

Exploring The Role Of Parental Expectations And Pressures On Students' Academic Performance And Mental Health

Dr. Sameena Iqbal¹, Dr. Asma Riaz Hamdani², Dr. Samia Mazhar³, Asima Munawar⁴, Maria Tanvir⁵, Sarah Fatima Dogar⁶, Dr. Amna Hassan⁷

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the complex relationships that exist between parental influence, students' academic performance, and their psychological health. The study uses a qualitative research methodology and purposive sampling to collect data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with students, parents, and educators. Thematic analysis reveals recurrent themes that include parental expectations that vary by culture, the importance of teacher-parent communication, and the pressures placed on pupils to perform well academically, as well as motivation and emotional health. The study highlights the widespread influence of parental expectations on the mental well-being and academic performance of adolescents, underscoring the necessity of adopting a well-rounded strategy that gives equal weight to mental health and intellectual development. In addition to lobbying for more research and policy creation, the recommendations include boosting parental education, improving communication between teachers and parents, putting supportive interventions into place, offering cultural sensitivity training, and supporting comprehensive education. Through the implementation of these principles, stakeholders can work together to establish supportive settings that encourage students' holistic development, ensuring that they flourish both intellectually and emotionally in spite of the demands placed on them by their parents.

Keywords: Parental influence, students' academic performance, psychological health, motivation, parental expectations.

Introduction

Parental influence is one of the main threads in the complex fabric of education. Parents are crucial in determining their children's academic path and general well-being because they are their primary caregivers and educators. This influence, though, is not always positive; it can take

¹Teaching Research Associate, Dept. Of Psychology, IIUI.

²Lecturer, Department of Applied Psychology, GCUF.

³Department of Applied Psychology, Riphah International University, Gulberg Greens Campus Islamabad.

⁴Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Capital University of Science and Technology, Islamabad.

⁵Senior Lecturer, Riphah International University Islamabad.

⁶PhD Scholar, International Islamic University Islamabad.

⁷Lecturer, Department of Psychology, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).

the form of demands and stresses that have a negative impact on students' mental and academic well-being. The goal of this study is to examine the complex dynamics of parental expectations and pressures and how they affect students' academic progress and psychological well-being (Negru & Sava, 2023). For many years, there has been curiosity in the connection between academic success and parental expectations. Parents have great expectations for their children's academic progress and naturally want the best for them. These expectations may originate from a number of things, such as family experiences, socioeconomic background, and cultural standards. While striving for greatness might inspire children to aspire to greatness, having unreasonably high expectations can cause stress that actually hinders rather than helps learning. Studies have indicated that students may experience elevated stress, anxiety, and even depression as a result of parental pressure to perform academically well (Ehtsham et al., 2023). A parent's level of involvement in their child's education has a big impact on the academic results of the kid. Children raised by authoritative parents, who exhibit warmth, support, and realistic demands, have been linked to better academic performance and psychological well. On the other hand, students who experience authoritarian parenting—which is characterized by tight control and exaggeratedly high expectations—may develop feelings of inadequacy and a fear of failing. In a similar vein, students who experience intermittent or nonexistent parental participation due to lax or negligent parenting may feel hopeless and unsupported in their academic endeavors (Ahmad, Kaker, Rafi, Bibi, & Gul, 2020). It is impossible to overestimate the effect that parental expectations have on pupils' mental health. Parental pressure can have an especially negative impact throughout adolescence, a crucial time for social, emotional, and cognitive development. Student self-discovery, peer connections, and academic rigor all provide hurdles, and they are particularly sensitive to parental acceptance and feedback. Feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy can be made worse by perceived parental disapproval or disappointment, which can lead to a variety of mental health problems such as anxiety disorders, sadness, and low self-esteem (Jiang, Gao, Wu, & Guo, 2022). It is imperative to take into account the interaction between pupils' intrinsic motivation and parental expectations. External pressures may initially push children to achieve academic excellence, but intrinsic motivation—which comes from sincere interest and fulfilment on a personal level—is ultimately more resilient and favorable to long-term success. Overbearing parental pressure can erode students' sense of autonomy and sap their intrinsic motivation, making them rely more on outside rewards or the threat of punishment as their main sources of academic motivation (Silvers, 2022).

The phenomena of parental expectations is further complicated by the cultural milieu in which they are ingrained. Parental attitudes and behaviors around their children's academic aspirations are influenced by the diverse cultural values, beliefs, and expectations surrounding education that exist across nations. Academic success is highly regarded in many cultures, and parents may put a great deal of pressure on their kids to do well in school—often at the expense of their mental health. On the other hand, in societies that place a higher value on overall growth and welfare, parents might expect their children to accomplish more than just academic success (Li et al., 2020). It is now essential to address the negative consequences of parental expectations and pressures because of the increasing understanding of the significance of mental health in academic settings. Collaboration between educational institutions, legislators, and mental

health experts is vital to cultivate a supportive atmosphere that promotes academic success while protecting students' mental and emotional well-being. In order to meet the psychological needs of students who are under parental pressure, it is imperative that parents, students, and educators foster open lines of communication. Resources and support services should also be made available (De Looze et al., 2020). There is a complex interplay among multiple elements that influence the relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and mental health and parental expectations and pressures. Although parental involvement in school is essential for kids to succeed, students' wellbeing may suffer as a result of undue pressure and unreasonable expectations. We can establish an atmosphere where kids can flourish academically and emotionally by realizing the complexity of this link and implementing a holistic approach to education that places a high value on both academic accomplishment and mental health (Herd, King-Casas, & Kim-Spoon, 2020).

Objectives of the Research

1. To investigate the different ways that parental demands and expectations affect students' academic performance and emotional health.
2. To comprehend how parental demands and expectations about academic performance and general well-being are influenced by cultural origins.
3. To investigate the part that teachers play in identifying and resolving the effects that parental expectations have on kids' emotional and intellectual health.

Research Questions

1. What are the main causes of parental expectations and pressures on the mental and intellectual well-being of students?
2. What effects do cultural differences have on parents' views and expectations about their kids' academic performance and general well-being?
3. What techniques do teachers use to recognize and lessen the detrimental impact that parental expectations have on kids' emotional and academic well-being?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this qualitative study have important ramifications for our comprehension of the complex effects that parental expectations and pressures have on adolescents' academic performance and mental health. Through an exploration of the perspectives of educators, parents, and students, it offers significant understanding of the intricate relationship among psychological health, familial impact, and academic performance. The results highlight how ubiquitous parental expectations are in a variety of cultural contexts and educational settings, providing insight into the pressures and coping strategies that kids face. The study also emphasizes how important it is for educators to identify and deal with the difficulties caused by parental pressure, stressing the value of cooperation between the home and school settings. In the end, this research advances holistic educational strategies that give equal weight to emotional health and academic achievement, with the goal of fostering supportive situations in which all children can develop both emotionally and academically.

Literature Review

Parental involvement in school has long been thought to be essential to academic achievement. But parental influence has changed over time, with more and more of the talk in modern society acknowledging the possible drawbacks of undue pressure and high expectations (Ribeiro, Cunha, Silva, Carvalho, & Vital, 2021). The academic achievement of students and parental expectations are positively correlated, according to a number of research. Elevated parental expectations are frequently linked to increased academic motivation, engagement, and success. Nonetheless, there is a fine line between encouraging assistance and excessive pressure, and having unrealistic expectations can be harmful to students' wellbeing (Poon, 2020). Different parenting philosophies, which are marked by differing degrees of warmth, authority, and expectations, have a significant impact on how adolescents develop academically. High levels of warmth and realistic expectations are characteristics of authoritative parenting, which has been associated with favorable academic results and psychological well-being. On the other hand, mental health problems and poor academic performance might be caused by authoritarian and inattentive parenting practices (Hernández, Taylor, & Jones, 2024). Parental expectations and attitudes regarding schooling are greatly influenced by cultural norms and values. Parental pressure to achieve academic success can be especially strong in societies where it is valued as a sign of status and accomplishment. Societies that place a high value on holistic development may also value academic success and emotional well-being, leading to a more balanced approach to education (Šimunović & Babarović, 2020).

The mental health of students may suffer from excessive parental pressure. Research has connected teenage stress, anxiety, and depression levels to parental expectations. Psychological problems might arise as a result of perceived parental disappointment or disapproval, which can intensify feelings of inadequacy (Mohler-Kuo, Dzemaili, Foster, Werlen, & Walitza, 2021). Parental expectations and intrinsic drive in students have a complicated relationship. Students' innate desire and enthusiasm for learning can be undermined by external pressure, even though it may initially drive academic performance. Promoting intrinsic motivation and promoting autonomy are critical for long-term academic achievement and wellbeing (Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwany, & Okoronka, 2020). Parental expectations' effects on students' academic achievement and mental health are mitigated by the educational setting, which includes the school atmosphere and teacher-student relationships. Positive school environments that put students' needs first help protect against the harmful impacts of parental pressure (Davis, 2021). Studies indicate that there can be variations in how parents expect and pressure their children depending on their gender. Girls may be more likely to internalize their parents' expectations, which could result in higher rates of anxiety and perfectionism. It is essential to comprehend these gender dynamics in order to create interventions that support fair educational opportunities (Nielson, Schroeder, Martin, & Cook, 2020).

The long-lasting effects of parental expectations on adolescents' academic and psychological development have been emphasized by longitudinal studies. Adulthood well-being and life satisfaction have been linked to higher levels of parental pressure during adolescence. The significance of addressing these dynamics at an early age is highlighted by the realization of the long-term effects of parental influence (Lorijn, Engels, Huisman, & Veenstra, 2022). Parental support and involvement are essential protective factors for students' academic and

mental health, even when parental expectations might be stressful. Parental pressure can have detrimental impacts that can be lessened by having positive parent-child interactions that are marked by open communication and emotional support (Garrote, Niederbacher, Hofmann, Rösti, & Neuenschwander, 2021). Parental expectations and pressures should be addressed through interventions that take a multimodal approach. Effective solutions must include teaching parents about the possible repercussions of applying too much pressure, encouraging flexible coping mechanisms, and cultivating a positive school-home relationship (S. V. Lu et al., 2022). Parental attitudes towards education vary among cultures, and this needs to be included in interventions. Families from different cultural origins are more likely to respond favorably to culturally aware techniques that respect diverse values and beliefs (Doak, 2021).

In order to mitigate the negative impacts of parental expectations on pupils' wellbeing, educators are essential. To give teachers the tools they need to help kids overcome academic obstacles, teacher preparation programs ought to incorporate courses on recognizing and responding to parental pressure (H. Lu, Nie, & Sousa-Poza, 2021). Adopting a holistic approach to education requires cooperation between schools, families, and community organizations. According to de Wal Pastoor (2020) community-based programs that offer families and students tools and support services can help students develop resilience and well-being in the face of pressure from their parents. To lessen the detrimental consequences of parental expectations, it is crucial to help adolescents develop their resilience and flexible coping mechanisms. Interventions aimed at improving students' problem-solving abilities, emotional control, and self-efficacy can provide them the confidence to face academic obstacles (Yeung & Li, 2021). In order to create supportive family situations, parent education programs that emphasize good parenting techniques and excellent communication skills are essential. These programs help lessen the negative impacts of parental pressure by giving parents the information and resources they need to support their kids' academic and emotional growth (Juffer, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Van IJzendoorn, 2023).

Peer support networks can provide crucial social support and validation to students who are experiencing parental pressure. Peer mentoring programs and support groups, according to Eisenberg et al. (2013), provide safe spaces where students can discuss their experiences, seek advice, and find coping mechanisms for the stresses of school (Twum-Antwi, Jefferies, & Ungar, 2020). Policymakers play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape and developing educational policies that promote students' well-being. Policies that work to reduce academic pressure, support a balanced curriculum, and provide supportive school environments are essential to building an educational system that prioritizes students' holistic development (Wortham, Love-Jones, Peters, Morris, & García-Huidobro, 2020). Intersectionality must be considered while analyzing parental expectations and demands in order to recognize the unique experiences of pupils from marginalized backgrounds. Intersectional approaches which consider the intersections of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and other identities are essential to closing the achievement gap and advancing equity in education (Varsik & Goročovskij, 2023).

Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative research is to investigate the complex relationships between parental expectations and demands and students' academic achievement and mental health. To choose participants with direct knowledge of parental expectations and pressures—parents, teachers, and students—a purposive sample strategy was used. Students from a variety of age groups and academic backgrounds were taken up about 60% of the sample, which had to guarantee a thorough grasp of the issue at all educational levels. Furthermore, parents, representing a range of cultural origins and parenting techniques, were taken up 30% of the sample. The remaining 10% were selected as of educators, who had to offer insightful commentary on how parental expectations affect schooling. Each participant was the subject of in-depth, semi-structured interviews designed to extract rich qualitative information on their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs related to parental expectations and demands. The study utilized thematic analysis to detect recurrent themes and patterns in the data, which has provided a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate relationship among parental influence, academic achievement, and mental well-being.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in the qualitative study on the effects of parental expectations and pressures on kids' academic performance and mental health to examine the intricate connections between parental influence, academic success, and mental health. Finding, evaluating, and reporting patterns (themes) in qualitative data is the process of thematic analysis. In order to obtain insight into the effects of parental expectations and pressures on many facets of students' academic and emotional well-being, the data analysis in this instance concentrated on finding recurrent patterns throughout the various participant groups, including students, parents, and educators.

Student Participants Analysis:

Three major themes emerged among the student participants about the impact of parental expectations on academic achievement: academic pressure, motivation and drive, and emotional well-being. The fact that 35% of the themes dealt with academic pressure indicates how frequent parental expectations are and how they can cause stress in teenagers. This pressure may originate from parental expectations of academic success or from social influences. Drive and motivation (25%) demonstrate how, occasionally, parental expectations can positively influence students' commitment to their studies by fostering a sense of purpose and resolution. However, adolescents' emotional well-being (20%) stood out as a primary worry, with tension and anxiety sometimes resulting from parental expectations. The effects of parental demands on mental health were shown to be impacted by themes such as coping strategies (15%) and stress and anxiety (40%) among respondents. As demonstrated by the high rate of stress and anxiety, which exacerbates feelings of pressure and overload, parental demands have a detrimental effect on children's mental health. While coping mechanisms may not always be beneficial or healthy, they do demonstrate how adolescents attempt to manage the strain of living up to parental expectations (15%).

Parents Participants Analysis:

Themes from the parent participants that represented cultural variations in parental expectations accounted for forty percent of the analysis. This demonstrates how parents' cultural backgrounds have a big impact on what they anticipate from their kids in terms of academic achievement and overall well-being. Cultural expectations, such as values, beliefs, and rituals, might impact parents' views towards education.

Parental pressure on accomplishment (30%) was discovered to be a significant topic, indicating that parents have high expectations for their kids' academic success. There are many other ways that this pressure can manifest itself, including strict discipline, extracurricular involvement, or academic support. However, parental care for their child's wellbeing also surfaced as a substantial topic (20%), suggesting that parents attend to their child's emotional and psychological well-being even though they may prioritize academic achievement more highly.

Educators Participants Analysis:

Themes pertaining to observations and experiences with parental expectations accounted for thirty percent of the analysis among the educator participants. This emphasizes how important it is for teachers to observe and manage how parental pressure affects their kids' academic and emotional health in the classroom. Parental expectations may have an impact on the classroom climate, which in turn may have an impact on student interactions, engagement, and performance (30%).

One important issue that came out of the study was teacher-parent communication (25%) and how important it is for educators and parents to work together to support pupils. Teachers' understanding of the difficulties children have as a result of parental expectations and their attempts to lessen these pressures through suitable interventions and support techniques are demonstrated by their recognition of and response to parental pressure (20%).

Cross-Participants Themes:

Some themes were prevalent in all participant groups, indicating a common experience and worries about parental expectations and pressures on students' mental and academic well-being. One prominent issue that showed the widespread influence of parental obligations on students' psychological well-being was stress and worry. The necessity for a comprehensive approach to education that prioritizes both academic accomplishment and emotional wellness was also highlighted by the subject of striking a balance between academic rigor and mental health, which was evident among participants who were students and educators.

Conclusion

A qualitative investigation of how parental expectations and pressures affect children's mental health and academic achievement has shed light on the complex relationships that exist between family influence, psychological well-being, and educational outcomes. Parental expectations are ubiquitous and have a significant impact on many aspects of students' life, as demonstrated by thematic analysis of patterns from the perspectives of educators, parents, and students. Through an analysis of student participant experiences, it is apparent that parental

expectations have a notable impact on academic performance, motivation, and emotional health. The ubiquity of themes pertaining to academic pressure underscores the ubiquitous presence of parental expectations and their capacity to generate stress and anxiety in young people. Parental expectations can occasionally act as a stimulant for drive and ambition, but they can also cause emotional distress, which emphasizes the need for a careful balance in parental engagement. Furthermore, worry and anxiety emerged as the most common concerns among responders, underscoring the negative consequences of parental obligations on mental health. Adolescents show resilience by using coping mechanisms to manage the demands placed on them, even in the face of obstacles caused by parental expectations. Cultural differences in parental expectations show up as a major subject from the parent participants' point of view, illustrating the variety of factors influencing parental attitudes toward academic success and general well-being. The frequency with which parents place pressure on achievement highlights the high standards they have for their kids, which frequently take the shape of rigorous discipline or academic help. Nonetheless, the acknowledgment of the importance of parental care for their child's academic achievement and well-being points to a sophisticated parenting style that places an emphasis on holistic development. Parents' goals for their children's success and happiness are reflected in this dual emphasis on academic progress and emotional well-being.

Insights from educators shed additional light on how family expectations affect education, stressing how crucial it is to recognize and deal with parental pressure in order to foster a positive learning environment. Themes pertaining to observations and personal experiences with parental expectations highlight the critical role educators have in identifying and resolving the difficulties kids encounter as a result of pressure from their parents. The value of collaborative efforts between educators and parents is highlighted by the role that communication between teachers and parents plays in boosting students' academic progress and overall well-being. Teachers can lessen the detrimental effects of parental expectations and encourage positive student results by encouraging open communication and putting appropriate interventions into practice. Common themes among all participant groups emphasize how parental responsibilities have a broad impact on students' mental and academic well. Worry and stress come to light as common issues, illustrating the ways in which educators, parents, and students have all had to deal with the demands of family life. The need for a balanced and all-encompassing strategy to promote students' development is highlighted by the call for a comprehensive approach to education that places a priority on both academic accomplishment and emotional wellness. The examination of parental expectations and demands on children's mental health and academic achievement using thematic analysis offers significant insights into the intricate dynamics influencing kids' experiences. Through a comprehensive comprehension of the diverse components of parental influence and its effects on different facets of students' life, concerned parties can collaborate to establish nurturing environments that promote both academic achievement and psychological wellness. We can work toward a future where every child has the chance to flourish academically and emotionally, free from the weight of excessive parental expectations, by collaborating with parents, educators, legislators, and students.

Recommendations

Several suggestions can be made in light of the thematic analysis's results and conclusions:

Promote Parental Education: Inform parents about the possible harm that comes from placing too much pressure on their children's academic performance and mental health. Promote a well-rounded strategy that places equal importance on emotional health and intellectual achievement.

Enhance Teacher-Parent Communication: To better understand and address the needs and obstacles students face as a result of parental expectations, educators and parents should be encouraged to communicate openly and frequently.

Implement Supportive Interventions: To assist students in managing the stress and strain of academics, schools should create and implement support programs and interventions. Give parents and students access to materials that will help them develop resilience and mental health.

Cultural Sensitivity Training: Provide training on cultural sensitivity to parents and educators so they can better grasp how cultural variances affect expectations from parents. Encourage culturally aware teaching methods that honor different viewpoints on success and achievement.

Promote Comprehensive Education: Promote a comprehensive educational strategy that gives equal weight to both academic success and mental health. Urge educational institutions to offer tools and programs that enhance students' overall growth.

Research and Policy Development: Encourage more investigation into how parental expectations affect kids' academic performance and mental health. When developing policies to enhance supportive learning settings and healthy parent-child dynamics, take evidence-based findings into consideration.

By implementing these suggestions into practice, stakeholders can collaborate to provide supportive environments that promote every student's achievement and well-being while also easing the strain of overbearing parents.

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1242 *Exploring The Role Of Parental Expectations And Pressures On Students' Academic Performance And Mental Health*

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