

Exploring parental engagement and partnership approaches in Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated

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Abstract

This research analyzed the parental engagement among Senior High School parents in Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. Specifically, this study aimed to analyze the various approaches and initiatives implemented to encourage and sustain parental engagement in the educational process, and to determine the importance of communication and information in School activities. The findings of the study revealed that respondents consider parental involvement to be the active participation of parents in their child's educational path, both at home, at school, and in the larger community. In addition, the school's communication efforts with students are varied, combining modern digital tools with traditional ways. The essential methods of general information transmission are group discussions on Messenger and individual communications with teacher advisers. Results showed that 70% of parents demonstrate regular engagement, especially during important events, while the remaining 30% may need more assistance. Communication methods, such as group chats, personal messages, and formal letters are vital. Therefore, the study recommends that the school diversify engagement initiatives by offering a wider range of activities that suit the different preferences and schedules of parents; improving communication channels using modern tools to ensure effective information sharing; and inviting parental participation in decision-making processes are important steps to create a sense of shared ownership. A two-way communication approach should be encouraged, creating opportunities for parents to share their views and issues. Providing training for school staff on effective engagement strategies and cultural sensitivity can help create a more inclusive environment.

Keywords: parental engagement, educational path, partnership approaches, communication methods, thematic analysis, Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated

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1. Introduction

Parental engagement in education stands as both a beacon of hope and a landscape riddled with challenges. When schools actively encourage participation in various parental events like PTA meetings, workshops, fundraisers, and family-oriented programs, it fosters a positive bond between parents, their children, and the school. As noted by Llamas & Tuazon (2016), this involvement leads parents to feel engaged in decision-making processes aimed at enhancing their children's education, such as contributing insights into curriculum development or providing feedback through teacher evaluation forms. Moreover, Epstein (2018) asserts that parental involvement significantly shapes children's academic achievements, highlighting the family's role as the primary educational support. Parents wield considerable influence on their children's development, carrying a profound responsibility in nurturing their growth.

Epstein emphasizes that parental choices create an environment conducive to academic potential and self-esteem. Active participation in children's extracurricular activities and school events is recommended as integral to this involved parental role. In addition, Muzvidziwa's findings (2017) highlight a crucial synergy: parental involvement flourishes within a positive school culture. This culture embodies effective leadership, open communication among stakeholders, and a commitment to academic excellence through engaging programs. Building strong partnerships and sustaining unwavering dedication not only motivates students but also establishes an environment where parental engagement becomes pivotal in shaping a vibrant and successful school community. As highlighted in the Ates (2021) study exploring the connection between parental involvement in education and academic achievement, students primarily interact with two central institutions: the school and the family. The achievement of success is contingent upon a reciprocal relationship between these entities, underscoring the importance of shared objectives, a sustainable balance of trust and authority, and the quality of parental engagement. This dynamic is particularly relevant within the context of Divine Word School of Semirara Island Inc., where the interplay between the school and family components is crucial in shaping the educational landscape, the aspiration to provide strong partnerships between school and parents is met with an array of real-world hurdles.

Parents face many obstacles when they try to be involved in their children's education. They may have different work schedules that limit their availability, different expectations from the school or their children, and different levels of resistance from either side. They also have to deal with the practical difficulties of aligning their priorities and finding a balance that works for everyone. The study underscores that the dynamic interplay, alignment of goals, and quality of parental involvement stand as crucial determinants shaping a student's path to academic success. Hence, aligning the priorities of educators, parents, and administrators while juggling logistical challenges remains a delicate balancing act. Yet, within these complexities lie opportunities to bridge these gaps, foster mutual understanding, and cultivate an environment where parental involvement becomes not just a concept but also a vibrant reality shaping student success. This study aims to discover these complexities, providing a roadmap toward establishing healthy school-home partnerships despite these physical challenges.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study explores the parental engagement and partnership approaches in Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated. It aims to gauge the influence of this engagement on student development, emphasizing its significance in shaping a holistic educational experience. The research objectives for this study were: (1) to analyze the various approaches and initiatives implemented by Divine Word School to encourage and sustain parental engagement in the educational process. (2) to determine the importance of communication and

information in School activities; (3) to analyze the importance of parents' involvement in school; (4) to explore the improved parental engagement on partnership approaches in Divine Word School of Semirara Island.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study offers practical benefits for everyone involved. Parents gain insights to better support their child's education, empowered by diverse perspectives from teachers and administrators. Educators learn about parental expectations, refining communication for stronger school-home connections. Administrators improve policies, enhancing parental involvement and enriching the overall school experience. Most importantly, students thrive with improved academic performance and well-being. This research aims to create a collaborative setting where school and homework foster student success through coordinated efforts.

1.3 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study specifically focuses on the Senior High School (SHS) parents within Divine Word School of Semirara Island Inc. It aims to explore parental engagement and partnership approaches within this particular school context. Due to the substantial SHS population, the research concentrates on one section within the SHS department, ensuring a more in-depth analysis while managing the study's scope. The study's limitation lies in its narrow focus on just one section within the SHS department. This might not fully capture the diverse viewpoints across the entire SHS population and could limit the study's applicability to the broader school context. Additionally, findings might not easily translate to other schools. However, the study aims to provide valuable insights into parental engagement within this specific section of Divine Word School's SHS department.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The research design for this study is a purely qualitative approach. It employs a descriptive phenomenological approach to delve deeply into the lived experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of Senior High School parents in Divine Word School of Semirara Island Inc. This approach allows for a rich exploration of the nuances and intricacies of parental engagement within the school context.

2.2 Respondents of the Study

This study used a purposive non-random sampling procedure, the participants consisted of 33 parents or guardians specifically from St. Albert the Great, which represents one section from the SHS department. Selection criteria were focused on assessing parental engagement in school activities, diverse perspectives on engagement, and varying levels of interaction with the school. This method aims to ensure the inclusion of a diverse range of experiences and viewpoints among Senior High School parents at Divine Word School. The selection criteria aim to ensure a diverse representation of parental engagement experiences within the school community. By incorporating parents with diverse experiences and viewpoints, the qualitative research design seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of parental engagement.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study's main research instrument is semi-structured interviews, that involve asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework (George, 2023). Designed to gather in-depth information, the research tool for this study was specifically crafted to explore current perceptions, approaches, communication patterns, involvement in activities, and recommendations for improvement among Senior High School parents at Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated in the context of parental engagement.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data for this study was sourced from primary sources, involving direct interactions between the researchers and the participants, utilizing information collected by the researchers to address a specific issue or problem. The chosen method was intentionally designed to gather firsthand insights and perspectives from Senior High School parents at Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated, specifically focusing on their experiences with parental engagement. This approach allows for a more nuanced and direct exploration of the subject matter by directly engaging with the individuals involved.

2.5 Data Analysis

The researchers used thematic analysis to analyze and interpret the data collected from the respondents. This method involves identifying recurring patterns that are presented by researchers as overarching statements or themes (Lochmiller, 2021). The process was conducted rigorously, incorporating multiple judgments to enhance the reliability and validity of the interview guide at Divine Word School of Semirara Island. The initial section of the questionnaire was structured to elicit a diverse range of perceptions and preferences among parents. The researchers aimed to extract insights from responses, revealing varying perspectives on parental engagement. Some respondents expressed their current level of involvement, while others indicated areas where they believed there was room for improvement. This method allows for an in-depth analysis and understanding of the dynamics of parental engagement within the school community. The second section was about communication preferences, with themes highlighting a mix of digital platforms and face-to-face interactions. The highlight section actively involved parents participating in school activities, with suggestions for broader involvement and diverse activities. In the concluding phase of the study, recommendations for enhancing collaboration between parents and the school were integrated. The findings underscore the necessity for a flexible and inclusive approach to parental engagement, acknowledging the diverse preferences and expectations of Divine Word School parents. This inclusive approach aims to accommodate the varied perspectives and needs within the parental community. By adopting thematic analysis, the researcher opens up an avenue for a broader understanding of potential issues (Alhojailan, 2012), providing a comprehensive framework for addressing challenges and fostering improved collaboration between parents and the school.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Perceptions and Approaches of Parental Engagement in Divine Word School of Semirara Island Incorporated

Based on the results of the interview, respondents consider parental involvement to be the active participation of parents in their child's educational path, both at home, at school, and in the larger community. This involvement is fostered through conversations between parents/practitioners, emphasizing ways in which families can enhance their existing efforts to contribute to their children's learning and establish a conducive home learning environment (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). In the Philippines, parents frequently engage in school activities through participation in parent-teacher associations (PTA) or by serving as representatives in school governing councils. However, their predominant role is often confined to resource mobilization and volunteer work. Consequently, parents are rarely acknowledged as integral contributors to facilitating their children's learning and success in education (UNICEF, 2021). The extent of parental engagement at Divine Word School of Semirara Incorporated presents a variation, particularly within the Senior High School cohort. A notable 70% of parents actively participate in various facets of their children's educational journey, including attendance at key events such as parent-teacher conferences, classroom meetings, and various school activities. This active involvement underscores a positive and engaged parental community. Conversely, the remaining 30% appears less visible in these spheres, suggesting a potential need for increased encouragement and support from the school to enhance their participation. Recognizing and addressing this variability in parental

engagement levels is essential for fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

3.2 Communication and Information

Schools should be prepared to involve parents in ways that extend beyond conventional school management and volunteer activities. Specifically, the findings of the study showed that schools are encouraged to identify parents facing challenging circumstances, that hinder their regular participation in academic activities at home, and proactively offer support to these parents. Global evidence suggests that engaging in communication with parents regarding their children's school performance has a positive impact on learning outcomes. Therefore, it is advised to conduct regular in-person meetings and utilize phone calls and text messages to communicate with parents of underperforming students. This approach is designed to heighten parents' awareness of their children's progress in school and actively engage them in the learning process (FLN Academy, 2022). The school's communication strategies with students exhibit a multifaceted approach, combining contemporary digital methods with traditional means. Group chats on Messenger and individual messages from teacher advisers serve as the primary channels for general information dissemination. However, in specific cases, such as those warranting special attention, the school adopts a more personalized approach, requiring the delivery of call slips by teachers directly. Moreover, alongside the convenience of online messages, the school recognizes the efficacy of employing a formal and personal letter for certain communication needs. This nuanced communication framework reflects the institution's adaptability to diverse circumstances and a commitment to ensuring effective information flow within the school community.

3.3 Parents' involvement in school

The significance of parental involvement and engagement is widely acknowledged, making it one of the most universally agreed-upon principles of effective educational practice (Borgonovi & Montt, 2012). Parental involvement can yield advantages not only for the students but also for the school and teachers by fostering connections between home and school learning (Hart, 2011). Additionally, it presents an opportunity to challenge any misguided assumptions held by school staff, enabling parents to take on advocacy roles and ensuring suitable provisions for any special needs. In the retrospective analysis of parental involvement at Divine Word School of Semirara Incorporated, the participant demonstrated active engagement during the academic year, particularly in school orientations conducted at the commencement of the school year. These orientations, which elucidated the institution's policies and regulations, served as focal points for the participant's involvement in critical informational sessions. Regarding prospective initiatives aimed at enhancing parental involvement, the participant adopted a neutral stance, expressing no specific preferences for activities. However, a salient recommendation emerged, emphasizing the necessity of allocating sufficient time for parental participation in all school activities. This underscores the participant's recognition of the temporal dimension as a crucial factor in fostering meaningful engagement.

3.4 Improving Parental Engagement

Increasing family connection with your school can be a highly successful technique for improving student performance. Prioritizing family involvement is critical for cultivating an enjoyable and supportive educational environment. A school that emphasizes establishing strong family connections contributes to a stable atmosphere, fostering the development of students' confidence and motivation, essential elements for success (Hong, 2011). The participant emphasizes the need for the school to involve parents in a range of activities, covering both academic and curricular areas. This suggestion is based on the idea that such inclusive practices not only enable parents to devote time to school-related issues but also foster a sense of cooperation within the educational community. Moreover, the participant recognizes the existence of an active and cooperative Parent organization that has been working with the school for several years. The organization's remarkable contributions through various projects have been helpful to the school, showing a history of effective collaboration between the institution and parents. This acknowledgment highlights the significance of ongoing partnership initiatives

between the school and parental entities for overall school enhancement and community development.

4. Conclusions

This study has achieved the research objectives that were set out, offering valuable insights into the parental engagement situation at Divine Word School of Semirara Island. The first objective was achieved by thoroughly analyzing the school's techniques and initiatives, which revealed several approaches for promoting and maintaining parental involvement in the learning process. The second objective highlighted the key role of communication and information in school activities, stressing the importance of efficient channels for sharing information with parents. The third objective emphasized the need for parents' active participation in school matters, acknowledging their role as an important partner in the educational journey of their children. Moreover, the fourth objective aimed to examine the effect of improved parental engagement on partnership approaches within Divine Word School. The results indicate that increasing parental engagement has a positive impact on cooperative efforts, creating a more lively and supportive school community. In conclusion, it becomes clear that addressing these objectives has provided a detailed understanding of parental engagement dynamics at Divine Word School. This study adds to the wider discussion on effective strategies for building collaboration between schools and parents, recognizing the essential role parents have in the educational journey. Looking ahead, the insights gained from this research can guide customized approaches to further enhance parental engagement and partnership initiatives within educational institutions.

4.1 Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study on parental engagement at Divine Word School of Semirara Island reveal several recommendations to improve and maintain the positive trends observed. A key recommendation is to diversify engagement initiatives by offering a wider range of activities that suit the different preferences and schedules of parents. Improving communication channels using modern tools to ensure effective information sharing. Creating regular feedback mechanisms and inviting parental participation in decision-making processes are important steps to create a sense of shared ownership. A two-way communication approach should be encouraged, creating opportunities for parents to share their views and issues. Providing training for school staff such as faculty and employees on effective engagement strategies and cultural sensitivity can help create a more inclusive environment. Acknowledging and celebrating parental involvement through formal recognition ceremonies and ongoing research initiatives to understand the long-term impact of increased engagement are essential parts of a comprehensive approach. These ideas are intended to deepen the collaborative cooperation between Divine Word School and its parent community, thereby establishing an atmosphere that promotes kids' complete development. A multifaceted approach is recommended for future investigations into parental engagement at Divine Word School of Semirara Island or similar educational settings. Future research can examine the sustained impact of parental involvement over time, using longitudinal studies to reveal how it affects student outcomes and school dynamics. Lastly, investigations into the direct impact of parental engagement on specific academic outcomes, such as student performance and attendance, will further emphasize the importance of parental involvement in the educational journey. These recommendations collectively guide future research endeavors, contributing to the ongoing discourse on effective parental engagement strategies.

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