The Role of Parental Involvement and Social/Emotional Skills in Academic Achievement: Global Perspectives

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Abstract

The purpose of this systematic literature review is to examine global perspectives on the role of parental involvement and social/emotional skills in school-age children's academic success. A multistage filtering analysis process provides relevant information in relation to key issues on the topic of parental involvement in different countries and reveals distinctive characteristics of parental involvement as well as contextual differences from one culture to another. A discussion of the concepts is presented, and recommendations are drawn from the analysis.

Key Words: parental involvement, education, social and emotional skills, academic achievement, global perspectives, cultures

Introduction

Today's world is technologically driven, and each nation must compete with every other in terms of economic and technological development in the global information-based economy. To align with international standards of education and work (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007) and prepare the youth of a nation to compete in a global economy, parents must invest and encourage not only the pursuit of academic excellence but also the development of a wholesome personality. Both parents and the school community need to

make a conscious and intentional effort to facilitate the development of academic and social/emotional skills in children. The purpose of this review is to examine relevant literature on parental involvement and critically discuss global perspectives on the topic in connection to the promotion of social/emotional skills as an important asset for children's academic success and development.

In this review, parental involvement is defined as those behaviors shown by the parents, both in home and school settings, meant to support the development of their children's social/emotional skills and facilitate their educational success (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Goleman, 1998). Socioemotional intelligence has been discussed as comprising skills that facilitate the processing of social and emotional information and improve problem-solving and leadership-context activities in which the child must interact with other people and consequently deal with varied emotions in social situations (Goleman, 1998). Likewise, we discuss the importance of parents as support systems for children's social and emotional learning, understood as a process through which children gain and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities that will help them understand and manage emotions, set goals, embrace empathy for others, and make responsible decisions (Taylor et al., 2017; Redding, 2014).

The authors emphasize the responsibility of parents to support their children, both in terms of academic achievement and social/emotional skills, in order to have a real impact on their development as individuals prepared to interact with society on a global scale. It is the belief of the present authors that parent-supported development of social/emotional skills should be encouraged in their children's lives in order for them to achieve to the highest standards, both in school and in all other aspects of their lives.

Methodology

The review of the literature indicates that parental involvement differs between cultures. Further, it discusses the link between parental involvement and the promotion of social/emotional learning and skills in school-age children. A multistage filtering process allowed the selection of sources that support the conceptual, cultural, and academic contexts of the topic. More specifically, the methodology of the review consisted of a systematic search of databases, including ERIC, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and other education-related online sites as well as the adoption of a predetermined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria that prioritized peer-reviewed references. For example, the articles selected for the literature review were included in the analysis and discussion only if they addressed variables such as parental involvement, social/emotional skills, academic achievement or outcomes, as well as articles related to the topic that described the intersection or associations between these variables. Another

inclusion criterion had to do with the contribution of the articles regarding different perspectives of parental involvement and social/emotional skills in more than one cultural context (e.g., Western and Eastern views of parental involvement and achievement). Conversely, articles that did not meet the criteria for inclusion or addressed parental involvement outside the parameter of the population of interest—school-age students—were excluded from the final analysis and discussion in this literature review. The review process provided relevant information from a sampling of different cultural perspectives which is presented and then discussed in relation to key issues of parental involvement across different cultures.

Review of Perspectives

In the last decade, there has been an increased interest in the role of emotional skills in the academic success of students as well as in their emotional adjustment in and beyond the school environment. The promotion of social/emotional skills to enhance students' academic performance finds an ally in the level and style of parental involvement if we consider that "effective, lasting academic learning and socio-emotional learning are built on caring relationships" (Elias, 2006, p. 7). In seminal work in the field, Goleman (1998) noted that the processing of social and emotional information, as well as the ability to problem-solve and engage in leadership activities that demand interpersonal interactions, are facilitated by what he termed an individual's socio-emotional intelligence. Some of the competencies and skills observed in the theory of socio-emotional intelligence include: (a) self-awareness; (b) self-regulation; (c) social skill; (d) empathy; and (e) motivation (Goleman, 1998). A person equipped with such social/emotional skills is able to handle with confidence the varied challenges he or she faces.

Research on socio-emotional intelligence indicates that there is a relationship between such intelligence and academic achievement and that emotional intelligence is highly related to more prosocial behaviors and fewer antisocial behaviors in elementary school children (Mavroveli & Sánchez-Ruiz, 2011). Although there are multiple angles to the effect of parental involvement on children's academic achievement, this article reviews existing literature on the topic, including the effects of family socioeconomic status (SES), cultural background, and indicators of children's social/emotional skills, among other characteristics that may contribute to a child's academic success. In addition, the authors discuss the implications of parental involvement in children's development of social/emotional skills to facilitate their academic achievement as well as life experiences.

Most of the literature discusses the concept of socio-emotional intelligence. However, some more recent studies shift toward a definition that focuses on the concept as social/emotional learning instead of intelligence, and these studies emphasize the learning process and skill sets a child gains in a social and emotional context which will, as stated below, become essential skills for living (Goleman, 2006). Goleman's proposed social/emotional skills include listening and talking as tools an individual can use for solving and/or negotiating problems, resulting in positive outcomes for the participants in each situation. The literature also explains that an individual with social/emotional skills consequently develops social/emotional competency, a "sense of self-worth, regard for others, and emotional understanding and management to set positive goals and make responsible decisions" (Redding, 2014, p. 6).

Parental Involvement

Defining parental involvement is not so easy a task, as it encompasses multiple behaviors. In this review, parental involvement is seen as those behaviors shown by the parents, including the home and school environments, that are intended to support not only their children's educational progress but also their social/emotional skills (El Nokali et al., 2010; Goleman, 1998). Ongoing research on parental involvement has often been drawn from the model by Epstein (2010) and describes teacher–parent relationships as based on communication and cooperation and parental involvement as malleable depending on the practices of teachers, administrators, other parents, and students. The types of involvement suggested in Epstein's model include: (1) parenting; (2) communication (home–school and school–home); (3) volunteering; (4) learning at home; (5) decision-making; and (6) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2010). This typology suggested by Epstein (2010) has been used in research to find out to what extent parental involvement helps in educational achievement. For example, Ingram and associates (2007) found that two of the six types (parenting and learning at home) were very apparent in high-performing schools attended by low-income students, while the other four types did not seem to be in operation or linked to students' academic success.

Hiatt-Michael (2001) explains that parental involvement is considered as one of eight educational goals in the U.S., and its value is remarkable for the educational communities and the geographical communities they serve. An effective connection between both "communities" would increase parental involvement in the promotion of children's social, emotional, and academic growth (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

Social Class and Family Background

Coleman's survey *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966) brought to public notice the fact that a combination of social class and family background explains most significant differences in cognitive outcomes in schools. It can be understood from this statement that many schools are not able to compensate for disadvantages that children bring from their homes. This does not mean that schools do not teach or are incapable of teaching, but suggests that parents or caregivers at home play a significant role in a child's academic achievement. Parents and school communities can also provide spaces and activities for interactions that help develop a child's social/emotional skills, for example, interactions that require the child to deal with different emotions in social situations (Goleman, 1998).

The literature explains that environment and family background play a significant role in a child's academic achievement; therefore, if we blame the schools/school systems for the poor performance of the students, we fail to recognize that parental involvement is just as important. According to Grant (1988), "Each of us is shaped by the family into which we were born…children from higher status families tend to stay in schools longer, have better grades and standardized test scores, and win more academic honors" (p. 129). Lareau (2003) argues that children from lower SES families suffer from a distinct disadvantage, as they are not exposed to the cultivation that middle-class parents pass on to their children. From this cultivation, "a robust sense of entitlement takes root in the children" (Lareau, 2003, p. 2). This sense of entitlement gives middle-class children confidence in talking to adults, questioning adults, and learning how to address adults as relative equals; thus, it plays an important role in institutional settings. As Lareau (2003) puts it, "From the experience of concerted cultivation, they acquire skills that could be valuable in the future when they enter the world of work" (p. 4). This advantage is passed on from middle-class parents to their children, but only the parents who are proactively invested in their child's future reap the most significant benefits. Some of the skills that allow youth to enter the workplace include those related to social/emotional skills. These are discussed by Goleman (2006) and include listening and talking skills for solving or negotiating problems, which resolve in positive outcomes.

One fact remains: Even though many middle-class parents pass on an advantage in terms of concerted cultivation, better school districts, and better facilities to their children, parental involvement in any socioeconomic class is a conscious choice that responsible parents make, and this is what makes a difference in the academic achievement of a child. Fan and Chen (2001), in their

study examining the influence of parental involvement, found positive educational outcomes for a general student population. Jeynes (2005) meta-analysis also supports these outcomes, indicating a strong relationship between parental involvement and academic outcomes in urban student populations. The findings of a study on parental involvement with middle grade urban students (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016) showed that involvement is positively associated with behavioral and cognitive engagement. This, in turn, contributed to academic achievement, thus pointing to the fact that parental involvement not only contributes to cognitive growth and development, but also to behaviors associated with positive academic outcomes.

Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

The effect of parental involvement has been the focus of studies for some time, particularly in terms of how providing support and a nurturing home learning environment influences the achievement and cognitive development of children, youth, and even young adults (Melhuish et al., 2008; Sylva et al., 1999). Research also indicates that parental involvement maximizes the potential of the children in their schooling years and infuses confidence in them by way of those achievements. For example, preschoolers in the U.K. were studied to assess the attainment and development of children between the ages three to seven years. The Home Learning Environment (HLE) index was devised to describe a range of learning-related activities that were associated with the home environment and were to be reported by parents (Melhuish et al., 2008). These activities were reading, library visits, playing with letters and numbers, painting and drawing, teaching (through play) the letters of the alphabet, teaching nursery rhymes, and singing. Interestingly, Melhuish et al. (2008) concluded that "higher home learning environment was associated with increased levels of cooperation and conformity, peer social ability and confidence, and higher cognitive development scores" (p. 11). This study throws light on the understanding of parental involvement beyond commonly studied factors and discusses the nuances of parental involvement characterized by a closer interaction between parent and child and the impact of that interaction on academic achievement as well as on peer social ability as an indicator of social/emotional skills.

The literature (from Coleman, 1966 to the present) often states that parental involvement in a child's educational attainment, even before schooling (preschool stages), is affected by the socioeconomic status of the child's family. However, it also states that, despite parents' lower socioeconomic status and lower educational attainment, they can still make a significant contribution in attainment/achievement goals by facilitating a positive home learning environment (Melhuish et al., 2008). Moreover, when parents create a healthy

home learning environment, there is a continuity of learning experiences for the child that positively impacts that child's cognitive development. Home learning environment has been strongly associated with improved cognitive and social development such as self-regulation (Melhuish, 2010). Melhuish et al. (2008, 2010) note a clear connection between an optimal home learning environment created by parents and the cognitive and social gains children might consequently experience; these gains ultimately influence their academic achievement and readiness for the future. Such social gains, evidenced in the child's social/emotional skills, are directly linked to the child's academic achievement and to his or her prosocial behaviors as well as reduced antisocial behaviors in elementary school children (Mavroveli & Sánchez-Ruiz, 2011).

A study by Ho and Willms (1996), which used data from the U.S. National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), examined the efforts of parents in the schooling of their children and the relationship between this involvement and the SES level and ethnic backgrounds of the parents. The data were obtained through parent and student questionnaires completed and collected in 1988 from about 24,000 eighth grade students. Standardized tests in mathematics and reading were used to measure student achievement. The different items under which parental involvement was rated included: limits on TV time, school dialogue with parents, being home after school, volunteering at school, limits on going out, talking with parents, and discussing school programs or activities. After analyzing the data, it was noted that there was a significant relationship between social class and parental involvement, indicating that the higher the social class, the more parental involvement a child typically experienced.

Another factor that stood out regardless of social class was that the more parents and children communicated with each other about school-related issues at home, the more the children achieved in schools (Ho & Willms, 1996). Thus, school-related discussions with children at home are shown to have a significant impact on the achievement of those children. This parent–child communication and interaction also encourages communication skills in children and helps them to form better social relationships both in the school and the community. Parents need to discuss the issues that are directly connected to their children's academic achievement and to proactively help them to communicate their academic needs. It is not by being just present in the school that these parents contribute to academic achievement, but by communication with the child about what they experience in school and by building a relationship with the child. This lays a firm foundation wherein children know with a deep conviction that a parent or parents care about both them and their academic achievements (Ho & Willms, 1996).

A study by Singh, Bickley, Trivette, & Keith (1995) identified four components of parental involvement (parental aspiration for the student's education, parent–child communication about school, home structure, parental participation in school-related activities) and studied their impact on student achievement. Their research reported that parental involvement in school activities had no effect on achievement and that parent–child communication had a moderate effect. Home structure, which Singh et al. (1995) described as the relationship between the home environment and the child's cognitive development (e.g., parent encouragement for reading, decreased TV time, rewards for improvement and grades) had a slightly negative impact on educational attainment, while parental aspiration had the strongest impact. The fact that discipline at home (monitoring TV time, etc.), a part of the home structure component, had a slightly negative effect on educational attainment is very interesting, possibly explained by the "monitoring" or controlling role of the parents.

George and Kaplan (1998) studied parental involvement in relation to achievement in the sciences using the NELS data base. Their findings indicated that the more the parents showed a positive attitude towards the sciences, the better their children achieved in those areas. This result was replicated in another study by Kimmel and Miller (2008), who used data from the Longitudinal Study of American Youth that kept track of 6,000 students from middle school through college, attempting to determine what led them to or away from STEM-related disciplines. Only 4% of the students who experienced low parental encouragement to attend college planned to enter a postsecondary program and major in a STEM field, compared to 41% of students whose parents strongly encouraged college attendance.

Houtenville and Conway (2008) stated that parents' effort is related to students' higher levels of academic achievement in eighth grade and argued that schools would need to increase expenditure per pupil by more than $1,000 to achieve similar results to those that are gained through parental involvement. The variables studied were: how frequently the parents discussed the events or activities of special interest to their child, the topics the child was taught in class, the process of selection of courses or programs at school (parents helped or offered advice), whether the parents attended school meetings, and whether the parents volunteered at school. This kind of parental involvement demonstrates some of the support elements that help to improve a student's academic performance and development of their social/emotional skills. For example, when the parents show interest in their child or children's interests in school, help them become self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and help them set goals inside and outside the school environment, the students are generally more likely to show prosocial behaviors and care for their peers in a similar way, being open to conversations and negotiating group work.

Cross-Cultural Factors in Parental Involvement

Parental involvement has also been studied in the context of immigrants. One example is from the book *Learning a New Land*, wherein the author gives an example of a student named Jean-Luc, a first-generation immigrant who is successful in the U.S. (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2009). Even though he comes from a low-SES immigrant family, he achieves success because of parental support and aspirations for his education as well as the intrinsic motivation of the child; this is supported by other studies (e.g., Giraldo-García, 2014). As Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009) write, "Jean-Luc's parents are a delight to talk with, speaking with frankness, trust, and clarity. They also reveal the deep affection and connectedness they have for each other… This is a loving family—cohesive, respectful, and harmonious" (p. 309). Both parents think "knowledge is treasure" and invest most of their time, money, and energy into communicating their dreams for their children, and they work hard to translate those dreams into reality. Even if the family is poor, a child can make significant progress because the parents not only invest academically, they also give sound emotional support that fosters the development of social and emotional skill sets in the child. It seems that the family atmosphere shows a strong bonding and an environment wherein deep social/emotional nurturing, in the form of ongoing and effective communication, is practiced.

International and cross-cultural studies also have shown a significant relationship between parental involvement and student achievement (e.g., Levpušček & Zupančič, 2009). According to Levpušček and Zupančič's (2009) study of Slovene students, parental involvement in terms of mathematical achievement played a significant role in student success. Out of all the other factors, parental academic support was found to be the strongest predictor of the Slovene eighth graders' mastery and goal orientation, academic efficacy, and achievement in math. This replicates the earlier findings of Campbell (1996, cited in Koutsoulis & Campbell, 2001) and Koutsoulis and Campbell (2001). Conversely, parental academic pressure had a negative impact, especially if it was accompanied by parental dissatisfaction about the adolescent's academic outcomes and distrust in his or her efficient schoolwork, undermining the students' sense of academic self-efficacy (Levpušček & Zupančič, 2008).

In the culture of India, parental expectations, to a great extent, govern the educational expectations of their children. Obedience to parents and educational achievement are valued. Within the family, parental concern is manifested in making economic resources available to children to allow them to secure higher educational levels. For example, in a study of Indian mothers in Britain, it was found that mothers relied on younger relatives as direct social capital to access knowledge and resources to help them and their daughters navigate the

higher education environment (Khambhaita, 2014). Another study conducted in two Indian universities used questionnaires and interviews with 40 students and their parents to examine their perceptions of parental involvement at the higher education level, finding that most students (65%) were open to their parents' advice, particularly when making important decisions (Deka, 2016).

In Indian culture, parents who are educated (or even somewhat less educated) make it very clear to their children the importance of pursuing educational excellence. They are there to assist the child in each and every way, even to the extent of paying for the entirety of their university education. In this context, we may touch upon the sociological framework of "within-family social capital" and "between-family social capital" (Lingxin & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998, pp. 177–178). If both parents and children share the same educational goals, it is usually because those goals have been transferred from the parent to the child; the fact that both groups value education is carried from one generation to the other (Kerckhoff, 1989; Smith & Robbins, 1982).

Indian cultural traditions encourage and value education and are deeply rooted in their history. Historical evidence points to the existence of the ancient University of Nalanda about which the Buddhist monk Hsuan Tsang writes in detail in *Great Tang Records on the Western Region* (Li, 1996). Tsang writes that this university, in its heyday, had an enrollment of 10,000 students and 2,000 faculty. The student population was comprised of Indians as well as students from Korea, China, Japan, and Sri Lanka. Tsang visited India from 602 CE to 664 CE in the Tang Period of Chinese history. Another ancient university was the Taxila University (in what is now Pakistan), which was also a center of higher learning and was recorded in the works of another Chinese scholar named Fa-Hien (Legge, 1886).

Education was similarly valued in ancient Korean culture, and even today it is embedded in the ethos of the nation. This is reflected in the consistently excellent performance of Korean students in international comparative studies. According to studies of international achievement (i.e., PISA, TIMSS), Korean students are top achievers in mathematics, science, and literacy (Lee, 2009). They ranked second in mathematics and fifth in science, whereas students from the U.S. were ranked nineteenth in mathematics and eighteenth in sciences.

The need to excel in the Korean students is seen in terms of the impact of Korean history and culture (Kim & Park, 2006). Nevertheless, Kim and Park (2006) emphasize that, regarding motivation, most of the Korean students in their study did not say that their success was due to innate ability or personal motivation. Kim and Park found that about 85% of the Korean students surveyed said they studied hard in mathematics to gain entrance to the best universities (social motivation), and 62% agreed that they studied hard to please their parents (relational motivation).

The Korean education system is intrinsically linked to Confucianism, which was adopted in Korea 2,000 years ago. During the Three Kingdom period, the National Confucian Academy was established in the Goguryo Kingdom (37 BC–668 CE). Beginning in 788 CE, the curriculum was established as a two-fold study of the Chinese language and of Confucian classics. Passing those examinations was not only an honor, but also an assured way of obtaining higher social mobility in class and economic status; individuals of merit made their way through high government positions as a result of passing these exams. Students strove exceedingly hard to pass. The same kind of competitiveness has now become a part of Korean culture (Kim & Park, 2006).

Another factor that motivates Korean students is the Confucian/Buddhist belief system, including the belief that a deficiency of any kind can be over-come by hard work or diligence (Chang, 1985). This is a result of Confucian thinking regarding the role of effort in achievement. South Koreans view suc-cess in life as educational success, as Confucianism places great emphasis on scholarship and education. In keeping with this belief system, most Koreans attribute their success to hard work rather than innate ability (Kim & Park, 2006). Koreans, even those who are not students, work very hard at all levels, and parents are deeply involved in the educational goals of their children. Kim and Park (2006) put it aptly: parents play a central role in child development by defining the goals of socialization; teaching children the necessary cognitive, linguistic, relational, and social skills; and providing them with a supportive family environment. Kim and Park stated that parent–child relationship is par-amount for increasing adolescents' self-efficacy and achievement motivation, which in turn propels their academic achievement.

Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan (1972) studied parental socioeconomic status and education as predicators of student achievement. Their results are quite in line with what Coleman (1966, 1988) pointed out in terms of how, as in the words of Fejgin (1995), "parents' financial and human capital are trans-lated into actions that may help students develop their own human capital" (p. 19). Similarly, a study of Jewish children's educational achievements throws further light on parental involvement. Many Jewish parents do have more fi-nancial resources than parents of other communities, and it seems that they often use these resources to enhance the educational achievement of their chil-dren through an award system, one mechanism that motivates the students to achieve (Katz, Kaplan, & Buzukashvily, 2011). Awarding or limiting privileges is a system that works for them in teaching their children that hard work is re-warded. The other measures used in Katz et al.'s (2011) research to determine parental involvement at home in students' academic achievement included: home learning materials, parents' educational expectations from their child, parents' involvement in schools, privileges given for good grades, the student's

locus of control, and hours spent on homework. The results showed that parental involvement had a positive effect on student academic achievement in the case of the studied Jewish children (Katz et al., 2011).

Research on Australian students showed that home discipline has a significant effect on academic achievement in the case of ethnically Asian students. Dandy and Nettlebeck (2002) showed that school age children from Asian cultural backgrounds typically achieved at higher levels in math than non-Asians students with identical IQs. The reason given was that the Asian students spent more time on their homework (Chinese Australians: 11.99 hours per week) than their Anglo-Celtic Australian peers (5.09 hours per week). As per Fan and Chen (2001), parents' aspirations and expectations for their children's educational achievement, which are typically higher in Asian cultures, have the strongest relationship with students' academic achievement. But the very same research (Fan & Chen, 2001) shows that parental supervision does not have a significant impact on student achievement.

There are many different interpretations of the effect of parental involvement depending upon the type and extent of the involvement and even the definition of involvement. What parental involvement means in one study may be different than in another study, and parental involvement may also have different meanings cross-culturally. Nevertheless, positive parental educational aspirations for children clearly impact how children perform and fulfill their educational goals (Giraldo-García, 2014). Parents' aspirations and role as support systems facilitate children's gain of knowledge, attitudes, and abilities that help them to understand and deal with emotions, set goals, embrace empathy for others, and make responsible choices (Redding, 2014). Since schools are social environments and learning is a social process, besides the interaction with teachers and other students, parental support is vital for academic success given that students' behavior in the social/emotional context of an educational institution could facilitate or hamper their academic performance and outcomes (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007).

Discussion

The examination of global perspectives on the role of parental involvement and social/emotional skills in school-age (and beyond) children's academic success provides a rich and nuanced context for the understanding of the topic in different cultures. This review focused on related literature on the concepts of parental involvement and social/emotional skills and its connection to children's educational success and development as whole individuals and as the future leaders of an ever-growing globalized society. The analysis of the selected

literature reveals contextual differences from one culture to another in terms of family background and aspirations for the child at different educational levels, as well as on the relationship between parental involvement and expectations of their children's academic performance, as highlighted in Lee's (2009) work. It is important to note that the development of social/emotional skills needs to be guided by an engaged parent–child interaction where listening and talking skills are put into practice. Considering findings from Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman (2007) that indicate a connection between parenting and learning at home to students' academic success, the current authors highlight that how parents interact with children at home is of great influence on the child's performance in school and has to be addressed with that purpose in mind. For example, parent–child interaction at home can be coached through school-initiated parent involvement programs that aim at improving student learning (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002).

From parent involvement practices and student academic performance based on a nation's cultural history, such as in Korea and India (Kim & Park, 2006; Li, 1996)—in which a sense of pride, self-respect, and competitiveness has been prevalent for generations—to more modern mindsets wherein involvement can take the form of support or parental pressure (Melhuish et al., 2008; Levpušček & Zupančič, 2009), the importance of having a supportive family environment for academic success seems to be prevailing. This environment is primarily defined as positive parental communication and dynamics that promote social/emotional skills (e.g., problem solving, self-regulation, empathy, etc.).

While some research indicates that high school students who spend more time working on their homework—monitored by their parents—have higher grades, other studies suggest that supporting and encouraging students' aspirations also has a significant positive effect on the students' academic achievement, as the students are subsequently guided by their intrinsic motivation (Giraldo-García, 2014; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). Research also supports the fact that early parental involvement (e.g., reading stories together, supportive environments) influences young children's behavior and attitudes toward learning and is a strong predictor of academic success (Waters, 2014). The point is that we need to raise children who are prepared for challenges they will face during diverse interpersonal interactions in academic contexts where parents do not directly participate and also those arising throughout their lives outside of and beyond school.

As noted earlier, the success of the student Jean-Luc is an example of parental support negating potentially detrimental situations such as the lengthy family separations that immigrants face or neighborhood problems and, in return, giving back to society a well-adjusted honor student (Suárez-Orozco et

al., 2009). This example illustrates that giving children the strongest and most stable home possible as well as taking interest in their studies can yield positive results even in a poor immigrant family. Out of their own sense of responsibility, some parents are always engaged in their children's learning process; they value education and may believe that education is the best legacy they can give their children. Nevertheless, an active home–school communication channel and an inviting school environment can provide a framework for more informed and supportive parent–child interactions (Kraft & Rogers, 2015).

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of selected literature and discussion of the connections between parental involvement, academic success, and children's development of social/emotional skills, we recommend some parental involvement practices that could facilitate achievement in the school environment and the improvement of social/emotional skills in school-age children. Parental involvement in a child's life can take many forms, especially if the parents want to positively influence the child's academic and social/emotional skills and subsequently improve the child's chances for the future. For instance, parental involvement can be directed to improving cognitive gains when implementing school-like activities at home, such as naming objects, colors, shapes in nature, and talking about historical events that define the family background. These foster the continuity of classroom learning in the form of monitoring homework and facilitating the real-life, at-home application of concepts learned at school (e.g., the water cycle: making ice cubes, boiling water, etc.).

Likewise, parental involvement can deliberately be used to foster parent–school relationships. This parent–school interaction could be initiated by the school in an intentional manner. This involvement may include more frequent invitations for visits to schools (besides formal conferences) to meet teachers or principals so that a working relationship can be established and so they can become collaborative partners in the learning and development of the child.

Alternative forms of parent–school relationships might also involve helping the school management develop new plans for the school in terms of technology, new courses, or architectural improvements; however, implementing parental involvement practices designed to improve the social/emotional skills of children implies that parents or caregivers go a step further and purposely lay a foundation of skills, values, and attitudes to improve the child's social/emotional competencies needed to succeed. This may include fostering empathy and self-perception by the parents interacting with the child by talking about what happens in school every day, who the child's friends are and why they are friends, and what personal challenges or strengths the child identifies at school.

Interactions of this nature not only bond the parent with the child but reveal any need to reinforce the child's self-awareness and social-awareness competencies. The parents' role in a child's education is complex, yet paramount for that child's cognitive and social/emotional well-being and development.

In the case of parents with adolescent children, monitoring screen time and the quality of programs the child sees as well as regulating extra study hours are important parental involvement tasks. In addition, modern parents have to deal not only with these tasks, but also work to become mentors that provide opportunities for problem identification (e.g., *what* is causing low grades), reflection, and problem-solving actions (e.g., *how* to improve low grades) that help children take ethical responsibility for their academic performance as well as actions to improve it (e.g., join study groups). Parents need to be more than providers of material resources and become key guides to help children map their own paths in a globalized system for which technical and social/emotional skills are key resources for academic success. For such purpose and considering that it is of paramount importance that parents are aware of the areas in which their children could improve, the authors recommend maintaining frequent teacher–parent communication through written or online messaging in order to allow for an expedient interaction between the home and the school and, together, identify and implement targeted interventions (Kraft & Rogers, 2015).

The review of the literature suggests that social/emotional skills are highly related to the development of prosocial behaviors and a reduction in antisocial behavior in elementary children (Mavroveli & Sánchez-Ruiz, 2011). Based on this, we recommend that an important set of activities to foster social/emotional skills—such as relationship building, working cooperatively, and impulse control—be integrated into parent–child playtime, wherein the child can relieve stress and practice the skills, and likewise in play dates with other children, where he or she can use self-discipline to participate in group games. All these activities can improve the child's social/emotional competencies for school and life.

In an increasingly globalized and technology-driven world, there are more challenges that parents from different cultures and nations must face to keep up with these advances and be involved in their children's lives both inside and outside of school. Parental involvement must go beyond helping with homework or volunteering. It must be meaningful and heartfelt, so children not only see but feel that their parents are physically and emotionally engaged in supporting their dreams and goals as well as helping them figure out their weaknesses and how to overcome academic and/or possible career-choice barriers. By showing empathy for others and by modeling problem-solving activities for their children, parents are teaching those children how to be caring and resourceful; moreover, children also learn to develop their own ways to solve

problems inside and outside of the academic environment. We believe that parents' wholesome investment of time in their children will have a greater positive impact if it entails the promotion of social/emotional skills that help to meet the child's educational needs as well as provide them with the tools to face other challenges in the world in which they live, even in the absence of their parents.

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