Parental Expectations And Their relationship With Academic Engagement And Academic Achievement Among Hashemite University Students

Fatin A. Mhaidat, Moeen A. Oudat

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the correlation between parental expectation, academic engagement, and academic achievement among Hashemite university students. The participants were 656 students enrolled in the Family and Child Education course, one of the elective requirement courses offered by the Faculty of Arts at the Hashemite University during the academic year 2020-2021. The Parental Expectations Scale (PES) was developed by Wang and Heppner (2002), and consists of 32 items divided into three dimensions. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in analysis of the study data, mean, and standard deviation. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha (0.91). Microsoft Forms software was used for completing the questionnaires, and the data were collected over a period of three weeks. The results showed a positive correlation between parental expectation and academic engagement, and between parental expectation and academic achievement.

Keywords:
Parental Expectation, Academic Engagement, Academic Achievement, University Student

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Introduction

Parents are the closest and strongest influence on a child’s educational process, although the impact may be either positive or negative. Parental interest, support, help and motivation can enhance the child’s academic ability and success (Harper et al, 2012; Wilder, 2016), with a positive correlation between supportive parental involvement and children’s achievement in school, and a negative effect on the achievement of children under parental stress. Gusniarti (2002) found that the stress encountered by some children resulted from the difference between parental or familial demands and expectations or those of the school and other social environments, with the child’s capabilities. Basically, parents’ aims for their children are hopes that academic success will open the door to a better future for them, rather than from any personal ambition (Rubie et al, 2007; Letha, 2013). Parental expectation (PE) helps to develop the individual’s ability and talent, and increase academic achievement.

However, Heffner (2011) noted that if the parental hopes and expectations were unrealistic in relation to the child’s capabilities, then the impact would be negative; this is often the case where parents try to re-live their own lives and achieve their own ambitions through their children (Sugono, 2008). Hope or expectation is the desire to make something come true or real. Siagian (1989) explains expectations as the inclination of an individual to believe that a certain result is achievable; Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) and Wang and Heppner (2002) describe PE as parents’ trust in their children’s ability for future achievement; Furry and Sy (2012) and Sasikala and Karunanidhi (2011) define it as their desire to see their children lead successful lives and fulfill career ambitions as a result of academic performance and achievement (Sy et al, 2005). Children whose parents place great emphasis and importance on education, and who expect high levels of performance and attainment, continue to be engaged in a study-related environment. However, PE may vary; some researchers believe that continuous effort can improve a child’s performance, while others believe that a child’s innate ability cannot be changed (Trautwein et al, 2006).

Parental expectations consistently higher than a child’s abilities, however, can denigrate and demotivate the child when they fail to meet these expectations. Dandy and Nettelbeck (2002) and Jones (2015) quote studies identifying excessive PE as causing stress which negatively impacts on the child’s academic achievement. According to Wang and Heppner (2002), PE comprises three dimensions: 1. Personal maturity, relating to behaviour, self-control, politeness, responsibility, maturity and obedience; 2. Academic accomplishment, academic achievement, and ideal career; and 3. Socialising and personal relationships, particularly regarding choice of potential spouse.

Several research studies into the academic engagement (AE) construct (e.g. Appleton et al, 2008; Carter et al, 2012; Barbe et al., 2016; Valdivia et al, 2018) have approached it as a way to reduce discontent, avoid boredom, improve motivation and academic participation, increase success levels, and to understand the constructive
development of students; others (e.g. Appleton et al, 2008; Kizilcec et al, 2013) considered it as a valid construct for their investigations into students’ gradual lack of academic engagement. Fredricks et al, (2004), describe academic engagement by three constructs comprising behavioural, cognitive and emotional components.

Behavioural engagement denotes an individual’s committed involvement in learning, in addition to time and effort spent on academic work and study and respecting and abiding by school rules; it also includes participation in school/college activities. Emotional engagement refers to a student’s feeling of belonging to the academic establishment, of liking and responding to the environment and being interested in what the school has to offer. Cognitive engagement, however, includes self-discipline, the individual’s self-regulated behaviour associated with learning as in organising and monitoring schoolwork, and goal-setting, the form of engagement associated with academic achievement (Fredricks et al, 2004; Wang & Eccles, 2012b; Niehaus et al, 2012 and Wang and Eccles, 2012a) noted a frequent decline in behavioural and emotional responsiveness in early adolescence, and Niehaus et al, 2012; Wang and Eccles, 2013; Wang and Sheikh (2014) commented that this emotional decline in adolescence was related to lower performance and grades on academic achievement tests. Fall and Roberts (2012) added that these were strong predictors of future school drop-outs.

Parental expectations can have a positive or a negative influence on children depending on the attitude of the parents. Parents who are encouraging and supportive, accepting and dealing firmly and calmly with the difficulties and obstacles encountered during the study process, will have positive effects on their children, providing them with incentive and motivation to higher achievement; on the other hand, if the parents’ attitude is negative and judgemental so that the student feels threatened and loses confidence, this affects his/her physical and psychological abilities, which negatively affect academic performance and cognitive skills.

In light of the above it is clear that children are affected by parental expectations, whether supportive or frustrating, which have either a positive or negative influence on the children and their level of academic engagement and academic achievement. This study investigated the relationship between parental expectations, and academic engagement and academic achievement.

**Objective**
- Identify the parental expectations and their relationship with academic engagement and academic achievement among Hashemite university students.

**Questions**
- Are there relationship between parental expectations and academic engagement and academic achievement among Hashemite university students?

**Methodology**

**Study sample**
The participants were 656 students enrolled in the Family and Child Education course, one of the elective requirement courses offered by the Faculty of Arts at the Hashemite University during the academic year 2020-2021. Ages ranged between 18 and 22 years.

**Instruments**
Parental Expectations Scale (PES): The PES was developed by Wang and Heppner (2002), and consists of 32 items divided into three dimensions. The PES items are measured using the 5-point Likert scale, ranging between (1) strongly disagree, to (5) strongly agree. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha (0.91). Academic Engagement Scale (AES) was developed by Mahasneh et al, (2019).

**Analysis**
The PE scale was translated from English into Arabic and the accuracy and integrity of the translation were verified. Students enrolled in the Family and Child Education course were selected in the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021. Microsoft Formssoftware was used for completing the questionnaires, and the data were collected over a period of three weeks. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in analysis of the study data, mean, and standard deviation.

**Results**

Table (1). Results of (M, SD) to the parental expectations and academic engagement and Academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic engagement</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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</table>

Table (1). Shows that the overall mean of the Academic engagement (3.57) with Standard deviation (0.42). While the overall mean for academic achievement was (3.75) with Standard deviation (0.47). To examine the correlation between the parental expectations and academic engagement and Academic achievement, Pearson correlation coefficient was used, table (2) illustrate this.
Table (2). Result of Pearson correlation coefficient between parental expectations, academic engagement and academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic engagement</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The table (2) shows positive correlations between parental expectation and academic engagement, and between parental expectation and academic achievement.

Discussion

Results showed a positive and statistically significant correlation between parental expectations, academic engagement and academic achievement. Parental expectations which are concurrent with the student’s abilities, academic performance and ambitions and supportive, encouraging and realistic, generate self-motivation in the student enabling him/her to surmount difficulties; they become a driving force for achievement and success, thus increasing both academic engagement and achievement levels.

As indicated by the results of the study by Niehaus et al. (2012), one of the main exposures to family risk is the pressure to perform, which incorporates academic socialization in the messages relayed by the parents to their children. High academic expectations, or by lack of support and encouragement for children failing to live up to parental expectations.

Results of the Englund et al., (2004) indicated that the level of psychological pressure, anxiety, depression and tension exhibited by children was in proportion to the level of discrepancy between parental expectations and the actual achievement of the children, while Saw Zhang (2010) illustrated a direct effect of unrealistic parental expectations on raised anxiety levels in children, incapacity in forming social relationships, and failure in future achievement. The above results and conclusions have been further supported by Yamamoto and Holloway (2010), in that those parents with expectations of future academic achievement for their children have been shown to have a positive influence on their school education; Kean (2005) found that high parental expectations often generate in their children higher motivation to achieve. Other researchers (Jeynes, 2005; Redd et al., 2004; Trusty et al., 2003) reported parental expectations as one of the most influential constituents of parental involvement, having a positive improvement and motivational effect on academic outcomes, while Jeynes (2007) identified the influence of parental expectation at school functions and in homework-checking.

Hill and Tyson (2009) looked at parental participation from the point of view of parent-school involvement, which incorporates academic socialization in the messages relayed by the parents to their children regarding their schoolwork and the importance of education for their future. Other researchers (Bempechat et al., 1999; Suizzo & Soon, 2006), noted that, prominent among the forms of education-related messages parents sent their children, were those emphasizing the importance of making a good effort in school, of the pressure to perform, and the shame felt by children for failing to reach the standards they were expected to achieve. Others (Bowen & Bowen, 1998; Englund et al., 2004) emphasized the stress in the reviewed literature on the importance of the family in students’ engagement in school, particularly that of parental support in achieving positive academic results, good grades and good school attendance record, in addition to appropriate school behaviour (Simon & Chen, 2009).

The levels of student engagement in school are only partially explained by parental dispositions, expectations, support, and encouragement, and variables other than the family environment have to be taken into consideration, including those related to the school context (Woolfolk, 2014); this was reiterated by Mandara and Murray (2002), who emphasized the significance of family influence on student engagement and academic success, as well as considering the importance of school-related variables including students from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures (Zhang & Anderson, 2010).

Also evident from the literature reviewed, is that the students most affected were those lacking parental support, those with a poor understanding of their rights, students having parents without parenting skills, and those from a low socio-economic or socio-cultural background. Students from these categories were less engaged and more likely to be drop-outs, requiring psychological intervention. Given that students’ engagement in school can be a positive and protective factor in preventative measures against certain problematic school behaviour patterns, it should be included in the education of teachers and psychologists from the initial phase through to completion of their training.

The current study was restricted to a sample of Hashemite University students. Researchers have noted the scarcity of studies that have addressed the parental expectations variable, and have recommended conducting prospective studies that examine the relationship between parental expectations and academic engagement or goal orientation among students at school and university.

References

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