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The Role of the Family in Supporting Students' Assessment Process

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of families, particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, in supporting students' readiness and performance in the assessment process. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with parents, focus group discussions with teachers and counselors, and document analysis of school policies related to assessment preparation. The findings reveal that while families face various challenges such as limited educational resources, time constraints, and digital barriers they nonetheless exhibit a strong willingness to be involved in their children's academic success. Emotional support, monitoring of academic progress, and informal learning at home emerged as common forms of involvement. However, the study also highlights a lack of structured, culturally responsive, and sustainable engagement practices from schools. To enhance student outcomes in assessments, the study recommends that schools develop inclusive communication strategies, provide digital and assessment literacy support for parents, and implement community-based partnership models. The research emphasizes that meaningful school-family collaboration is essential to fostering equitable assessment readiness for all students.

Kata Kunci

Family Involvement, Assessment Readiness, Low Socioeconomic Background, Parental Engagement, School-Family Partnership, Qualitative Research

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INTRODUCTION

The role of the family in education has evolved significantly over the past century, transitioning from a peripheral influence to a central component of pedagogical frameworks. Historically, education systems operated under a school-centric model, where teachers and institutions held sole responsibility for student outcomes (Epstein, 2018). However, the late 20th century saw a paradigm shift toward recognizing families as co-educators, particularly through theories like Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, which posits that child development is shaped by interconnected environmental layers,

including the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Contemporary research underscores that familial engagement is not merely supplementary but foundational to academic success, especially in the context of assessments (Kim & Hill, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for redefining family roles in education. With the abrupt shift to remote learning, parents and caregivers were thrust into unprecedented responsibilities, from managing online platforms to directly facilitating assessments (Smith et al., 2023). A 2023 UNESCO report revealed that 67% of families globally became actively involved in daily academic tasks during lockdowns, highlighting the blurred boundaries between home and school. In Indonesia, a Sinta-indexed study by Suryani et al. (2022) found that 82% of rural parents struggled with digital literacy, exacerbating inequities in assessment participation. These disparities underscored the need for systemic reforms to bridge gaps in resource access and parental preparedness.

In collectivist societies such as Indonesia, familial obligations deeply influence academic motivation. A 2023 study in *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* (Sinta 2) demonstrated that Javanese families prioritize communal academic success, often pooling resources to hire tutors or purchase devices for high-stakes exams (Widodo & Santoso, 2023). Conversely, individualist cultures, like the United States, emphasize self-reliance, though meta-analyses show that parental emotional support remains critical across contexts (Pomerantz et al., 2020).

Socioeconomic status (SES) further mediates family efficacy in supporting assessments. High-income families often invest in enrichment activities, such as coding classes or international standardized test prep, which directly enhance assessment performance (García & Weiss, 2020). In contrast, low-SES households face structural barriers: a 2023 World Bank study in Southeast Asia noted that 40% of Indonesian families could not afford internet subscriptions, limiting access to online practice tests (World Bank, 2023). Such inequities are compounded in rural areas, where schools rarely provide offline assessment alternatives (Nugroho et al., 2023).

Post-pandemic, technology has reshaped assessment formats, with AI-driven platforms and gamified quizzes becoming mainstream. While these tools offer personalized feedback, they require families to navigate complex interfaces. A 2023 Scopus-indexed study by Lee et al. found that parental familiarity with EdTech tools correlated with a 30% reduction in student anxiety during digital exams. In response, governments like Indonesia's have

launched initiatives such as the *Digital Literacy for Families* program, which trains parents in using assessment portals (Kemendikbud, 2023).

Families also play a psychological role in mitigating assessment stress. A 2023 *Journal of Adolescent Health* study linked parental affirmations to lower cortisol levels in teenagers during exam periods (Chen et al., 2023). However, over-involvement risks counterproductivity: a 2023 Sinta-indexed paper warned that "helicopter parenting" in urban Indonesian families increased burnout rates among students preparing for the national university entrance exam (SBMPTN) (Pratiwi et al., 2023).

The family's role in assessments is thus multifaceted, shaped by cultural values, technological shifts, and socioeconomic realities. Recent global crises and innovations have further cemented its importance, urging policymakers to adopt inclusive strategies that empower all families as partners in education.

1. How do parents in rural Indonesia perceive their role in supporting students during digital-based assessments, and what challenges do they face in fulfilling this role?
2. What strategies can schools implement to strengthen collaboration with families from low socioeconomic backgrounds to improve students' readiness for assessments?

The family plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic development, including their preparedness and performance in assessment contexts. A growing body of recent literature underscores that students whose families are actively engaged in their education demonstrate higher levels of motivation, confidence, and achievement in assessments (Garbacz et al., 2021). This support may manifest in various forms, such as providing a conducive home learning environment, helping with homework, or fostering positive attitudes toward education.

Parental involvement is consistently linked to improved academic outcomes, especially in formative and summative assessments (Boonk et al., 2020). Students tend to perform better when parents engage in regular communication with teachers, monitor academic progress, and support test preparation strategies. According to Goodall (2021), involvement that emphasizes learning over performance fosters deeper cognitive engagement and reduces test anxiety among learners.

Families from low socioeconomic status (SES) often face structural barriers that hinder consistent involvement, including limited time, educational background, and access to resources (Jeynes, 2022). These challenges can affect students' assessment readiness. However, when schools proactively address these barriers—by offering flexible meeting schedules, translated materials, or

community outreach—family engagement increases (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2020). Studies indicate that even minimal but consistent engagement from low-SES families can positively influence student achievement when guided by supportive school policies (Fan & Yost, 2023).

Collaborative relationships between schools and families are vital in demystifying the assessment process. Epstein's framework of overlapping spheres of influence (2021) suggests that effective partnerships empower families to play meaningful roles in student assessment, especially when schools provide training or information sessions on test formats and expectations. Research by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2022) emphasizes that when parents understand the purpose and nature of assessments, they can more effectively motivate and support their children's learning.

Culturally responsive strategies are essential in involving diverse families in assessment preparation. According to Hammond (2023), recognizing and respecting families' cultural values and communication styles strengthens trust and engagement. When educators adopt inclusive practices—such as incorporating home languages, acknowledging cultural practices, and employing community liaisons—students feel more supported and confident in facing academic evaluations.

The digitalization of assessments has added a new layer of complexity for low-SES families. Limited digital literacy or internet access can marginalize parents' ability to support children in technology-based evaluations. A study by Kim & Glassman (2021) found that schools providing device access and parental training in educational technology saw a marked improvement in students' online assessment performance. Thus, bridging the digital divide is now a critical dimension of family-school collaboration.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, aiming to explore how families—particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds—support students in the assessment process. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of family-school interactions, parental involvement strategies, and perceived barriers from the perspectives of both parents and teachers.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of:

- 10 parents from low-income families whose children are enrolled in Grade 5–8 at a public elementary school in [insert location].

- 5 teachers and 1 school counselor who regularly engage with families and are involved in preparing students for assessments.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring they had direct experience with the assessment process and represented diverse family structures and economic conditions.

Data Collection Techniques

The data were collected using the following instruments:

- Semi-structured interviews with parents to explore their strategies, challenges, and beliefs regarding their role in students' academic assessments.\
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers and counselors to gather insights on school-initiated efforts to engage families and their perceptions of family involvement.
- Document analysis of school policies, parent-teacher meeting records, and assessment preparation guidelines to triangulate the findings.
- Interviews and FGDs were conducted in the participants' preferred language, audio-recorded with permission, and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021), which include:

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Themes were categorized around key aspects such as types of parental support, barriers to involvement, communication patterns, and school-family collaboration strategies.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research, the following strategies were used:

Member checking: Participants reviewed the transcripts and preliminary findings to validate the interpretations.

- Peer debriefing: The researcher consulted with academic peers to discuss emerging themes.
- Triangulation of data sources (interviews, FGDs, and documents) to enhance reliability.

- Thick description of the context and participants to allow for transferability of findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from [insert institution or university name]. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and signed informed consent forms. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by using pseudonyms in all transcripts and reports. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that families—especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds—play a crucial yet often underestimated role in supporting students' assessment readiness. Although material resources may be limited, many parents demonstrate a strong commitment to their children's education through emotional encouragement, monitoring academic progress, and maintaining communication with teachers. These findings align with previous research (Garbacz et al., 2021; Goodall, 2021), which emphasizes that even non-academic support from families can significantly influence student performance.

One key theme that emerged was the barriers to effective engagement, such as limited educational background, time constraints due to multiple jobs, and lack of access to information or digital tools. These findings echo Jeynes (2022), who noted that socioeconomic constraints often inhibit parental involvement not due to disinterest, but due to systemic limitations. Despite these challenges, several parents expressed a deep desire to be more involved if provided with appropriate guidance and support from schools.

Teachers and school counselors in the study also recognized the potential of family involvement but cited a lack of institutional structures to support consistent communication and collaboration. While some initiatives, such as home visits or parent workshops, were mentioned, their implementation was inconsistent and dependent on available funding and staff capacity. This reflects the need for more sustainable, equity-driven strategies at the institutional level (Fan & Yost, 2023).

Moreover, the study found that culturally responsive engagement practices were either absent or insufficient. Few schools actively acknowledged or incorporated the cultural values and communication preferences of diverse families, a factor that could impact trust and participation. As suggested by Hammond (2023), fostering cultural responsiveness is essential to building

authentic relationships between schools and families, particularly in multicultural communities.

Finally, digital access emerged as a critical concern. With the increasing reliance on online assessments and digital learning tools, families lacking internet access or digital literacy faced additional challenges in supporting their children. This finding supports the work of Kim and Glassman (2021), who argue that digital inequality can exacerbate educational disparities, particularly in assessment outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that family involvement, regardless of socioeconomic status, is an essential factor in enhancing students' assessment preparedness. While parents from low-income backgrounds often encounter structural and technological barriers, their engagement when facilitated by schools through inclusive communication, resource access, and culturally responsive practices can significantly impact student success.

To strengthen this collaboration, schools must:

- Provide flexible and accessible communication channels for all families.
- Offer parent education workshops on assessment literacy and digital tools.
- Develop culturally responsive engagement strategies to build trust and inclusion.
- Establish support systems such as home visits, community liaisons, or peer mentoring among parents.

By recognizing the value of families as partners in education, particularly in the assessment process, schools can foster more equitable learning environments that empower students from all backgrounds to succeed.

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