

Parental Involvement of Higher Secondary Students in Aizawl City: Role of Family Dynamics

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Abstract—This study examined how parental involvement varies with parents' occupation, family type and students' birth order among 330 higher secondary students selected through stratified random sampling from government, private and aided schools in Aizawl. Parental involvement was assessed using a standardized Parental Involvement Scale, and data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA. Results showed that parents' occupational sector did not significantly influence mean parental involvement scores, indicating that job type alone does not determine how actively parents engage with their children's education in this context. In contrast, family type emerged as a significant factor at the 0.05 level, with students from nuclear families reporting comparatively higher proportions of high and very high involvement, while those from single-parent families were overrepresented in the low involvement category, suggesting that structural constraints in single-parent and extended families may limit parents' capacity to support schooling. Birth order showed no significant differences in parental involvement, and the distribution of involvement levels was broadly similar across all categories, implying relatively equitable parental engagement across siblings. The overall findings suggest that in a high-literacy, close-knit setting like Aizawl, family structure matters more for parental involvement than parents' occupation or children's birth order, and interventions to strengthen parental engagement should prioritize support for extended and single-parent households while sustaining generally comparable involvement across educational and occupational groups.

Key Words—Parental Involvement, Occupation, Family Type, Birth Order, Higher Secondary Students, Aizawl City

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement is widely recognized as a decisive factor in shaping students' academic success, socio-emotional development, and overall adjustment in school (Wilder, 2014; Epstein, 1995). While existing literature has consistently highlighted the positive impact of parental engagement on learners' achievement and behaviour, it also shows that this involvement is unevenly distributed across key socio-demographic dimensions, including parents' occupation, family structure, and children's birth order (Zedan, 2011; Cabus & Ariës, 2016). Studies across different contexts suggest that parents' occupational demands can constrain the time and energy available for supervising homework, attending school meetings, and providing emotional support, thereby indirectly influencing students' discipline and school adjustment (Adeyemi et al., 2018).

In the context of Aizawl, where literacy rates are high and community and church-based networks are strong, it becomes essential to investigate whether parents' occupation, family type, and birth order meaningfully differentiate levels of parental involvement, or whether shared educational values foster more uniform patterns of engagement across these groups. The present study therefore focuses specifically on these three dimensions; parents' job sector, family structure, and students' birth order to deepen understanding of how structural and positional factors within families shape the nature and extent of parental involvement among higher secondary students in Aizawl City.

Rationale

Parental involvement has long been guided by theories developed in the 1980s and 1990s, which helped draw attention to the field but were formulated before a strong base of quantitative evidence was available, limiting their empirical robustness. Contemporary research shows that parental involvement remains a critical predictor of students' academic success, behavior, and emotional well-being, with active engagement linked to higher achievement and better adjustment (Wilder, 2014; Epstein, 1995). Given that involvement patterns differ across cultural and socioeconomic contexts and that neglect during adolescence is associated with poorer outcomes (Reay, 1998; Careemdeen, 2024), examining parental involvement among secondary school students in Aizawl City is essential to understand their current support systems and to generate context-specific evidence that can guide efforts to enhance students' overall growth and development.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are as follows –

1. Is there a difference in the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in relation to their parent's job sector?
2. Is there a difference in the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students on the basis of the type of families they belong to?
3. Is there a difference in the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in terms of birth order?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows –

1. To compare the level of parental involvement between government and self employed parents of higher secondary students in Aizawl city.

2. To compare the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in Aizawl city on the basis of nuclear, extended and single parent families.
3. To compare the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in Aizawl city in terms of birth order.

Hypotheses of the Study

The null hypotheses of the study are as follows -

1. There is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement between government employed and self employed parents of higher secondary students in Aizawl city.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement between higher secondary students in Aizawl city belonging to nuclear, extended or single parent families.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in Aizawl city in terms of youngest, middle, eldest and only child.

Statement of the problem

The problem is stated as “Parental Involvement of Higher Secondary Students in Aizawl City: Role of Family Dynamics”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviews of related literature for the present study are –

Abbas et al. (2024) reported that employment status, along with parental education, significantly influenced parental involvement in Katsina, indicating that parents in more stable or formal jobs were better able to support their children’s education.

Rasulova (2024) showed that fathers’ occupational status affected students’ reading comprehension in Azerbaijan, implying that job type and associated time/resources can directly influence academic outcomes.

Kanungo et al. (2023) emphasized that among tribal parents, limited educational familiarity rather than occupation alone restricted parental involvement, highlighting that job status interacts with awareness and educational capital.

Zedan (2011) found that larger families, often represented by extended households, displayed lower levels of parental involvement, which was attributed to divided attention and competing responsibilities among multiple children.

Shao et al. (2022) reported that an increasing number of children in the family reduced overall parental involvement, reinforcing the idea that family composition and size constrain parents’ capacity to support learning.

Cabus and Ariës (2016) examined Dutch compulsory education and found a negative relationship between birth order and parental involvement, with younger siblings receiving less parental attention and support than first-borns. Their study also showed that parental involvement had medium to large positive effects on achievement, implying that first-born children benefit most from higher parental support.

Paulhus et al. (1999) investigated birth order effects on personality and achievement within families and reported that first-borns often receive more attention and resources from parents, contributing to higher achievement and conscientiousness. Later-born children, in contrast, tended to develop more rebellious and liberal traits, possibly reflecting efforts to differentiate themselves in the context of reduced parental focus.

METHODOLOGY

Method

The study employs a descriptive survey method to explore the influence of family dynamics on parental involvement.

Population

The population of the present study comprises of higher secondary school students enrolled in Class 11 and 12 across government, private, and aided schools in Aizawl City, based on enrollment records from the DEO, Aizawl as of November 2024.

Sample

A total of 330 higher secondary students were selected using a stratified random sampling technique.

Tools used for data collection

The investigator used the “Parental Involvement Scale” (PIS), a standardized instrument developed by Dr. Vijaya Laxmi Chouhan and Mrs. Gunjan Ganotra Arora (2009).

Procedure for data analysis

The investigator visits a total of twelve schools and collects necessary data through questionnaires. For analyzing the data, statistical tools such as Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, T-test and ANOVA were employed.

DATA ANALYSIS

For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as Percentage, Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, T-test and ANOVA were used.

Comparison of parental involvement based on parents' occupation

Objective 1: To compare the level of parental involvement between government and self employed parents of higher secondary students in Aizawl City.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement between government employed and self employed parents of higher secondary students in Aizawl city.

Table 1 presents the differences in parental involvement levels between government employed and self employed parents.

Table 1
Result of Independent Samples t-test comparing the level of parental involvement between government employed and self employed parents.

PO	N	M	SD	Df	t-value	Inference
Govt. Employed	109	84.56	9.71	328	0.45	Not Significant
Self Employed	221	85.06	8.71			

The independent samples t-test presented in Table 4.5 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in parental involvement between students with government employed parents ($M = 84.56$, $SD = 9.71$) and those with self employed parents ($M = 85.06$, $SD = 8.71$). The obtained t-value of 0.45 is lower than the critical values at the 0.05 (1.97) and 0.01 (2.59) levels of significance, demonstrating that the slight variation in mean scores is not statistically meaningful. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement between government employed and self-employed parents is rejected, indicating that parental occupation does not significantly influence the extent of parental involvement.

Comparison of parental involvement based on family type

Objective 2: To compare the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in Aizawl city on the basis of nuclear, extended and single parent families.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement between higher secondary students in Aizawl city belonging to nuclear, extended or single parent families.

Table 2 presents the differences in parental involvement levels based on the types of families.

Table 2
Result of One-way Analysis of Variance comparing the level of parental involvement between nuclear, extended and single-parent families.

Dimension	Variance	SS	Df	MS	f ratio	Inference
Family type	Between Groups	528.56	2	264.28	3.28	Significant
	Within Groups	26347.14	327	80.57		

The result of the one-way ANOVA in Table 2 revealed a significant difference in the mean scores of parental involvement across different family types; Nuclear, Extended, and Single Parent. The between-group variance was relatively larger ($SS = 528.56$, $MS = 264.28$) compared to the within-group variance ($SS = 26,347.14$, $MS = 80.57$), resulting in an F-ratio of 3.28. This F-value exceeds the critical value at the 0.05 level (3.03). Due to the significant difference in the between group variance, a further analysis is carried out through independent samples t-test to compare the level of parental involvement based on parents occupation.

Table 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 present the differences in parental involvement levels based on family type.

Table 2.1
Result of Independent Samples t-test comparing the level of parental involvement between nuclear and extended families

Family type	N	M	SD	Df	t-Value	Inference
Nuclear	191	85.98	9.18005	283	2.29	Significant
Extended	94	83.37	8.93			

Table 2.2*Result of Independent Samples t-test comparing the level of parental involvement between extended and single parent families*

Family type	N	M	SD	Df	t-Value	Inference
Extended	94	83.37	8.93	137	0.09	Not Significant
Single Parent	45	83.51	8.13			

Table 2.3*Result of Independent Samples t-test comparing the level of parental involvement between extended and single parent families*

Family type	N	M	SD	Df	t-Value	Inference
Nuclear	191	85.98	9.18005	234	1.79	Not Significant
Single Parent	45	83.51	8.13			

In table 4.8, further analysis by family type revealed that students from nuclear families (N = 191) had a mean parental involvement score of 85.98 (SD = 9.18), while those from extended families (N = 94) had a mean score of 83.37 (SD = 8.93). The calculated t-value of 2.29 exceeds the critical value at the 0.05 significance level (1.97), indicating a statistically significant difference in parental involvement between nuclear and extended family types.

Comparison of parental involvement based on birth order

Objective 3: To compare the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in Aizawl city in terms of birth order.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the level of parental involvement in higher secondary students in Aizawl city in terms of youngest, middle, eldest and only child.

Table 3 presents the differences in parental involvement levels based on birth order.

Table 3*Result of One-way Analysis of Variance comparing the level of parental involvement based on students' birth order.*

Dimension	Variance	SS	DF	MS	f ratio	Inference
Birth Order	Between Groups	68.83	3	22.94	0.27	Not Significant
	Within Groups	26806.87	326	82.22		

The one-way ANOVA in Table 3 showed no significant difference in parental involvement among students by birth order (oldest, middle, youngest, only child), with a low between-group variance (SS = 68.83, MS = 22.94) compared to within-group variance (SS = 26,806.87, MS = 82.22) and an F-ratio of 0.27, which is far below the critical values at the 0.05 (3.03) and 0.01 (4.68) levels. Accordingly, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in parental involvement across the four birth order categories is accepted, indicating that birth order does not significantly affect the level of parental involvement among higher secondary students in Aizawl City.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The article shows that overall parental involvement among higher secondary students in Aizawl City is generally low to average, with nearly half of the students reporting below average support from their parents at home and in their studies. Within this broader pattern, parental occupation and birth order do not emerge as distinguishing factors: students of government employed and self employed parents experience very similar levels of involvement, and eldest, middle, youngest, and only children also report broadly comparable parental engagement. These results suggest that, in the Aizawl context, parents tend to value education similarly across job sectors and make efforts to distribute attention fairly among their children, regardless of sibling position.

Family type emerged as a clear influence on parental involvement, with students from nuclear families more often reporting high or very high support, while those from extended and especially single parent families were concentrated in the low involvement category. This findings aligned with Zedan (2011) and Shao et al. (2022), who found that larger or more complex family structures tend to dilute parental attention, suggesting that in Aizawl City the structure and relational climate of the family rather than occupation or birth order are central in shaping parental engagement and warrant targeted support for extended and single parent households.

In conclusion, the findings underscore that in a high literacy, education valuing context like Aizawl City, structural and relational characteristics of the home environment matter more for parental involvement than conventional socio-economic markers such as job sector or the child's position in the sibling hierarchy. For practice, this implies that school based interventions and policy initiatives should prioritize additional support mechanisms for students from single parent and extended families through flexible communication, counseling, and community support while continuing to encourage a culture of equal involvement across all children in the household. For research, the study highlights the need for further, larger scale and possibly longitudinal investigations into how family dynamics, care giving load, and community networks interact with family type to shape parental involvement and student outcomes in Mizoram and similar socio cultural settings.

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