
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Building Foundations: Exploring The Impact of Parent Participation on the Academic Growth and Social Skills of First Grade Learners

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| ABSTRACT

The present research assessed the relationship between parental participation and academic and social skills of the learners. Using a descriptive-correlational design, the study involved 120 parent respondents. Data were collected through surveys on perceived parental involvement, academic and social skills of the grade one learners. Descriptive statistics were employed for the sociodemographic profile, while Pearson correlation tested relationships among the variables. Findings showed that most parents were from low-income households, with high school education as their highest attainment, and majority were unemployed mothers. Parents frequently demonstrated supportive and responsive behaviors, although structured practices and school volunteering were less evident. Learners exhibited strengths in curiosity, attentiveness, and following rules, but needed further support in independent reading, math fluency, and conflict resolution. Correlation results revealed that direct parental involvement significantly influenced academic growth, while parental involvement significantly contributed to the learners' emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. The study concludes that concrete parental actions at home and learners' social skills are key predictors of early academic success. It recommends structured, low-cost parental support initiatives, classroom-based socio-emotional learning routines, and strengthened school-home partnerships consistent with the ARAL Program Act and K-12 Law.

| KEYWORDS

Parental Participation, Academic Growth, Social Skills, Grade One Learners, Autonomy Support, Parental Involvement, Emotional Regulation

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 25 December 2026

PUBLISHED: 02 January 2026

DOI: 10.32996/jlds.2026.6.1.1

Introduction

Parental participation in a child's education has long been considered a crucial factor in enhancing academic outcomes, but recent findings from 2020 to 2025 show an even stronger emphasis on early childhood engagement. Contemporary research suggests that parental involvement during foundational years, particularly in Grade 1, significantly affects not only academic achievement but also behavioral and socio-emotional development (Wang et al., 2021). Parents who are involved in school-related activities, monitor homework, or communicate with teachers help bridge the gap between home and school, fostering consistency in children's learning environments (McWayne & Melzi, 2020). These interactions support learners in building routines, motivation, and confidence as they navigate early academic challenges. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, increased parental involvement became necessary due to remote learning, highlighting its impact on learning continuity and resilience (Dong et al., 2020; Garbe et al., 2020). This evolving educational landscape calls for more contextualized examinations of how parental participation manifests and influences children's school experiences, particularly at the start of formal education.

Parental participation is multifaceted and may be experienced by children in various forms such as autonomy support, control, structure, responsiveness, and involvement. Recent studies differentiate these dimensions and examine how each uniquely affects child outcomes. Autonomy-supportive parenting, which encourages decision-making and problem-solving, is positively associated with intrinsic motivation and academic persistence in young learners (Jungert et al., 2021). On the other hand, controlling parental behaviors such as excessive supervision or pressure may diminish motivation and hinder emotional regulation (Ma et al., 2022). Structural parenting, which includes providing consistent routines and expectations, has been shown to promote competence and independence in early school years (Lucassen et al., 2021). Responsiveness, or the emotional availability of the parent, is also essential for children's self-esteem and social competence (Coln et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021). Meanwhile, general involvement such as participating in school meetings, checking homework, or encouraging reading at home remains a key predictor of early academic success (Muschkin et al., 2022). Understanding these components provides a comprehensive view of how parenting styles influence early learners.

Parents are often the primary observers of their children's academic progress, particularly in the early stages of formal education. Their perceptions shape the emotional and academic support they provide at home and influence the extent to which they engage with the school. Research indicates that parental beliefs about their children's academic abilities are closely linked with children's actual performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy (Shin et al., 2022). In the Grade 1 context, where children begin structured learning, parents play a key role in reinforcing lessons and promoting cognitive development (Bruschi et al., 2022; Hecht & Weinberg, 2023). Studies also suggest that parents who perceive strong academic growth are more likely to maintain active involvement, while those who detect learning difficulties may either reduce involvement or shift their strategies to seek additional help (Markussen-Brown & Vesely, 2023). These perceptions are influenced by both formal assessments (e.g., teacher feedback) and informal observations (e.g., homework ease, reading fluency). Therefore, capturing parental insights provides a holistic understanding of student learning experiences in early education.

Parental perceptions extend beyond academics into the social domain, influencing how they guide their children's interpersonal development. Social skills such as cooperation, communication, and emotional regulation are essential for school adjustment and are highly shaped by home experiences (Puranik et al., 2021). In recent studies, parents who perceived their children as socially adept were more likely to support peer interactions, promote group activities, and encourage collaborative behaviors (Leerkes et al., 2022). On the contrary, concerns about poor social behavior, such as aggression or withdrawal, often result in closer supervision or intervention at home (Frick et al., 2020; Roben et al., 2020). These parental insights often complement teacher observations and are vital in early detection of socio-emotional difficulties. Furthermore, social skills are found to be predictive of future academic performance, making it essential to understand how parents perceive and support this domain (Maldonado-Carreño et al., 2021). As social competencies become increasingly recognized as central to 21st-century learning, analyzing parental views on their children's social development adds an important dimension to educational research.

Despite the growing evidence of parental involvement's importance, gaps remain in understanding its nuances within specific cultural and socio-economic contexts, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Philippines. Most existing studies are concentrated in Western contexts, which may not reflect the parenting styles, school structures, and social expectations present in Philippine communities (Bernardo et al., 2022). Furthermore, recent research emphasizes the need to differentiate types of parental engagement rather than treating it as a single construct. Another gap lies in the underrepresentation of parental voices most data on children's development come from educators or standardized tests, overlooking the perspectives of parents who play an integral daily role. With the shift toward inclusive and participatory education, understanding how parents interpret and contribute to their children's development is essential. This localized and perception-based approach is necessary to design effective educational interventions that reflect both home and school realities.

This study is situated in Adlaon Integrated School and Kang-atis Elementary School two public institutions in the Philippines that cater to diverse and primarily rural communities. These schools represent a critical intersection of home and school collaboration, where parental involvement is often influenced by economic, cultural, and logistical factors. Given the limited research on how parents in such communities perceive and participate in their children's academic and social development, this study seeks to fill that gap. Using parent-reported data, the research aims to assess the extent and manner of parental participation autonomy supportive, controlling, structured, responsive, and involved and examine its correlation with learners perceived academic growth and social skills. Previous research has shown that community-specific studies are more effective in informing policy and practice than generalized models. Thus, findings from this study may guide local education stakeholders in enhancing school-family partnerships, adapting parental engagement programs, and ultimately improving early learning outcomes in these institutions.

Literature review

Parental participation in education is a multifaceted construct that has been consistently linked to children's academic success, especially during the early years of formal schooling. Recent studies emphasize that parental involvement ranging from monitoring homework to maintaining communication with teachers positively influences early literacy and numeracy skills (Pomerantz et al., 2021). However, the type and quality of involvement matter significantly. Autonomy-supportive parenting, which encourages decision-making and problem-solving, has been found to foster intrinsic motivation and higher academic persistence among young learners (Grolnick et al., 2020). Conversely, overly controlling behaviors such as excessive monitoring or academic pressure can hinder children's academic engagement and lead to anxiety or reduced self-confidence (Soenens et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2022). Structured parenting, characterized by clear rules and expectations, has also shown positive links to academic competence by promoting goal-oriented behavior and time management (Lucassen et al., 2021). Despite these findings, many studies highlight the importance of considering the cultural and socio-economic context in which parental involvement occurs, as the effectiveness of these practices can vary widely across settings (McWayne & Melzi, 2020).

Beyond academic outcomes, the role of parental participation in shaping children's social skills has gained increasing attention in recent years. Social skills including cooperation, emotional regulation, and communication are foundational for both classroom functioning and long-term development. Research reveals that responsive parenting, characterized by warmth and sensitivity, significantly supports the development of these skills, especially in early childhood (Boele et al., 2020). Parental perceptions of their children's social behavior also influence how they interact with them and guide social development. For instance, parents who recognize their child's prosocial tendencies may reinforce such behaviors through positive feedback or by facilitating peer interactions (Peterson et al., 2021; Walker et al., 2022). In contrast, concerns over behavioral problems may prompt increased monitoring or disciplinary actions. These dynamics underscore the complex interplay between parental beliefs, involvement style, and children's social outcomes. Moreover, localized studies suggest that cultural norms and parental expectations significantly shape how social competencies are nurtured at home and interpreted within school environments (Cuevas & Geronimo, 2021). This reinforces the need for context-specific research particularly in underexplored settings such as rural Philippine schools to better understand how these factors converge in early learner development.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design, which was appropriate for examining the relationship between parental participation and the perceived academic growth and social skills of Grade One learners in Adlaon Integrated School and Kang-atis Elementary School. This design allowed the researchers to gather data in a natural setting without manipulation, aligning with the objective of describing existing conditions and determining the degree of relationship between variables (Naungayan et al., 2024). The study utilized the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model to guide the research flow, from variable identification to the development of an enhancement plan based on the findings. The respondents were 120 parents of Grade One learners selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-made survey instrument that consisted of three parts: (1) the Manner of Parental Participation Scale, which assessed autonomy support, control, structure, responsiveness, and involvement; (2) a questionnaire measuring learners' academic growth through indicators of literacy and numeracy; and (3) a social skills questionnaire adapted from Kadesjo et al. (2017), covering emotional regulation, self-concept, social interaction, and prosocial behavior. All items used a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The instruments were content-validated by experts and pilot-tested for reliability with Grade One teachers. Data were gathered through formal orientation sessions, and ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality were strictly observed. Statistical tools used included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson r to determine the relationship between parental participation and learners' academic and social outcomes.

Results

Table 1 presents the manner of parental participation across five dimensions, showing an overall aggregate (WM) of 3.46, which corresponds to the verbal interpretation "Often." This indicates that parents of Grade One learners in Adlaon Integrated School and Kang-atis Elementary School frequently participate in their children's academic life. Among the five domains, Responsiveness was the highest-rated, with parents indicating they talk regularly with their children about school (WM) of 4.27 and show interest in their academic efforts (WM) of 4.26, both interpreted as "Always." These results suggest that parents are emotionally present and provide consistent encouragement in relation to their children's school experiences.

Table 1. Manner of Parental participation Scale

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
Autonomy Supportive Involvement			
1	I encourage my child to try solving academic tasks on their own before helping	4.03	Often
2	I listen to my child's opinions when we talk about schoolwork.	4.28	Often
3	I give my child the freedom to choose how or when to do their homework	3.51	Often
4	I support my child's learning interests even outside school activities	3.47	Often
5	I help only when my child asks or when truly needed.	3.53	Often
Controlling Involvement			
6	I pressure my child to perform well to avoid failure or punishment.	1.99	Rarely
7	I offer rewards only when my child gets high scores.	2.47	Rarely
8	I insist my child follow my exact steps when doing school tasks.	2.50	Rarely
9	I frequently compare my child's performance with others.	1.59	Never
10	I become upset when my child doesn't meet my academic expectations.	1.67	Never
Structure			
11	I provide a consistent routine for study and homework.	3.36	Sometimes
12	I explain clearly what is expected in school related tasks.	3.80	Often
13	I set realistic and age-appropriate goals for my child's schoolwork.	3.18	Sometimes
14	I help my child break down complex tasks into manageable steps.	3.85	Often
15	I offer guidance when my child seems confused about schoolwork.	4.20	Often
Responsiveness			
16	I talk to my child regularly about what happens in school.	4.27	Always
17	I show interest in my child's academic efforts and struggles	4.26	Always
18	I celebrate my child's small achievements in school.	3.63	Often
19	I comfort my child when school becomes overwhelming.	3.94	Often
20	I enjoy spending time with my child when we study together.	4.13	Often
Involvement			
21	I help my child with homework regularly	3.88	Often
22	I talk with my child about school topics.	4.02	Often
23	I read with my child at home.	3.90	Often
24	I attend parent teacher conferences.	3.73	Often
25	I volunteer at school when possible.	3.03	Sometimes
26	I participate in school events or activities	3.64	Often
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.46	Often
Standard Deviation		0.79	

The Autonomy Supportive Involvement domain also scored highly, especially in listening to children's opinions about schoolwork (WM) of 4.28 and encouraging independent problem-solving before offering help (WM) of 4.03. This indicates that many parents foster autonomy and self-regulation in learning. Conversely, Controlling Involvement received the lowest ratings, with statements like comparing a child's performance with others (WM) of 1.59 and showing disappointment when expectations are not met (WM) of 1.67 being rated as "Never." The Structure domain showed variability, with setting realistic goals rated "Sometimes" (WM) of 3.18 and offering guidance when confused rated "Often" (WM) of 4.20. Lastly, in the Involvement domain, home-based activities such as helping with homework were frequent (WM) of 3.88, while school-based activities like volunteering were less common (WM) of 3.03. These findings emphasize strong emotional and autonomy-supportive parenting, with areas for growth in structured and school-based involvement.

Table 2. Grade One Learners' Level of Academic growth

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	My child can read simple words and short sentences independently	3.36	Sometimes
2	My child recognizes and writes the letters of the alphabet correctly.	3.96	Often
3	My child recognizes and writes the letters of the alphabet correctly.	3.83	Often
4	My child demonstrates understanding of basic addition and subtraction.	3.48	Often
5	My child can follow multi step instructions related to academic tasks.	3.46	Often

6	My child completes assignments and homework with minimal supervision.	3.68	Often
7	My child shows interest and curiosity in learning new academic concepts.	4.19	Often
8	My child listens attentively during lessons and academic activities.	4.00	Often
9	My child can retell or explain stories or lessons in their own words.	3.60	Often
10	My child demonstrates age-appropriate writing skills.	3.48	Often
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.70	Often
Standard Deviation		0.28	

Table 2 presents the parents' perceptions of their Grade One children's academic growth, showing an overall aggregate (WM) of 3.70, interpreted as "Often." This indicates that parents generally observe frequent demonstrations of age-appropriate academic skills among their children. Notably, the highest-rated item was "My child shows interest and curiosity in learning new academic concepts" with a (WM) of 4.19, suggesting that learners are highly engaged and motivated in exploring new ideas. This is closely followed by the child's ability to listen attentively during lessons (WM) of 4.00, reflecting strong foundational attention and focus. Other academic behaviors were also perceived as frequently observed. These include completing homework with minimal supervision (WM) of 3.68, understanding basic math operations (WM) of 3.48, and retelling stories in their own words (WM) of 3.60. all of which are essential markers of early literacy and numeracy. The ability to recognize and write letters received strong ratings as well, with (WM) of 3.96 and (WM) of 3.83, respectively. However, the lowest score was for reading simple words and sentences independently (WM) of 3.36, rated as "Sometimes." This suggests that while children are progressing academically, independent reading skills may still be developing. The standard deviation of 0.28 indicates a relatively consistent pattern of responses among parents. Overall, the findings suggest that most learners are demonstrating expected academic behaviors and interests at a frequent level, with independent reading as a key area for further support.

Table 3. Perceived Social skills of Grade One Learners

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
Emotional Regulation			
1	The child expresses emotions in appropriate ways.	3.75	Often
2	The child recovers quickly when upset or frustrated.	3.73	Often
3	The child remains calm when routines change.	3.61	Often
4	The child seeks help or comfort from adults when distressed.	3.81	Often
5	The child can name or describe their feelings.	4.02	Often
Self-Concept and Confidence			
6	The child believes they can accomplish school tasks.	3.83	Often
7	The child takes pride in their work and achievements.	3.62	Often
8	The child shows willingness to try new things or answer questions.	3.98	Often
9	The child bounces back after making mistakes	3.46	Often
10	The child sees themselves as a good friend and classmate.	4.02	Often
Social Interaction			
11	The child plays cooperatively with classmates.	4.08	Often
12	The child shares, takes turns, and follows group rules.	3.89	Often
13	The child resolves conflicts without much adult help	3.33	Sometimes
14	The child listens when others speak.	3.63	Often
15	The child initiates and maintains friendships.	4.03	Often
Moral and Prosocial Behavior			
16	The child shows empathy to those who are sad or hurt.	4.15	Often
17	The child understands right from wrong.	4.16	Often
18	The child apologizes or takes responsibility for misbehavior.	4.08	Often
19	The child helps classmates or family even without being asked.	3.95	Often
20	The child respects adults and follows classroom rules.	4.24	Often
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.87	Often
Standard Deviation		0.25	

Table 3 presents parents' perceptions of their Grade One children's social skills across four domains: emotional regulation, self-

concept and confidence, social interaction, and moral and prosocial behavior. The results show an aggregate (WM) of 3.87, interpreted as "Often," indicating that the children frequently demonstrate key social competencies expected at their developmental level. Among the domains, Moral and Prosocial Behavior received the highest ratings. Notable items include "The child respects adults and follows classroom rules" (WM) of 4.24 and "The child understands right from wrong" (WM) of 4.16, both of which suggest a strong foundation in character development and value formation. Emotional Regulation was also highly rated, particularly the child's ability to name or describe their feelings (WM) of 4.02 and seek help from adults when distressed (WM) of 3.81. These findings indicate that children are capable of managing emotions appropriately. In terms of Self-Concept and Confidence, high scores were seen in willingness to try new things (WM) of 3.98 and belief in their ability to accomplish school tasks (WM) of 3.83, reflecting a positive self-view and growth mindset. Social Interaction showed slightly more variability, with most items rated "Often". This may indicate that peer conflict resolution is an area still developing at this age. Overall, the standard deviation of 0.25 shows a strong consensus among parents regarding their children's social behaviors. These results suggest well-rounded social development, with minor areas needing further support, particularly in independent conflict resolution.

Table 4. Test of relationship between the Level of Parental participation and the Learners' Level of Academic growth

Variables	r value	Strength of Correlation	p value	Decision	Remarks
Autonomy Support	.006	Negligible Positive	.952	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Controlling Involvement	-.085	Negligible Negative	.319	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Structure	.149	Weak Positive	.172	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Responsiveness	.133	Weak Positive	.294	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Involvement	.277	Moderate Positive	.017	Reject Ho	Significant

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two tailed)

Table 4 shows that only the Involvement dimension of parental participation had a significant moderate positive correlation with learners' academic growth ($r = .277$, $p = .017$), indicating that active participation in home- and school-based activities supports academic success. Other dimensions, Autonomy Support, Controlling Involvement, Structure, and Responsiveness showed no significant correlation, suggesting limited impact on academic outcomes. These results emphasize that direct parental involvement is more influential than parenting style or emotional support in enhancing Grade One learners' academic performance.

Table 5. Test of relationship between the Learners' Level of Social skills and Level of Parental participation

Variables	r value	Strength of Correlation	p value	Decision	Remarks
Emotional Regulation	.238	Weak Positive	.029	Reject Ho	Significant
Self-Concept and Confidence	.161	Weak Positive	.111	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Social Interaction	.103	Weak Positive	.253	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Moral and Prosocial Behavior	.212	Weak Positive	.024	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two tailed)

Table 5 shows that Emotional Regulation ($r = .238$, $p = .029$) and Moral and Prosocial Behavior ($r = .212$, $p = .024$) have significant weak positive correlations with parental participation, indicating that increased parental involvement supports better emotional control and moral behavior in Grade One learners. However, Self-Concept and Confidence and Social Interaction did not show significant correlations, suggesting limited influence from parental participation. These results highlight the importance of parental support in developing emotional and moral aspects of children's social skills.

Discussion

The findings of this study collectively underscore the meaningful role that parental participation plays in shaping the academic and social development of Grade One learners in Adlaon Integrated School and Kang-atis Elementary School. Based on the results, parents were found to frequently participate in their children's education, with an aggregate. The highest-rated dimension was Responsiveness, indicating that parents are emotionally supportive and attentive to their children's educational experiences. However, dimensions such as Structure and Controlling Involvement were either moderate or low, suggesting room for improvement in establishing consistent routines and avoiding pressure-based approaches. Moreover, findings revealed that learners demonstrated a generally high level of academic growth, especially in areas like curiosity, letter recognition, and basic math skills. However, independent reading scored lower, indicating a developmental area that could benefit from targeted parental and instructional support. Table 3 confirmed that learners also exhibited strong social skills, particularly in moral behavior and emotional regulation, reflecting well-rounded development. However, some indicators such as conflict resolution were lower, implying that certain social abilities are still emerging at this stage. Correlation analyses further deepened these insights. Table 4 showed that only the Involvement dimension had a significant positive relationship with academic growth. This suggests that hands-on support like helping with homework or attending school events directly benefits academic performance. Findings also revealed that Emotional Regulation and Moral and Prosocial Behavior were significantly correlated with parental participation, highlighting the role of involved parenting in nurturing emotional control and moral reasoning. Other dimensions such as self-concept and peer interaction showed non-significant correlations, suggesting these may be influenced by factors beyond parental involvement, such as peer dynamics or individual temperament. Overall, the results affirm that while general parental responsiveness and autonomy support are important, active involvement in educational tasks and school-related activities has the most tangible impact on academic and socio-emotional development. Schools may benefit from fostering more structured partnerships with parents, especially in areas like literacy support, emotional guidance, and values education, to enhance both the academic and personal growth of early learners.

Conclusion

This study concludes that parental participation plays a vital role in the academic and social development of Grade One learners. While parents frequently engage in responsive and autonomy-supportive practices, only active involvement such as helping with homework and attending school activities showed a significant positive relationship with academic growth. Additionally, parental participation was significantly associated with learners' emotional regulation and moral behavior, highlighting its impact on key social skills. However, no significant links were found with self-concept or peer interaction. These findings emphasize the need for strengthened home-school collaboration to support well-rounded development in early childhood education.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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