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Influence of Family Attributes on Academic Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of family stability and involvement on the academic outcomes of learners with special educational needs (SEN). Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, the research analyzed responses from 50 parents of SEN learners using a validated questionnaire. Statistical tools, including Pearson's correlation, revealed strong positive relationships between family stability and family involvement with academic performance. Findings showed that consistent family routines, emotional and financial support, and active parental engagement significantly enhanced academic outcomes. However, moderate levels of participation in school activities indicated areas for improvement. These results underscore the critical role of family-related factors in supporting SEN learners and highlight the need for collaborative efforts between families and schools. The study provides actionable insights for designing interventions and policies to foster inclusive and effective educational support systems.

Keywords: Academic Outcomes, Family Involvement, Family Stability, Special Educational Needs (SEN).

1. Introduction

Special Educational Needs (SEN) refer to diverse physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional challenges that impact a learner's ability to access standard educational systems without specialized support. The prevalence of SEN has increased significantly over the years, with studies highlighting variations in identification across countries and educational systems (Nic Aindriú et al., 2020; Robellos et al., 2024). For instance, data from Northern Ireland suggests a disproportionate rise in SEN students compared to the general school population, emphasizing the critical role of inclusive policies (O'Connor et al., 2022). Academic success is crucial for SEN learners, as it promotes better social inclusion and lifelong opportunities (Dalgaard et al., 2021; Kyamko et al., 2024). However, achieving this goal requires systemic and family-level support.

Family involvement, which includes active participation in education and the provision of learning resources, is a cornerstone of successful SEN outcomes. Research has demonstrated that families who engage in their children's learning foster stronger academic performance and social skills (Ismail & Rashid, 2024). Parents play a crucial role in addressing specific needs, such as adapting resources and providing emotional support (Lewis et al., 2023). Additionally, family involvement strengthens collaboration with schools and educators, ensuring personalized learning strategies that cater to unique needs especially in the digital age (Meyer et al., 2023; Suson, 2024).

Despite the known benefits of family involvement, research on its combined effects with other factors, such as socio-economic conditions, remains sparse. Studies often focus on either systemic challenges or family dynamics in isolation, leading to fragmented insights (Lindsay et al., 2020). For instance, while inclusive education is widely promoted, there is limited empirical evidence on how family engagement interacts with educational policies to influence SEN outcomes (Dalgaard et al., 2022). Addressing this gap could provide a more holistic understanding of the interplay between family and systemic factors.

Similarly, research on the broader influence of family attributes, such as stability and emotional support, on SEN outcomes remains underexplored. Existing studies often examine these factors separately, which does not reflect the complex realities of family dynamics (Tomlinson & Johnston, 2024; Suson et al., 2020). For instance, economic instability can exacerbate challenges for SEN learners, but how this interacts with parental involvement is yet to be fully studied (Nguyen et al., 2022). Comprehensive research is needed to explore how these factors collectively shape educational outcomes. This study seeks to explore the relationship between family involvement and academic outcomes for learners with SEN. Specifically, it aims to identify areas where families and educators can collaborate to provide stronger support systems. By addressing gaps in research and understanding, this work aims to contribute to more inclusive and effective educational practices (Nic Aindriú et al., 2020; Dalgaard et al., 2022).

At the local level, Baybay I and Baybay II Central Schools in the Division of Baybay, Leyte, have been actively implementing inclusive education programs for learners with SEN. However, Baybay II Central School faces specific challenges related to family dynamics. Preliminary observations during the school year 2023-2024 indicated a lack of comprehensive data on how family stability and involvement influence the academic outcomes of learners with SEN. Factors such as varying family structures, socioeconomic conditions, and the type of SEN add complexity to understanding these relationships. This study addressed these gaps by examining the profiles of learners with SEN, assessing their family stability, and evaluating the extent of family involvement in their academic experiences. It identified significant relationships between these factors and academic outcomes, providing valuable insights for targeted interventions. The findings align with global and national initiatives promoting inclusive education and offer localized solutions tailored to Baybay II Central School. The proposed action plan derived from this research serves as a roadmap to strengthen family stability and engagement, ensuring improved academic performance and fostering an inclusive, supportive educational environment for learners with SEN.

2. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships between family structure, stability, involvement, and the academic outcomes of learners with special educational needs (SEN). This quantitative approach, based on Creswell's (2014) framework, enabled the systematic analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and correlations without manipulating variables. The participants consisted of 50 parents from Baybay I Central School and Baybay II Central School, who provided critical data through a researcher-made questionnaire. The instrument, designed specifically for this study, underwent pilot testing to ensure its reliability and validity, with feedback used to refine the questionnaire for clarity and effectiveness. Responses were scored using a 5-point Likert scale, with predefined categories to interpret levels of family stability, involvement, and academic outcomes. Statistical tools, including frequency counts, weighted means, and Pearson's correlation coefficient, were employed to summarize demographic profiles, analyze trends, and assess the relationships between variables. The study followed the Input-Process-Output (I-P-O) Continuum Model for systematic implementation, ensuring alignment with its objectives. This rigorous

methodology provided meaningful insights into how family-related factors influence the academic performance of SEN learners, offering a reliable evidence base to guide interventions and policy-making.

Table 1. Level of family stability of the learners.

| Indicators | WM | SD | Description |
|--|------|------|-------------------|
| Our family maintains a routine that supports my child's learning. | 3.92 | 1.07 | Stable |
| Our family experiences frequent changes that affect my child's learning (e.g., moving houses, changing schools). | 3.38 | 1.41 | Moderately stable |
| My child receives consistent support for education at home. | 3.46 | 1.34 | Stable |
| Aggregate mean | 3.59 | | |
| Aggregate standard deviation | | 1.27 | Stable |

3. Results and Discussion

The data in Table 1 indicate that the overall level of family stability for learners with special educational needs (SEN) is generally stable, as reflected by an aggregate mean score of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.27. Specifically, families were found to maintain routines that support their child's learning, with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.92, which falls under the stable category. However, some families experienced frequent changes, such as moving houses or changing schools, which slightly disrupted the child's learning, with a WM of 3.38, categorized as moderately stable. Additionally, families were reported to provide consistent support for their child's education at home, achieving a WM of 3.46, which also falls in the stable range. These findings suggest that while families generally provide a stable environment, occasional disruptions may occur, affecting the overall consistency of support.

Table 2. Extent of involvement of the family members of the learners.

| Indicators | WM | SD | Description |
|--|------|------|---------------------|
| I regularly communicate with my child's teachers about his/her progress. | 3.68 | 1.25 | Involved |
| My family participates in school activities that involve parents. | 2.80 | 1.20 | Moderately involved |
| My child has access to educational resources at home. | 3.36 | 1.40 | Involved |
| Aggregate mean | 3.28 | | Moderately involved |
| Aggregate standard deviation | | 1.28 | |

The data in Table 2 show that the overall extent of family involvement in the education of learners with special educational needs (SEN) is moderately involved, with an aggregate mean score of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 1.28. Families were rated as involved in regularly communicating with their child's teachers about progress, with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.68. Similarly, families were also involved in providing access to educational resources at home, scoring a WM of 3.36. However, participation in school activities that involve parents was rated as moderately involved, with a WM of 2.80, indicating that families were less consistent in engaging with school events. Overall, the findings suggest that while families show involvement in supporting their child's education at home and communicating with teachers, there is room for improvement in active participation in school-related activities.

Table 3. Level of academic outcomes of the learners.

| Indicators | WM | SD | Description |
|---|------|------|-------------------|
| My child enjoys learning activities at school. | 3.72 | 1.31 | Very satisfactory |
| My child completes homework and assignments on time. | 3.48 | 1.45 | Very satisfactory |
| My child's teachers report satisfactory academic progress | 3.22 | 1.36 | Satisfactory |
| Aggregate mean | 3.47 | | Very satisfactory |
| Aggregate standard deviation | | 1.37 | |

The data in Table 3 show that the overall level of academic outcomes for learners with special educational needs (SEN) is rated as very satisfactory, with an aggregate mean of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.37. Specifically, learners were reported to enjoy learning activities at school, with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.72, categorized as very satisfactory. Similarly, the completion of homework

and assignments on time was also rated very satisfactory, with a WM of 3.48. However, teacher reports on academic progress were slightly lower, with a WM of 3.22, categorized as satisfactory. These results suggest that learners generally demonstrate positive academic performance and engagement in school, although there is some variation in their progress as observed by teachers.

Table 4. Test of relationship between the family stability and academic outcomes of the learners.

| Variables | r-value | Strength of correlation | p - value | Decision | Remarks |
|--|---------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Family stability and academic outcomes | 0.827* | Strong Positive | 0.000 | Reject Ho | Significant |

Note: *significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

The data in Table 4 show a strong positive relationship between family stability and the academic outcomes of learners with special educational needs (SEN), as indicated by an r-value of 0.827. This means that higher levels of family stability are strongly associated with better academic performance among these learners. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho). These findings highlight the critical role of a stable family environment in supporting the academic success of learners with SEN, emphasizing the importance of consistent routines, emotional support, and reliable home-based learning resources.

Table 5. Test of relationship between family involvement and academic outcomes of the learners.

| Variables | r-value | Strength of correlation | p - value | Decision | Remarks |
|--|---------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Family stability and academic outcomes | 0.901* | Strong Positive | 0.000 | Reject Ho | Significant |

Note: *significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

The data in Table 5 reveal a strong positive relationship between family involvement and the academic outcomes of learners with special educational needs (SEN), as indicated by an r-value of 0.901. This strong correlation suggests that higher levels of family involvement such as regular communication with teachers, participation in school activities, and providing educational resources at home are closely linked to improved academic performance. These findings underscore the importance of active family engagement in enhancing the educational success of learners with SEN and highlight the need for families to be involved consistently in their child's education.

4. Discussion

The study revealed a strong positive relationship between family stability and academic outcomes, highlighting the critical role of a stable home environment in fostering the educational success of learners with special educational needs (SEN). These findings are consistent with previous research that shows family stability provides children with emotional and financial security, enabling them to focus on academic tasks and achieve better outcomes (Pribesh et al., 2020). Stable routines and consistent support systems at home have been found to enhance learners' engagement and performance in school, as seen in studies emphasizing how family resilience and routine significantly benefit academic and socio-emotional outcomes (Rosenthal et al., 2021). The significant positive correlation observed in this study underscores the importance of policies and interventions that support family stability to improve educational outcomes for SEN learners.

Similarly, family involvement showed a strong positive relationship with academic outcomes, confirming the value of parental engagement in education. Previous studies have highlighted how active family participation, including regular communication with teachers, involvement in school activities, and providing learning resources at home, positively influences students' academic performance (Mokhtar et al., 2023). Family involvement not only enhances academic achievement but also supports socio-emotional development, which is crucial for learners with SEN (Saracostti et al., 2019). These findings suggest that fostering stronger family-school partnerships and encouraging parental engagement are key strategies for improving the academic success of SEN learners.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that both family stability and family involvement play a significant role in shaping the academic outcomes of learners with special educational needs (SEN). A stable home environment, characterized by consistent routines and emotional and financial support, was strongly associated with improved academic performance. Similarly, active parental involvement, including regular communication with teachers, participation in school activities, and the provision of educational resources, significantly contributed to learners' success. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering supportive family environments and encouraging parental engagement to enhance educational outcomes for SEN learners. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions and policies that strengthen family stability and promote active collaboration between families and schools, ensuring inclusive and supportive learning environments for all students.

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