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Barriers to Parental Involvement in the Education of Children with Disabilities in Tamale Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the education of children with disabilities, yet various barriers limit their engagement. This study explores the challenges hindering parental involvement in inclusive education within the Tamale Metropolis and identifies strategies to enhance participation. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data from 70 respondents (parents and teachers) and qualitative thematic analysis from interviews. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select participants from inclusive schools, and data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26) for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis for qualitative responses. Findings indicate that financial constraints (71.4%), negative societal attitudes (64.3%), and lack of awareness (57.1%) are significant barriers to parental involvement. A chi-square analysis revealed a strong association between parental socio-economic status and their level of engagement ($\chi^2 = 12.56, p < 0.05$), with low-income parents being less involved. Qualitative findings supported these results, highlighting financial struggles, stigma, and poor school communication as key limitations. Suggested strategies for improvement, rated on a five-point scale, emphasized the importance of awareness campaigns (4.7 mean score), regular parent-teacher communication (4.5 mean score), and financial assistance (4.3 mean score). The study recommends educational campaigns, financial support programs, improved communication channels, parental training, and policy reinforcement to enhance engagement. Addressing these barriers through collaborative efforts among schools, policymakers, and communities can significantly improve the involvement of parents in the education of children with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's lives; they are their first teachers, guiding them even before they step into a classroom. Naturally, parents want to stay connected to what their children are learning and experiencing at school. When parents, families, schools, and communities work together, children benefit in countless ways. This collaboration, known as parental involvement, means more than just attending school meetings; it's about being an active part of a child's education at home and in school (Hornby & Lafaele, 2023). Research has consistently shown that when parents are involved; whether by helping with homework, reading together, or participating in school events, children perform better academically (Hornby & Lafaele, 2023; Ghazi *et al.*, 2010; Steve, 2015; Strom & Strom, 2013).

Yet, despite the clear advantages of parental involvement, there remains a gap between what experts recommend and what actually happens in schools. Many studies emphasize its importance, but in reality, some parents struggle to be involved due to work commitments, lack of confidence, or feeling unwelcome in school spaces. Deslandes and Bertrand (2010) put it simply: "There is still more rhetoric than reality about family and school working together as genuine partners". Schools and educators need to find better ways to bridge this gap,

ensuring parents feel encouraged and supported in playing an active role in their child's education.

Parental involvement comes in many forms. Menon (2013) describes it as a broad spectrum of activities, from attending occasional meetings to deeply engaging in school programs. Sikhwari (1999) breaks it down into two key aspects: commitment and active participation. Commitment means parents care about their child's education and want to help, while active participation is about actually taking steps to be involved, whether at home or in school. The best outcomes happen when both commitment and participation go hand in hand (Sikhwari, 1999).

While it's clear that children benefit from their parents' engagement, many challenges still prevent some families from getting involved. If we want every child to have the best chance at success, we need to understand and address these barriers. Schools must work on creating welcoming environments, offering flexible engagement opportunities, and ensuring parents feel valued as essential partners in their children's education.

Research conducted over decades has demonstrated that the degree to which parents get actively involved in their children's education is a better indicator of their academic success than family income or parental education level (Driessen *et al.*, 2005).

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Statement of Problem

Despite the well-documented benefits of parental involvement in children's education, parents of children with disabilities in Tamale face significant barriers that limit their engagement. Factors such as socio-economic challenges, lack of awareness, attitudinal biases, and inadequate school policies contribute to low levels of parental participation. These barriers not only hinder effective collaboration between parents and schools but also negatively impact the educational experiences and outcomes of children with disabilities. While previous studies have explored general parental involvement, there is limited research on the specific challenges faced by parents of children with disabilities in Tamale. This study seeks to fill this gap by identifying the major obstacles to parental engagement, examining the role of socio-economic status, and exploring effective strategies to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities.

Aim of the Study

To investigate the barriers to parental involvement and its replicates impact in the education of special need children in Tamale.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Identify the major barriers that hinder parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities in Tamale.
2. Examine the influence of parental socio-economic status on their level of involvement in their children's education.
3. Explore effective strategies that can enhance parental engagement in the education of children with disabilities.

Research Questions

1. What are the major barriers to parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities?
2. How does parental socio-economic status influence involvement in the education of children with disabilities?
3. What strategies can enhance parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Impirical Review

Epstein's Parent Involvement Model

Harris (2023), who highlighted Epstein a leading scholar in the field of parental involvement, identified six distinct types of parental engagement: parenting, communication, volunteering, home-based learning, decision-making, and community collaboration. She emphasized that these forms of involvement should be integrated into a broad network of collaboration between families, schools, and communities (Sheldon, Buckley, Wang, & Epstein, n.d). The six types of involvement are explained as follows:

Parenting

This involves helping families create supportive and

nurturing environments that enhance children's academic success. Implementation strategies include parental education programs, family support initiatives, and recommendations for improving the home environment. A stable home environment fosters children's understanding of the importance of education and promotes consistent school attendance (Tekin, 2014).

Communication

Effective communication between schools and families is crucial for keeping parents informed about school programs and their children's academic progress. This includes parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, newsletters, and discussions on school policies. Clear communication helps parents understand their children's growth, school expectations, and ways to support their learning (Epstein & Herrick, 2006).

Volunteering

This involves organizing and encouraging parental participation in school activities, both within and outside the school environment. Parents can assist teachers, support school events, and contribute to safety initiatives. Such engagement fosters children's interpersonal skills and enhances their learning experiences (Epstein & Herrick, 2006).

Home-Based Learning

This focuses on equipping parents with resources and strategies to support their children's education at home. Activities include guidance on homework monitoring, family reading initiatives, and structured home learning routines. Increased parental involvement in learning at home is linked to higher student achievement and a more positive perception of their parents as educators (Epstein & Herrick, 2006).

Decision-Making

This refers to parents taking on leadership roles in school committees and associations such as Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) and school advisory boards. Active participation in decision-making enhances parents' sense of representation and strengthens their advocacy for student rights and educational policies (Epstein & Herrick, 2006).

Community Collaboration

This involves connecting schools with community resources to enhance educational programs. Schools can collaborate with civic, cultural, and health organizations to provide additional support for students and their families. Community partnerships contribute to students' skill development and access to specialized opportunities that enrich their educational experience (Epstein *et al.*, 2006). Epstein's model provides a comprehensive framework for parental involvement, offering practical strategies for educators to engage families in the learning process. However, the model is largely educator-driven and does not fully consider the parents' perspectives on

involvement. Most of the initiatives outlined rely on school staff, particularly teachers, to take the lead in fostering parental participation. While these strategies are essential, they do not fully address the challenges parents may face in engaging with their children's education.

The level of parental involvement is particularly critical when it comes to children with special needs or disabilities. Studies have shown that several psychological and demographic factors influence parental participation in education, yet Epstein's model does not adequately account for these barriers (Mabuza, 2017; McCoy *et al.*, 2016; Walker *et al.*, 2004). To understand the underlying factors affecting parental engagement, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) developed a model focusing on the psychological and motivational drivers of parental involvement.

This model examines parents' beliefs about their roles, their self-efficacy in supporting their child's education, and their perceptions of school invitations to participate (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Unlike Epstein's framework, which primarily categorizes types of involvement, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model provides deeper insights into why parents choose to engage or disengage from their children's education. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of children with disabilities, where factors such as parental confidence, societal attitudes, and logistical challenges play significant roles. Given the focus of this study on barriers to parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities in the Tamale Metropolis, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model serves as a more suitable theoretical foundation. It allows for a more nuanced exploration of the challenges parents face and offers insights into strategies that can enhance their engagement in their children's education.

Factors (Enablers) That Promote Effective Parental Involvement in the Education of Children with Disabilities (SEN)

Research consistently highlights the benefits of parental involvement in student learning. While classifications of parental engagement strategies vary, most scholars categorize them into two broad areas: home-based and school-based activities (Trotman, 2016). Home-based involvement includes activities parents undertake to support learning at home, while school-based involvement refers to parents collaborating with teachers and participating in school-related activities.

Numerous studies confirm that increased parental involvement is linked to better academic outcomes for children in general (Bariroh, 2021; Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Tekin & Ph, 2014). Some research also indicates a positive correlation between parental engagement and the academic performance of children with special needs. However, other studies have reported no significant relationship, while some argue that the extent of parental involvement has minimal impact on children with disabilities. Additionally, researchers have noted a decline

in parental involvement as children grow older, with parents of older students being less likely to engage with teachers or actively support learning.

For preschoolers with disabilities, academic performance is strongly influenced by the level of collaboration between parents and schools. Alimatu *et al.* (2021) emphasize that teachers, parents, and community members must work together to support inclusive learning and meet the diverse needs of children with disabilities. Establishing a professional support network is essential to creating a learning environment that accommodates students with disabilities.

Mugote (2019) argues that a sustained awareness campaign is necessary to promote the idea that education is a fundamental right for all children. Such initiatives should not only encourage parents to enroll their children with disabilities in school but also educate the general public on the importance of integrating these students into mainstream classrooms (Mugote, 2019). This integration is a crucial step in reducing stigma and fostering social inclusion.

Community attitudes play a crucial role in shaping parental involvement in education. Barton *et al.* (2004) found that positive community perceptions about disabilities help create an enabling environment for parental participation. In supportive communities, parents are more likely to seek and provide mobility, visual, and hearing assistive devices to help children with disabilities access school resources. Similarly, Steve (2015) asserts that parents' willingness to support their children's education is influenced by their perceptions of their parental role and the value they place on education (Steve, 2015).

Hoover *et al.* (2005) highlight that parents living in communities that strongly support inclusive education are more likely to be actively involved in their children's schooling. Motivating factors, such as the opportunity to volunteer in their children's academic and extracurricular activities, further encourage parental engagement (Green *et al.*, 2007).

To enhance parental involvement, Daudji *et al.* (2011) recommend implementing parent training programs and workshops. These initiatives equip parents with essential knowledge about disabilities, instructional strategies, and assistive technologies that can facilitate their child's learning. Additionally, such programs empower parents by fostering advocacy and support skills.

Similarly, Croot *et al.* (2008) suggest that parents of children with special needs should form support groups. These groups provide a platform for parents to share experiences, exchange resources, and offer emotional support. They also serve as advocacy networks that help parents navigate educational policies and secure better services for their children.

Epstein & Herrik (2006) advocates for an overlapping framework where families, schools, and communities collaborate to support children's learning. She argues that aligning goals and coordinating efforts among these three stakeholders can enhance both parental engagement and

student success. Studies conducted in Turkey, the United States, and England emphasize the need for partnerships among parents, schools, and governments to optimize educational opportunities for children with disabilities (D & Zúñiga, 2015; Epstein & Herrick, 2006; Pelco, 2000; Prew, 2009; Sheldon, 2002). These scholars suggest that schools should actively plan activities that foster parental engagement in various domains, including parenting support, remote learning, interpersonal communication, civic participation, decision-making, and broader societal collaboration.

Berg and Noort (2011) further asserts that, beyond passing down values and beliefs, parents have fundamental responsibilities, such as ensuring their children's basic needs for food, shelter, and safety. Fan and Chen (2001) extend this argument by emphasizing the direct correlation between parental attitudes and children's academic success. However, they acknowledge that not all parents can independently create a supportive home environment. In such cases, Epstein (2001) recommends that schools implement family-support programs, such as home visits, parent-education sessions, and initiatives to encourage parental engagement in academic activities. Schools that adopt these practices are often at the forefront of enhancing parental involvement in the education of students with disabilities.

Perceptions of Enablers to Involvement

Parental involvement in their children's education is significantly influenced by their perceptions of how schools value their children. Bariroh (2021) found that urban parents are more likely to engage in school activities when they perceive that teachers and school staff respect their children and recognize their potential.

Gay (2001), in *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, asserts that "Even without our conscious awareness, culture shapes how we teachers reason, believe, and conduct". This highlights the importance of educators understanding the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives of the communities they serve. Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) emphasize that fostering parental involvement requires schools to acknowledge how these cultural factors shape parents' perceptions of the institution (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016).

Parents are more likely to actively participate in their child's education when they:

1. Believe they can effectively support their child's academic progress.
2. Have confidence in their child's ability to succeed in school.
3. Place a high value on education.

These factors, identified by Bariroh (2021), citing Marui (1952), demonstrate the role of parental self-efficacy and educational expectations in fostering engagement. Billie (1993) further argues that parents who recognize their role as active participants in their child's education are more inclined to contribute to their academic development.

School leadership also plays a vital role in encouraging

parental involvement. Griffith, (2015) conducted a quantitative analysis of headteacher leadership styles and found that an empowering school atmosphere fosters strong parent-school relationships. In addition to leadership approaches, other key strategies identified by school administrators include:

- Implementing a formal parent engagement policy.
- Creating a welcoming school environment.
- Establishing a dedicated parent center.
- Launching parent outreach programs.
- Providing continuous professional development for teachers and staff to address parents' needs.

Jesse (1995) suggests that these strategies help create a more inclusive and collaborative school environment, ultimately enhancing parental participation in elementary education.

Barriers to Effective, School, and Parental Involvement

Parental participation is a crucial factor in determining children's academic success, yet many parents remain uninvolved due to various barriers (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Research has identified several key obstacles, including time constraints, limited expertise in providing academic support, transportation difficulties, attitudinal barriers, insufficient outreach by schools, and an unwelcoming school environment (Alimatu *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, institutional factors such as administrative challenges, ineffective communication, and a lack of clear policies further discourage parental engagement (Amoako, 2020). Socioeconomic barriers, including low income and lower parental education levels, can also impact parents' confidence and ability to support their children's learning (Chevalier *et al.*, 2013; Green *et al.*, 2007).

Parents of children with disabilities face even greater challenges in engaging with their children's education. Many lack awareness of available resources and support services, while negative societal perceptions and discrimination further discourage their involvement (Emerson *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, high poverty levels, limited knowledge of disability types, and the financial strain of raising a child with special needs contribute to their exclusion from the education system (Schooling, 2011). Schools often fail to adopt inclusive policies that accommodate the needs of parents with disabilities, reinforcing their marginalization (Nyarko, 2011). Consequently, children with disabilities may not receive the necessary parental support at home, which can hinder their academic and social development (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

Despite these challenges, research suggests several strategies to enhance parental involvement. Schools can improve communication and outreach by organizing workshops, seminars, and parent training programs to boost confidence and engagement (Koech, 2006). Establishing clear policies that encourage parental participation, fostering a welcoming school environment, and reducing negative attitudes towards parents and

their children are also crucial (Emmanuel, n.d.). Flexible engagement opportunities, such as virtual meetings or alternative participation methods, can help parents who struggle with time constraints or disabilities become more involved (Stoner & Angell, 2006). Moreover, collaboration between schools, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations can provide additional resources and support for parents, particularly those of children with special needs (Suzuki, 2002).

While barriers to parental involvement remain significant, particularly for parents of children with disabilities, it is evident that active participation greatly benefits children's education (Fingerman *et al.*, 2016). Parents play a crucial role in reinforcing the social, academic, and adaptive skills that children develop in school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to ensure depth, breadth, and confirmation

of findings (Hands, 2022). Mixed-method research allows for a more comprehensive exploration of complex issues by combining numerical data analysis with in-depth qualitative insights, enhancing the overall validity and applicability of the study (Akram *et al.*, 2023).

Population and Sampling

The study targeted parents of children with disabilities and teachers in selected inclusive schools within the Tamale metropolis. Purposive sampling was used to select parents of children with disabilities. Additionally, simple random sampling was employed to select classroom teachers from both regular and special education streams, ensuring a diverse representation.

Sample Distribution

The study involved 70 participants from various inclusive schools in the Tamale metropolis. The distribution is as follows:

Table 1: Sample Distribution

School	Number of Participants
Yumba Special School	10
Dakpema Inclusive Basic School	10
Lamashegu Primary (A)	10
Kaladan E.P Primary	10
Farukiya Islamic Primary	10
Zogbeli Primary (A)	10
Nyohini Presbyterian Primary (B)	5
Zujung Primary School	5
Total	70

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection involved: Structured questionnaires and interview guides were used to gather both numerical and descriptive data.

For quantitative analysis, responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and mean comparisons were employed to examine trends and relationships.

For qualitative analysis, a thematic analysis approach was used. Interview data were transcribed and analyzed for emerging themes, with occasional verbatim excerpts included to provide depth. Special education experts

reviewed the themes to ensure diverse perspectives were incorporated.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the study. Participants provided informed consent before engaging in surveys or interviews. Proper acknowledgment of original authors was ensured in literature references. Where copyrighted materials such as tables or excerpts were used, appropriate citations were included.

RESULTS

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 70)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=70)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	30	42.9
	Female	40	57.1
Educational Level	No Formal Education	12	17.1
	Basic Education	18	25.7
	Secondary Education	20	28.6
	Tertiary Education	20	28.6
Parental Status	Parent of Child with Disability	50	71.4
	Teacher	20	28.6

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the study participants. The gender distribution shows a slightly higher representation of females (57.1%) compared to males (42.9%), indicating a balanced perspective from both genders. In terms of education, a considerable proportion of respondents have attained secondary (28.6%) or tertiary education (28.6%), while a smaller segment has only basic education (25.7%) or no formal education (17.1%). This indicates a varied level of educational background, which may influence perspectives on parental involvement. Finally, a significant portion of respondents (71.4%)

are parents of children with disabilities, while 28.6% are teachers. This distribution ensures that the study captures both parental and professional perspectives on the barriers and strategies related to parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities.

Research Question 1: What are the Major Barriers to Parental Involvement in the Education of Children with Disabilities?

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the key barriers identified by parents and teachers.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics & Frequencies

Barrier	Frequency (n=70)	Percentage (%)
Lack of awareness about disabilities	40	57.1
Financial constraints	50	71.4
Negative societal attitudes	45	64.3
Lack of resources in schools	35	50.0
Poor communication with schools	30	42.9

According to the statistics in Table 3, the most important barriers restricting parental engagement in learning for children who have special needs are presumably unfavourable society views (64.3%) and financial restrictions (71.4%). A lack of information regarding disabilities (57.1%) further plays a major role in discouraging parental involvement as many parents have no idea about the children’s specific needs or how best to help them. Lack of facilities in schools (50.0%) and inadequate communication (42.9%) further add to the difficulty as they let parents feel cut away from the educational experience of their children.

Integration of qualitative and quantitative findings

Lack of Awareness about Disabilities

According to the survey results, 57.1% of respondents believe that one key barrier to parental participation is ignorance. Qualitative analysis responses from parents who revealed their poor knowledge of their children’s problems and how to help them academically complement this result. A parent observed:”so many parents do not understand the disability condition of their children and take it like they can never make it in school”

Another parent expressed: “Many of us parents were never taught about disabilities, so we don’t know how to support our children properly. We assume they cannot succeed because we lack the right information and guidance from the schools.”

These comments emphasises the importance of parental education initiatives that may provide households the tools and information required to assist in the learning of their children. Parents who lack knowledge might find it difficult to stand up for their children, therefore restricting their capacity to engage in school events.

Financial Constraints

The most common challenge found to be financial

problems (71.4%), which emphasises how strongly economic troubles affect parental engagement. The qualitative answers confirmed this, because many parents mentioned difficulties in supplying basic educational resources and inability to finance conveyance to school meetings as main problems. One parent clarified:

“some of us finds it difficult to provide common educational materials and mean to school where our children attends”

This implies that low-income households suffer systematic difficulties preventing them from participating in the education of their children. To increase parental engagement among economically underprivileged households, schools and legislators might have to take financial aid programs such transit allowances or subsidised learning supplies into consideration.

Negative Societal Attitudes

Of the respondents, a notable 64.3% said that parental participation was negatively affected by stigma and society views towards disability. Parents voiced worries in the qualitative interviews around community judgement of them. One parent shared:

“The stigma and shame that goes with disabilities in our communities make some of us parents uncertain to willingly involve in school activities.”

This result shows how limited parental involvement is by cultural attitudes. Parents who feel humiliated or afraid of prejudice may retreat from school events to escape observation. Awareness initiatives run by schools and community groups can help to dispel misunderstandings and create an inclusive climate whereby parents feel free to assist their children.

Lack of Resources in Schools

The primary barrier to engagement indicated by fifty percent of the participants (50.0%) as low school

resources. Teachers also underlined how inadequate teaching and learning resources make it challenging for institutions to properly serve children with impairments. Some parents noted that when schools lack the required tools to help their children, many of them feel demoralised. One parent noted:

“the school do not have the required materials to support my child learning and it discourages me from being actively involve.”

This result implies that parental involvement is much influenced by the availability of resources as parents could believe that their attempts are useless without enough facilities. lawmakers and school administrators should give distributing funds to inclusive schools top priority so that students get the required help.

Poor Communication with Schools

Although ineffective communication was the least often mentioned obstacle (42.9%), qualitative responses underlined that parents often feel cut off from school events because of inadequate involvement of teachers and managers. One parent described:

“schools hardly contact parents for engagement, this makes it difficult for parents to participate.”

This suggests that parental engagement is much influenced by school-led communication practices. When administrators and teachers neglect to notify

parents, they (parents) might believe their engagement is not necessary. Regular meetings, phone conversations, or digital tools like WhatsApp groups can schools enhance communication to make sure parents stay involved in the education of their children.

Consequently, the results draw attention to the very complex barriers to parental participation in the schooling of children with disabilities. Financial restrictions came first, then unfavourable society attitudes, lack of knowledge, inadequate funding, and lack of interaction. The qualitative findings helped one to better grasp these difficulties by showing how poor school involvement, cultural stigma, and financial difficulty all together limit parental involvement. Dealing with these problems calls for a whole strategy encompassing awareness campaigns, financial assistance programs, better communication techniques, and more distribution of resources to inclusive schools.

Research Question 2: How Does Parental Socio-Economic Status Influence Involvement in the Education of Children with Disabilities?

Chi-square Test of Independence

Table 4 shows the relationship between parental socio-economic status (SES) and their level of involvement in school activities.

Table 4: Relationship between parental socio-economic status (SES)

Parental SES Level	High Involvement (n=30)	Low Involvement (n=40)	Total (n=70)
Low SES	10 (33.3%)	30 (75.0%)	40 (57.1%)
Middle SES	10 (33.3%)	8 (20.0%)	18 (25.7%)
High SES	10 (33.3%)	2 (5.0%)	12 (17.1%)
Total	30 (100%)	40 (100%)	70 (100%)

Chi-square result: $\chi^2 (2, N=70) = 12.56, p < 0.05$

The chi-square test result ($\chi^2 = 12.56, p < 0.05$) as shown in Table 4, indicates a significant association between parental socio-economic status (SES) and their level of involvement in their children’s education. Parents from low-income households exhibit the lowest level of involvement, with 75.0% categorized as having low involvement. In contrast, parents from high-income backgrounds demonstrate greater engagement, with only 5.0% reporting low involvement. These findings suggest that financial stability plays a crucial role in enabling parental participation. Families with higher SES are more likely to have the time, resources, and knowledge necessary to engage actively in school-related activities. Conversely, parents from lower SES backgrounds may face challenges such as work commitments, financial constraints, and limited access to transportation, which hinder their ability to participate in their children’s education.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings Financial Burden and Time Constraints

The quantitative results reveal that low-income parents

participate far less in their children’s schooling. The qualitative data confirms this even more as many parents mention money problems as a main barrier. A parent shared:

“I wish to be more involved, I have to work several hours so I can provide for my family.”

As parents try to satisfy the financial demands of their families, this reaction shows how economic pressures compel them to give employment top priority above school engagement. Parents with hectic schedules might not have the time to help children study at home or show up for school events.

A teacher also highlighted this issue, stating:

“Some parents genuinely want to be involved, but their financial struggles mean they have to prioritize work over attending school meetings or supporting their children academically.”

This comment reinforces the idea that economic hardships limit parental involvement, not due to a lack of interest but because of the necessity to meet financial obligations.

Parental Education Level and Confidence in Supporting Learning

Another important element affecting parental engagement is educational level. The quantitative findings show that parents from higher SES backgrounds often show more engagement; this is likewise shown in the qualitative replies. Those with minimal formal education might feel inadequate to significantly help their children with their schooling. One participant noted:

“Parents who are not well educated feel they can not contribute effectively to their child’s education.”

Another parent echoed this concern, stating:

“Sometimes, I want to help my child with schoolwork, but I don’t understand the subjects well enough. I feel embarrassed to talk to teachers because I don’t know what to say.”

These responses highlight how a lack of formal education can create a psychological barrier that discourages parental involvement. Parents may feel intimidated by school environments and hesitant to seek support, further isolating them from their child’s learning process. Schools can address this issue by fostering a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere through parent education programs and open communication channels.

Access to Resources and School Involvement

Low- and high-SES parents’ access to resources especially technology and transportation which directly impact their capacity to interact with schools reflects also their financial difference. According to the survey results, 75.0% of low-SES parents say they are not very involved;

qualitative replies reveal some parents find it difficult to make it to school meetings because of travel expenses. A parent highlighted:

“Some parents do not have enough money for transportation to school meetings. Because I know I am not alone in this”

This emphasises how urgently intervention programs such as virtual engagement platforms, transportation stipends, or community-based support systems can help financially strapped parents. For low-SES families, if schools offer substitute ways for involvement such as neighbourhood parent support groups, it might help to close the gap.

Therefore, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data suggests that parental engagement in the education of children with disabilities is much influenced by socioeconomic level. Lower-income parents’ engagement in school events is hampered by insufficient education, busy schedules, and financial restrictions. Higher-income parents, on the other hand, have more money and freedom which helps them to be more involved. The results imply that lowering financial barriers, stepping up parental education initiatives, and providing flexible participation choices might help low-SES parents become more involved, so enhancing the educational results for children with impairments.

Research Question 3: What Strategies Can Enhance Parental Involvement in the Education of Children with Disabilities?

Table 5: Mean Ratings of Suggested Strategies

Strategy	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation
Regular parent-teacher communication	4.5	0.6
Financial assistance for low-income families	4.3	0.8
Awareness campaigns on disabilities	4.7	0.5
Parent training workshops	4.2	0.7
Community support groups	4.0	0.9

Table 5 presents the average ratings of different strategies suggested for improving parental involvement.

The results in Table 5, shows that all suggested approaches got great marks, implying that teachers and parents understand the importance of these interventions. Emphasising the need of teaching parents and society about handicap concerns, awareness campaigns on disabilities (Mean = 4.7, SD = 0.5) got the highest ranking among the techniques. Highly regarded were also regular parent-teacher contact (Mean = 4.5, SD = 0.6), which emphasises the need of consistent involvement between parents and schools. Another much supported item was financial help for low-income families (Mean = 4.3, SD = 0.8), therefore supporting the preceding conclusions on economic restrictions as a major obstacle to parental engagement.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings Importance of Awareness Campaigns

The quantitative data reveal that awareness campaigns on disability got the highest ranking (Mean= 4.7), indicating that both parents and teachers think a lack of knowledge is a major obstacle. This fits qualitative answers, when one teacher said:

“Most parents do not have any idea about their children disabilities, so they often not feel being part of any school activity

Another teacher emphasized this point, stating:

“Some parents don’t even know their child’s condition has a name or that there are ways to support them. They assume the child just learns slowly and give up on their education.”

These responses underscores the need for structured awareness programs that not only educate parents about

disabilities but also provide them with practical strategies for supporting their children. Schools and community organizations should work together to create accessible resources, conduct outreach programs, and encourage open discussions to empower parents with the knowledge they need to be actively involved in their children's education.

Enhancing Parent-Teacher Communication

With a mean value of 4.5, the great rating for frequent parent-teacher contact points to the major improvement in engagement that greater communication between schools and parents may bring about. This is consistent with parents' qualitative comments complaining about the dearth of school outreach:

"Schools hardly ever reach out to us for informs or meetings. We only hear from them when there is a problem."

Another parent reinforced this concern, stating:

"Sometimes, we don't even know about important school programs until it's too late. If teachers involved us more, we would be able to support our children better."

This comment suggests that parental involvement is limited by ineffective organised communication. In order to keep parents apprised and involved, schools should set up frequent meetings, newsletters, and digital lines of communication such as WhatsApp groups or SMS updates.

Addressing Financial Barriers

With a mean rating of 4.3 for financial aid, the theory that economic difficulty is a main deterrent to parent engagement is supported. Furthermore supporting this are qualitative answers:

"I would love to appear in school programs, but I don't have enough money transportation every time."

This indicates that although they are limited financially, some parents wish to be involved. Giving allowances for transportation, free learning materials, or scholarship programs that help families in need might benefit schools, NGOs, and government initiatives.

Providing Parent Training Workshops

With a mean score of 4.2, parent training programs clearly show great support for arming parents with tools to help their children's learning. One parent spoke:

"I occasionally want to support my child with schoolwork, but I don't know how. I feel lost."

This reaction emphasises how a number of parents lack the knowledge and confidence to help their disabled children. Workshops stressing efficient home learning techniques, knowledge of impairments, and communication skills might equip parents to be more involved.

Building Community Support Groups

With a mean rating of 4.0, community support groups show moderate but noteworthy support for peer networks whereby parents may exchange knowledge and

experiences. One participant said:

"Speaking to other parents with comparable experiences assist me feel less alone and more self-assured in managing my child's education."

This implies that networks of parents might offer incentive, knowledge-sharing, and emotional support. Parent support groups wherein families with disabled children may network and share ideas might be facilitated by schools and community organisations.

The results therefore show that parental engagement in the learning process of children with disabilities may be raised by means of awareness campaigns, better communication, financial support, training seminars, and support groups taken in concert. While the qualitative answers offer more in-depth understanding of how these techniques handle practical difficulties, the quantitative assessments underline their relevance. Awareness campaigns should be given top priority in schools and legislators should help low-income families, providing skill-building chances for parents to establish a more inclusive and encouraging learning environment.

Discussion

The results of this study underline the important barriers that prevent parents from participating in the educational experiences of children with disabilities, the part that socioeconomic level plays in determining involvement, and the success of several approaches for raising participation. Combining quantitative and qualitative data helps the discussion to offer a thorough examination of the current problems and suggests appropriate remedies.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Financial restrictions (71.4%), unfavourable society attitudes (64.3%), lack of information of disability (57.1%), lack of facilities in schools (50.0%), and lack of interaction with schools (42.9%) were among the numerous main barriers found restricting parental engagement. These results coincide with other studies demonstrating how significantly parental involvement is shaped by socioeconomic and cultural elements (Epstein, 2013; Newman & Northcutt, 2019).

The qualitative answers strengthened the statistical results. Many parents said they are ignorant of disability, which often results in emotions of powerlessness. One parent said:

"So many parents do not know the special needs of their children and assume they cannot prosper educationally."

In the same vein, unfavourable society perceptions remain a problem. One of the teachers remarked:

"The stigma relating to disabilities makes some parents not willing to responsibly involve with schools."

These results show that inadequate parental participation is mostly related with cultural views and false information. Improving involvement depends on addressing these misunderstandings by means of educational initiatives and training courses (Yuen-han MO & Tak-Mau CHAN, 2022).

Influence of Socio-Economic Status on Parental Involvement

The study also showed that their degree of involvement is much influenced by their socioeconomic level (SES). Strong link between SES and parental participation was established by the Chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 12.56, p < 0.05$). Low-income parents specifically showed lower degrees of participation (75.0%), whereas middle- and high-income parents were included more actively (80%-83.3%).

The qualitative data confirms this tendency. Low-income parents said that financial hardships keep them from fully participating in their children's education:

"I want to be more involved, but I have to work long hours to provide for my family."

Additionally, the educational background of parents played a role in shaping engagement. Some parents expressed that they felt inadequate to contribute to their child's learning due to their limited formal education:

"Those with less education believe they cannot successfully help their children study".

This result is consistent with other research showing that parents with greater education are more willing to help their children with homework and participate in intellectual conversations (Epstein & Herrick, 2006). It also implies that educational initiatives meant to educate parents with skills and confidence to assist their children's learning at home should be part of attempts to improve parental involvement.

Strategies for Enhancing Parental Involvement

The study looked at several ways to increase family participation; frequent parent-teacher contact (Mean = 4.5) and awareness campaigns on disability (Mean = 4.7) ranked highest. These results imply the first steps towards increased involvement include teaching parents about impairments and encouraging consistent connection with schools.

One parent's qualitative comments provide more light on the reasons these tactics are required. She said:

"I'm not sure how to help my child with homework occasionally, but I wish to. I find myself lost."

This response implies that parent training courses (Mean = 4.2) would be helpful in arming parents with useful abilities to assist their children's education. Likewise, community support groups (Mean = 4.0) proved to be a successful means of motivating parental involvement.

"Chatting with other parents going through similar circumstances assists me feel less alone and more confident in managing my child's education."

Combining qualitative and quantitative data shows that parental participation may be much raised by means of financial assistance, awareness campaigns, better school communication, and organised parent training programmes.

Implication for Policy and Practice

Policymakers, teachers, and community leaders striving to raise parental participation in special education should

pay great attention to the results of this study. Given that financial restrictions become the most important barrier, government and non-governmental organisations ought to give low-income parents financial support programs more thought. Offering free learning materials, compensation for school-related expenditures, and transportation assistance helps to reduce financial load and boost more involvement.

Also schools also have to actively include parents via controlled channels such monthly newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and mobile apps offering real-time information on student development. Training in cultural sensitivity for instructors should also be given top priority in special education programs to guarantee that parents feel welcomed and motivated to help their children with their education.

Moreover, public awareness initiatives should get greater vigour in order to fight the stigma related with disability. Using media channels, community events, and faith-based organisations, these campaigns should inform the public about the possibilities of children with disabilities and the need of parental participation.

CONCLUSION

Parental involvement plays a vital role in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of children, particularly those with disabilities. Despite its widely acknowledged benefits, many barriers hinder parents from actively participating in their children's education. These challenges, ranging from socio-economic constraints and lack of awareness to institutional limitations and societal attitudes, create significant gaps in engagement. Without addressing these obstacles, children with disabilities may not receive the full support they need to thrive academically and socially. This study has highlighted the key barriers limiting parental involvement and examined the influence of socio-economic factors on engagement levels. Additionally, it has explored strategies that can enhance parental participation, ensuring that all children, regardless of their abilities, benefit from a supportive learning environment. Schools, policymakers, and communities must work together to create inclusive and welcoming educational settings that encourage and facilitate parental engagement.

Moving forward, it is essential to implement targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by parents of children with disabilities. Schools should develop clear policies, foster open communication, and provide resources that empower parents to take an active role in their children's education. By bridging the gap between schools and families, we can create an education system that not only recognizes the importance of parental involvement but actively supports it, ultimately improving the educational outcomes and well-being of children with disabilities.

Recommendations

The results of this study provide numerous suggestions

to increase parental participation in the learning process of children with disabilities.

Raising Knowledge and Understanding of Disabilities

Many parents lack sufficient understanding of disability, which prevents their participation in the education of their children. Working together, schools, community organisations, and educational agencies should run campaigns of awareness and training courses to inform parents on disabilities, inclusive education, and efficient strategies for helping their children learn.

Addressing Financial Barriers

Financial assistance programs, scholarships, and transportation help should be established for families with low socioeconomic level since financial restrictions were found as a major obstacle. To lessen the financial load on parents, government organisations, NGOs, and school officials ought to give stipends or subsidised learning materials.

Combatting Negative Societal Attitudes

According to the study, prejudice and stigma limit parent involvement. Public sensitising initiatives should be carried out to question society preconceptions and advance a more inclusive attitude towards kids with disabilities. School outreach initiatives, media, and community events may all help these efforts be carried out.

Strengthening Parent-Teacher Communication

One noted limiting factor in parental participation was inadequate communication between parents and schools. To guarantee parents are routinely updated about the development of their children, schools should set up several channels of contact including phone calls, text messages, and parent conferences. Establishing parent-teacher organisations (PTAs) targeted on children with disabilities helps to improve communication even further.

5. Enhancing School Resources for Inclusive Education

Another main barriers to parental engagement in schools was insufficient funding. To help inclusive schools, the government and educational stakeholders should raise funding in special education resources like assistive technology, learning aids, and qualified special education teachers.

Following these suggestions will help stakeholders parents, teachers, legislators, community leaders to cooperate to remove obstacles and improve the active participation of parents in the education of children with disabilities.

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