seed-Farming-Punjab.pdf
- Pracsiu, P. L. (2008). Rolul și locul comunicării în activitatea managerială. *Revista de Cercetare și Intervenție Socială*, 21, 58–72.
- Runcan, P. L., Constantineanu, C., Ielics, B., & Popa, D. (2012). The role of communication in the parent-child interaction. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 904–908.
- Saleem, N., Hanan, M. A., Saleem, I., & Shamshad, R. M. (2014). Career Selection: Role of Parent's Profession, Mass Media and Personal Choice. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 36(2), 25–37.
- Sui-Chu, E. H., & Willms, J. D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of education*, 126–141.
- Webster, M. (2014). An encyclopedia Britannica company. *electronic source*] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/education>.
- Wood, J. T. (2015). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters*. Cengage Learning: Australia.
- Zia, S. (2012, may 06). South Punjab: larger in size, less in population. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://nation.com.pk/national/06-May-2012/south-punjab-larger-in-size-less-in-population>.

Citation of this Article:

Bhatti, M. B., Saleem, N., & Mian, H. A. (2021). Effect of parent-children communication on academic performance of the children: A study of southern Punjab, Pakistan. *Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education*, 5 (1), 21–37.