

**Research Article****THE HOME-SCHOOL NEXUS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL X AND SCHOOL Y*****Ashwannie Harripersaud**

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Abstract

This study asks whether parental involvement makes a real difference to how students behave in the classroom. To find out, two secondary schools were compared with very different approaches to engaging parents. The research draws on ecological systems theory and uses questionnaires given to teachers and parents at both schools, along with school records of behavioural incidents. The findings show that parental involvement is linked to better classroom behaviour but the form it takes, and how it is perceived, matter more than how often it happens. School X had high levels of involvement, but most of it was directed by the school itself, and behavioural outcomes were moderate. School Y had lower overall involvement, but what existed was of higher quality: more meaningful academic socialisation at home and more positive communication between parents and teachers. School Y also had fewer behavioural incidents and more positive teacher perceptions. The study concludes that schools should focus on improving the quality of home-school partnerships rather than simply trying to get more parents through the door.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Student behaviour, Classroom management, Home-school partnership, Comparative case study.

INTRODUCTION

For decades, researcher have been interested in how parents' involvement in their children's education affects what happens at school. We know a lot about the link between parental engagement and academic achievement, attendance, and attitudes toward school. But we know much less about how parental involvement specifically shapes student behaviour in the classroom and even less about how this plays out in different school communities where the amount and quality of involvement vary. This study takes up that question. Instead of treating parental involvement as one big thing, it was broken down into different dimensions: support for learning at home, participation in school activities, the quality of communication with teachers, and the ways parents talk about education with their children. The central question is: Does parental involvement significantly influence student behaviour in the classroom, and how do these effects differ across school contexts with different involvement patterns?

To answer this, two secondary schools that share similar demographics and resources but have very different parental involvement profiles were compared. This allowed the researcher to look at both whether involvement matters and how its form might be as important as its intensity. The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature and sets out the theoretical framework. Section 3 explains the methodology, including how I designed the instruments and selected participants. Section 4 presents the questionnaires. Section 5 reports the findings from both schools. Section 6 analyses and compares the results, and Section 7 offers conclusions for practice and policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW**Theoretical framework: Ecological systems theory**

This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The theory holds that children develop within nested environmental systems, with the family and school both Microsystems exerting the most immediate and powerful influence. What matters most for this study is the mesosystem: the relationships and communications between these microsystems. In other words, student behaviour in the classroom is shaped not just by what happens at home or at school separately, but by the nature of the connection between them. Parental involvement, then, is a mesosystem phenomenon, and its impact on behaviour should be understood through the quality of home-school alignment.

This theoretical positioning carries several implications. It reframes parental involvement not as a set of isolated behaviours helping with homework, attending meetings but as a relational process that takes on meaning through its interaction with the school environment. The same parental behaviour can produce different outcomes depending on whether it is welcomed, recognised, or reciprocated by teachers and school structures. So the study must attend not just to how often parents are involved but to how that involvement is received. The theory also highlights the bidirectional nature of mesosystem interactions. Just as parents influence the school through their involvement, schools shape the possibilities for involvement through their communication practices, openness, and expectations. Home-school alignment is not a fixed state but something negotiated over time through repeated interactions. For this study, that means student behaviour should be examined as an outcome of ongoing relational processes, not as a fixed response to isolated inputs. Ecological systems theory situates the family-school mesosystem within broader exosystemic and macrosystemic

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contexts. Factors like parental employment conditions, school policies, and cultural norms about education all affect the quality of home-school connections. While this study focuses primarily on the mesosystem, these contextual forces must be acknowledged as shaping the conditions under which involvement occurs. The theory's emphasis on developmental outcomes highlights the temporal dimension of mesosystem effects. The influence of home-school alignment on student behaviour is unlikely to be immediate or uniform; it may accumulate and manifest differently across developmental stages. This consideration informs both the sampling and the analytical approach, emphasising the need to attend to the age and developmental context of the students concerned. Bronfenbrenner's framework provides not just a vocabulary for the study but a set of substantive propositions about how parental involvement operates. It positions home-school alignment as the central mechanism through which involvement exerts its influence, and it calls for an analytical approach attentive to relational quality, reciprocity, and context.

Parental involvement and behavioural outcomes

Existing research consistently shows that parental involvement is associated with positive behavioural outcomes. A meta-analytic review examining school-wide positive behaviour supports, parental involvement, and student motivation found that level of parent involvement significantly predicted both achievement and behaviour. Students with highly involved parents tend to have fewer disciplinary incidents, better attendance, and more positive attitudes toward authority figures at school. But the mechanisms behind this relationship are complex and appear to be developmentally sensitive. Research by Hill and colleagues shows that the type of involvement that matters shifts with student age. In elementary school, direct help with homework and visible presence at school events are strongly associated with positive outcomes. By adolescence, however, direct homework help becomes largely ineffective or even counterproductive while "academic socialisation" practices (communicating expectations, discussing learning strategies, nurturing aspirations) emerge as the most powerful levers for improving engagement and behaviour. This distinction is critical for interpreting findings from secondary school contexts. Several qualifications warrant attention. The strength of the association between parental involvement and behavioural outcomes varies considerably across studies, suggesting moderating variables at work. Socioeconomic status, parental education, family structure, and the quality of the parent-child relationship all shape both the forms involvement takes and the effects it produces. Involvement enacted under conditions of economic stress or relational conflict may not yield the same benefits as involvement occurring within supportive family contexts.

The literature increasingly distinguishes between quantity and quality of involvement. Frequency of contact or number of attended events are crude indicators; what appears to matter more is the consistency, warmth, and academic focus of parental engagement. Parents who communicate high but attainable expectations, who monitor their children's activities without becoming intrusive, and who respond to academic difficulties with support rather than punishment tend to foster the most favourable behavioural trajectories. This aligns with the developmental shift toward academic socialisation in adolescence, where the parental role transitions from direct

instructional support to cultivating autonomy, motivation, and self-regulation. The relationship between parental involvement and behaviour is likely bidirectional. While involvement may promote positive behaviour, children who exhibit behavioural difficulties may also elicit different patterns of parental engagement sometimes increased monitoring and advocacy, sometimes withdrawal in response to repeated negative feedback from schools. Longitudinal designs are therefore essential for establishing causal direction, and cross-sectional findings should be interpreted with caution.

The outcomes themselves are multidimensional. Disciplinary incidents, attendance, and attitudes toward authority represent distinct behavioural domains that may respond differently to parental involvement. Attendance, for instance, is more proximally under family control than classroom conduct and may therefore be more immediately responsive to parental monitoring. Attitudes toward authority figures, by contrast, may be shaped more gradually through the cumulative quality of home-school interactions. The evidence base is disproportionately drawn from elementary and early secondary contexts, with comparatively less research on senior secondary students. Given the developmental shifts identified by Hill and colleagues, the mechanisms operative in earlier years cannot be assumed to persist unchanged through adolescence. This gap underscores the need for the present study's focus on secondary school contexts. While the association between parental involvement and positive behavioural outcomes is well established, the relationship is neither simple nor uniform. Its expression depends on developmental timing, the quality and form of involvement, the family and school contexts in which it occurs, and the specific behavioural domain under consideration. These complexities inform the present study's approach and justify its attention to the mesosystemic processes through which involvement exerts its effects.

Quality versus quantity of involvement

A recurring theme in the literature is that the quality of parental involvement matters more than its quantity. Research examining parent-teacher relationships for students with ADHD, for instance, found that the quality of family-school communication had a substantial effect on child development and school success, independent of the frequency of contact. Similarly, a longitudinal study of parent involvement trajectories across school transitions found that parents with low-but-stable school involvement had children with more steeply declining behavioural engagement than those with low-declining involvement suggesting that changes in involvement patterns, rather than absolute levels, are particularly consequential. The distinction between involvement types is further illuminated by a study of parent involvement in homework across elementary, junior high, and high school levels. The researcher found that the relationship between parental homework involvement and student outcomes varied significantly by developmental stage, with parental control and direct assistance becoming less beneficial and potentially detrimental as students mature. This finding underscores the importance of examining involvement through a developmental lens rather than assuming uniform effects across all age groups. These findings collectively challenge the intuitive assumption that more involvement is always better. Quality of involvement refers to the nature, tone, and appropriateness of parental engagement whether it is autonomy-supportive or controlling, warm or punitive,

consistent or erratic, aligned with the school's expectations or at cross-purposes with them. Quantity, by contrast, refers to the frequency, duration, or sheer volume of involvement behaviours. A parent who attends every school event but communicates hostility toward teachers, or who supervises homework every night in a controlling and critical manner, may be highly involved in quantitative terms while producing poor developmental outcomes.

The ADHD research is instructive here because it isolates communication quality as a distinct predictor from contact frequency. Families of children with ADHD often experience frequent school contact much of it negative and problem-focused and this frequency alone does not predict better outcomes. What matters is whether communication is collaborative, solution-oriented, and characterised by mutual respect. High-quality communication builds a shared understanding of the child's needs and a coherent approach to support, whereas frequent but adversarial contact may reinforce conflict and undermine the child's behavioural adjustment. The longitudinal trajectory findings introduce a further refinement: it is not only the quality of involvement at a single point in time that matters, but the stability and direction of involvement over time. Parents whose involvement remained low but stable had children whose behavioural engagement declined more steeply than children of parents whose involvement was declining from a higher base. This counterintuitive result suggests that absolute levels of involvement may be less important than the message that involvement conveys about parental investment. Low-but-stable involvement may signal to children that school is not a priority, whereas low-declining involvement beginning from a higher baseline may occur in families where other forms of support remain in place.

The homework involvement research adds a developmental dimension to the quality-quantity distinction. In the elementary years, direct assistance and supervision may function as appropriate scaffolding, and the quantity of such support can be beneficial. As students move into adolescence, however, the same behaviours can undermine autonomy, signal distrust of the student's competence, and provoke resistance. What counts as high-quality involvement is therefore not fixed but shifts with the child's developmental needs. Taken together, these strands of research suggest that parental involvement should be conceptualised as a multidimensional construct in which quality, developmental appropriateness, and trajectory all condition its effects. For the present study, this has three implications. Measures of involvement must capture qualitative dimensions such as warmth, consistency, and autonomy-supportiveness rather than relying solely on frequency counts. Analyses should consider whether involvement is matched to the developmental stage of the student, since Grade 7 students occupy a transitional space between childhood and adolescence. The study should attend to patterns and changes in involvement over time, not merely to levels at a single point. The evidence indicates that quantity of involvement is a poor proxy for its quality, and that the most consequential features of involvement are its relational character, its developmental fit, and its stability over time. These considerations reinforce the study's mesosystemic orientation, directing attention to how the nature of home-school connection shapes student behaviour in the classroom.

Contextual variations: Rural, urban, and socioeconomic factors

The impact of parental involvement is also moderated by contextual factors, including geographic location and socioeconomic status. A comparative study of rural and urban school settings in Uganda found no significant variation in the extent of parental involvement in homework between settings, though differences emerged in the ways parents were involved. In urban areas, mothers were more involved than fathers, suggesting that gendered patterns of involvement may be context dependent. Research from China's Henan Province during the COVID-19 pandemic found that parental involvement and students' positive learning behaviours significantly improved online learning outcomes, challenging the predominant view that socioeconomic status is the decisive factor in educational success. This finding suggests that targeted parental involvement interventions may partially compensate for socioeconomic disadvantages a proposition with significant implications for schools serving under-resourced communities. These findings invite a more nuanced understanding of how context shapes both the expression and the effects of parental involvement. The Ugandan study's finding of comparable involvement levels across rural and urban settings challenges deficit assumptions about rural families. It is often assumed that rural parents are less engaged due to distance, lower educational attainment, or competing demands of agricultural labour. The absence of significant variation suggests that rural parents are no less committed to their children's schooling; what differs is the form their involvement takes. Rural parents may rely more on indirect support providing time, space, and encouragement while urban parents may have greater access to school-based involvement opportunities. Measures of involvement must therefore be sensitive to contextually available modes of engagement rather than privileging school-centric forms.

The gendered pattern observed in urban Uganda where mothers were more involved than fathers points to the importance of examining who within the household enacts involvement. Gendered divisions of labour, cultural expectations regarding caregiving, and differences in employment patterns all shape which parent assumes primary responsibility for educational engagement. Communications and invitations to involvement that assume a generic "parent" may inadvertently reinforce maternal over-representation and paternal disengagement. The Henan Province research carries important implications for debates about socioeconomic determinism. The finding that parental involvement and positive learning behaviours improved online learning outcomes even during a period of considerable disruption suggests that involvement can function as a protective factor for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This does not mean that socioeconomic status is irrelevant; rather, it indicates that the effects of disadvantage are not absolute and may be partially offset by targeted interventions that strengthen home-based support for learning. The pandemic context of the Henan study highlights the role of crisis and disruption in reshaping involvement dynamics. When schools closed and learning moved online, the home environment became the primary site of education, and parental involvement assumed heightened importance. This raises the question of whether the compensatory effects observed during the pandemic persist under normal conditions or represent a context-specific phenomenon. The evidence points to the importance of distinguishing between different dimensions of socioeconomic status. Income, parental education, occupational status, and neighbourhood characteristics may each influence involvement

in different ways. Parents with higher educational attainment may be better positioned to support academic socialisation practices, while parents with greater financial resources may be able to provide enrichment activities and learning materials. However, the Henan findings suggest that when schools actively cultivate parental involvement, some of these advantages may be partially neutralised. The findings call for caution against overgeneralising from studies conducted in specific national and cultural contexts. The Ugandan and Chinese studies reflect distinct educational systems, cultural expectations regarding family roles, and economic conditions. Patterns of involvement observed in one context may not transfer directly to another. Taken together, these contextual considerations suggest that parental involvement is not a uniform phenomenon but one whose forms, meanings, and effects are shaped by geography, gender, socioeconomic conditions, and broader systemic factors. The finding that involvement may partially compensate for socioeconomic disadvantage offers an encouraging prospect for schools serving marginalised communities, while the observed variation in gendered and geographic patterns counsels against simplistic prescriptions.

The present study

While the literature establishes general associations between parental involvement and student outcomes, gaps remain in understanding how these relationships manifest comparatively across schools with different involvement cultures. Moreover, few studies have systematically examined the involvement-behaviour nexus using parallel instruments administered to both parents and teachers. This study addresses these gaps through a comparative case study design that examines behavioural outcomes in relation to multiple dimensions of parental involvement, as perceived by both key stakeholder groups. The rationale rests on several interrelated considerations. The existing literature has largely been dominated by single-site studies that examine parental involvement within one school or one community. While such studies have generated valuable insights, they cannot illuminate how school-level factors institutional culture, leadership priorities, communication practices, and expectations regarding family engagement shape the nature and strength of these relationships. Two schools serving demographically similar populations may nonetheless differ markedly in their involvement cultures, and these differences may produce divergent behavioural outcomes.

The predominance of single-informant designs constitutes a significant methodological limitation. Much of what is known about parental involvement is based on parent self-reports, teacher reports, or student reports considered in isolation. Yet involvement is inherently relational: what a parent believes they are doing may not correspond to what a teacher perceives, and what a teacher expects may not align with what a parent understands. These perceptual gaps are not merely measurement error; they may themselves be consequential, shaping the quality of home-school communication and the coherence of support provided to students. By administering parallel instruments to both parents and teachers, this study can capture the degree of convergence or divergence in perceptions and examine whether alignment between stakeholder perspectives is associated with more favourable behavioural outcomes. The study's focus on multiple dimensions of parental involvement reflects the conceptual advances

documented in the preceding sections. Rather than treating involvement as a unidimensional construct measured by frequency of contact or attendance at school events, this study recognises that involvement encompasses distinct forms academic socialisation, homework support, communication with school, participation in school activities, and monitoring of behaviour each of which may relate differently to behavioural outcomes.

The selection of behavioural outcomes as the dependent variable addresses a relative gap in the literature. While the association between parental involvement and academic achievement has been extensively documented, behavioural outcomes including classroom conduct, disciplinary incidents, attendance, and attitudes toward authority have received comparatively less systematic attention. Yet behavioural outcomes are of considerable practical importance: they shape the classroom climate, influence teacher-student relationships, and are themselves predictive of longer-term academic and social trajectories.

The comparative case study design permits attention to the mesosystemic processes that Bronfenbrenner's theory identifies as central. By examining two schools with differing involvement cultures, the study can explore how institutional practices communication strategies, invitation to involvement, responsiveness to family contributions, and the value placed on home-school partnership mediate the relationship between parental involvement and student behaviour.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent, and in what forms, are parents involved in their children's education at each participating school?
- How do parents and teachers perceive the quality and impact of parental involvement on student behaviour?
- What similarities and differences exist between the two schools in their involvement cultures and in the relationship between involvement and behavioural outcomes?
- To what extent do parent and teacher perceptions of involvement converge or diverge, and how does this alignment relate to student behaviour?
- What contextual factors institutional, socioeconomic, and geographic shape the nature and effects of parental involvement at each site?

These questions are addressed through a mixed-methods comparative case study involving parallel surveys administered to parents and teachers, supplemented by semi-structured interviews and analysis of school records relating to student behaviour. The significance of the study lies in its potential to inform school policy and practice. If, as the literature suggests, the quality and alignment of home-school communication are more consequential than the mere frequency of contact, then schools seeking to improve student behaviour may benefit more from investing in the relational dimensions of family engagement than from simply increasing the number of involvement opportunities. The study also contributes to theory by testing and extending Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework in a comparative context. While the theory posits that mesosystemic interactions are developmentally consequential, empirical work has often treated the mesosystem as a residual category rather than a focus of sustained analysis. By operationalising mesosystemic quality through parallel parent and teacher measures and by examining

how school-level involvement cultures shape mesosystemic processes, the study offers a more rigorous test of the theory's central propositions than has typically been attempted. The present study addresses significant gaps in the literature by adopting a comparative case study design, employing parallel instruments for parents and teachers, examining multiple dimensions of involvement, and focusing on behavioural outcomes through a mesosystemic lens.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employs a comparative case study design with embedded mixed-methods elements. Two secondary schools were selected based on their contrasting parental involvement profiles, as determined by preliminary consultation with district education officers and school administrators. The design allows for systematic comparison of the involvement-behaviour relationship across contexts while maintaining sufficient depth to capture contextual nuances. The choice of a comparative case study design rests on several methodological considerations. The research questions are fundamentally concerned with how context shapes the relationship between parental involvement and student behaviour. A single-site case study, while capable of generating rich contextual detail, cannot address questions of variation across settings. Conversely, a large-scale survey design, while capable of identifying broad patterns, would sacrifice the depth necessary to understand the processes and meanings that underlie those patterns. The comparative case study occupies a strategic middle ground.

The comparative dimension serves a specific analytic purpose. By selecting two schools with contrasting parental involvement profiles, the study can examine whether the involvement-behaviour relationship operates differently under different institutional conditions. This is not merely a matter of describing two cases side by side; it is a matter of using the contrast between cases to illuminate the mechanisms through which involvement exerts its effects. If, for example, the relationship between involvement quality and behavioural outcomes is stronger in the school with a more developed involvement culture, this would suggest that school-level factors condition the effects of parental engagement. The embedded mixed-methods element reflects the study's commitment to methodological triangulation. Quantitative data from parallel surveys administered to parents and teachers provide a basis for identifying patterns, measuring associations, and comparing across sites. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis provide the means to interpret those patterns, to explore the perspectives and experiences that underlie them, and to capture dimensions of involvement and behaviour that may not be readily quantifiable. The selection of the two schools warrants detailed justification. Rather than selecting schools randomly or on the basis of convenience, the study employs purposive sampling to identify cases that differ meaningfully in their parental involvement profiles. Preliminary consultation with district education officers and school administrators gathered information on a range of indicators, including the frequency and nature of home-school communication, the existence and scope of parental involvement programmes, the level of parental participation in school events, and the general tenor of home-school relations. From this pool, two schools were

selected that represent contrasting positions along these dimensions. The two schools are comparable in size and serve demographically similar student populations, controlling for factors that might otherwise confound the comparison. Both are secondary schools serving students in the early adolescent years a developmental period in which, as the literature review established, the forms of involvement most beneficial to students are shifting.

The case study approach also permits attention to the embeddedness of involvement within broader institutional and community contexts. Each school is understood not merely as a site where involvement occurs but as a social system with its own norms, practices, and power dynamics. The comparative design allows the study to examine how these systemic features shape the possibilities for involvement and the meanings attached to it. The design also incorporates a longitudinal dimension within the constraints of a single academic term. Data collection is sequenced to capture the evolution of involvement and behaviour over time, with baseline measures collected early in the term and follow-up measures collected at its conclusion. While the study does not claim to establish causality in the strict experimental sense, the temporal ordering of measures provides a basis for making plausible inferences about the direction of effects. Ethical considerations are integral to the design. Given that the study involves both adults and minors, and that it addresses matters of family practice and student behaviour that may be sensitive, careful attention is paid to informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of participants from harm. Parents and teachers provide informed consent for their own participation, while parental consent and student assent are obtained for the collection of behavioural data. Data are anonymised, stored securely, and reported in ways that protect the identities of individuals and schools.

Limitations of the design are acknowledged. The small number of cases two schools necessarily limits the generalisability of findings. The study does not claim to produce results that apply universally; rather, it seeks to generate contextually grounded insights that may be transferable to comparable settings. The reliance on self-report measures for involvement introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, though the use of parallel instruments for parents and teachers partially mitigates this by permitting cross-validation. The comparative case study design with embedded mixed-methods elements is well-suited to the study's aims. It permits systematic comparison across contrasting contexts, supports the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, attends to the mesosystemic processes that theory identifies as central, and maintains the depth necessary to capture contextual nuance.

Site Selection

School X is a public secondary school serving approximately 850 students in a suburban area. It has an active Parent-Teacher Association and regularly organises parent workshops and volunteer programmes. Administrative data indicate high parental participation rates in school events and relatively frequent parent-initiated contact with teachers. School Y is a public secondary school of similar size and demographic profile, located in a neighbouring community. It reports lower parental participation in formal school events but a strong informal culture of parent-teacher communication, with teachers reporting regular, substantive conversations with

parents about student progress and behaviour. Both schools serve communities with comparable socioeconomic characteristics and student demographic profiles, minimising confounds related to resource availability and student background.

The selection of these two schools reflects a deliberate strategy of contrast on the dimension of primary interest the form and culture of parental involvement while holding constant the demographic and socioeconomic factors that might otherwise explain differences in outcomes. This approach is consistent with the logic of comparative case study research, in which cases are selected not for representativeness in the statistical sense but for their capacity to illuminate theoretical relationships.

School X exemplifies what may be termed a formal or programmatic involvement culture. Involvement in this school is institutionalised through structured mechanisms: a constituted Parent-Teacher Association with regular meetings and defined roles; scheduled workshops addressing topics such as adolescent development, study skills, and digital safety; volunteer programmes that bring parents into the school for defined periods and purposes; and formal communication channels including newsletters, progress reports, and parent-teacher conferences. Parental participation in these activities is visible, measurable, and relatively high. Administrative records document attendance at events, volunteer hours contributed, and the frequency of parent-initiated contact with teachers. This visibility makes School X an attractive site for the study because involvement is, in a sense, already legible to the institution it has been named, organised, and counted.

However, the formalisation of involvement at School X carries potential limitations that the study must attend to. High participation rates in formal events do not necessarily indicate high-quality involvement, nor do they guarantee that involvement is experienced by students and teachers as supportive. It is possible for involvement to become performative enacted to fulfil expectations rather than to genuinely support learning and development or to be concentrated among a subset of families while others remain on the periphery. The study must therefore examine not only the extent of participation but also its quality, distribution, and perceived impact. Interviews with parents and teachers will be essential for probing beneath the surface of formal participation to understand how involvement is experienced and what it accomplishes.

School Y represents a contrasting involvement culture that may be characterised as informal or relational. Rather than channelling involvement through structured programmes and events, School Y appears to foster involvement through the quality of everyday relationships between parents and teachers. Teachers report regular, substantive conversations with parents about student progress and behaviour conversations that occur spontaneously rather than being scheduled as part of a formal programme. This pattern suggests a school culture in which communication is ongoing, personalised, and responsive to emerging needs rather than periodic and ritualised.

The informal involvement culture at School Y presents both opportunities and challenges for the study. It offers a valuable contrast to the formalised approach at School X, allowing the study to examine whether the quality of relational engagement can compensate for lower levels of formal participation. If, as

the literature on quality versus quantity suggests, the character of home-school communication matters more than its frequency, then School Y's informal but substantive communication may prove to be as or more consequential for student behaviour than School X's more visible but potentially more superficial involvement. The informal nature of involvement at School Y poses measurement challenges. Without formal records of participation, the study must rely more heavily on self-report and interview data to characterise the involvement culture. This reliance introduces the possibility of recall bias and raises questions about how representative the reported conversations are of the broader parent population. The study addresses these challenges through careful instrument design and triangulation across data sources.

The selection of schools in neighbouring communities with comparable socioeconomic and demographic profiles is a critical element of the study's design. This comparability serves two purposes. It minimises the risk that observed differences in involvement-behaviour relationships are attributable to differences in student background, family resources, or community characteristics rather than to involvement cultures. While the study cannot eliminate all confounding variables no observational design can it can reduce the plausibility of alternative explanations by holding constant the most obvious sources of variation. It enhances the comparability of the two cases, making the contrast between them more analytically meaningful. If the two schools differed markedly in their socioeconomic composition, any differences in involvement effects might simply reflect differences in the resources and capacities that families bring to their engagement with schools. Nevertheless, the study must remain attentive to the possibility that socioeconomic comparability at the aggregate level may mask meaningful variation within each school community. Families within each catchment area may differ in income, education, employment status, and cultural background, and these differences may shape how involvement is enacted and experienced. The study therefore incorporates measures of family background into its survey instruments and examines whether involvement effects vary across socioeconomic strata within each school.

The geographical proximity of the two schools located in neighbouring communities offers additional advantages. It ensures that both schools operate within the same broader educational jurisdiction, subject to the same district policies, curriculum frameworks, and accountability mechanisms. This shared policy environment reduces the likelihood that differences between the schools are attributable to systemic factors such as funding formulas, assessment regimes, or administrative priorities. The site selection process also warrants reflection on the role of gatekeepers and the nature of access. Preliminary consultation with district education officers and school administrators was essential for identifying schools with contrasting involvement profiles and for securing the permissions necessary to conduct research. However, this reliance on gatekeepers introduces the possibility of selection bias: administrators may have nominated schools that present their institutions in a favourable light, or may have steered the researcher toward schools that are convenient or cooperative rather than representative. The study mitigates this risk by triangulating gatekeeper accounts with documentary evidence and with the perceptions of parents and teachers, and by being transparent about the selection process in its reporting. The site

selection reflects the study's theoretical commitments. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory directs attention to the mesosystem the interactions between home and school as a determinant of developmental outcomes. By selecting schools that differ in how they structure and support these interactions, the study operationalises the mesosystem as a variable rather than merely a backdrop. School X, with its formal involvement structures, and School Y, with its informal relational culture, represent two distinct ways in which the mesosystem can be organised. Comparing them allows the study to examine how these different organisational forms shape the relationship between parental involvement and student behaviour. The selection of School X and School Y reflects a principled approach to case selection that prioritises contrast on the dimension of theoretical interest while controlling for potentially confounding variables. The two schools offer complementary perspectives on parental involvement one formal and programmatic, the other informal and relational and their comparability in demographic and socioeconomic terms enhances the analytic leverage of the comparison.

Participants

A total of 48 teachers (24 from each school) and 96 parents (48 from each school) participated in the questionnaire component of the study. Teacher participants were selected to ensure representation across subject areas and grade levels. Parent participants were recruited through school communication channels, with stratification to ensure representation across grade levels. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The composition of the sample reflects a deliberate effort to capture the diversity of perspectives within each school while maintaining comparability across the two sites. The equal allocation of teachers and parents to each school 24 teachers and 48 parents per site ensures that the comparative analysis is not distorted by unequal sample sizes. This balance is particularly important given the study's focus on cross-site comparison: if one school contributed substantially more participants than the other, observed differences between sites might reflect sampling artefacts rather than genuine contextual variation.

The recruitment of teachers was guided by the principle of maximum variation across subject areas and grade levels. Teachers of core academic subjects language, mathematics, science, and social studies were included alongside teachers of elective and specialist subjects such as physical education, arts, and technology. This breadth is significant because parental involvement may manifest differently across subject areas. Parents may be more engaged with subjects they perceive as central to academic success, or may feel more competent supporting certain subjects than others. By including teachers from a range of disciplines, the study can examine whether perceptions of parental involvement and its relationship to student behaviour vary by subject context. Similarly, teachers were drawn from across the grade levels served by each school, ensuring that the study captures the perspectives of those working with students at different developmental stages. The selection of teachers also attended to variations in experience and role within the school. Teachers with different levels of professional experience may hold different expectations regarding parental involvement and may interpret its effects on student behaviour differently. Novice teachers, for example, may be more attuned to the challenges of managing classroom behaviour and may place greater value on

parental support, while experienced teachers may have developed more nuanced understandings of how family engagement operates in practice. Similarly, teachers who hold additional responsibilities such as form tutor, head of year, or pastoral lead may have more extensive contact with parents and may therefore offer distinctive insights.

The recruitment of parents employed a stratified approach to ensure representation across grade levels. Stratification was necessary because parental involvement may vary systematically with the age and developmental stage of the child. Parents of students in earlier grades may be more directly involved in homework supervision and school events, while parents of older students may shift toward more autonomy-supportive forms of engagement. By recruiting parents from each grade level, the study can examine these developmental patterns and can assess whether the relationship between involvement and behaviour differs across grade levels. Within each grade level, parents were recruited through school communication channels, including digital platforms, letters sent home with students, and announcements at school events. This multi-channel approach was intended to reach parents with varying levels of engagement with school communications, reducing the risk that the sample would over-represent those who were already highly involved.

The stratification of the parent sample also aimed to capture diversity in family circumstances. While the study did not stratify explicitly by socioeconomic status, parental education, or family structure, it sought to recruit a sample that reflected the demographic profile of each school community. This was achieved by recruiting broadly through school channels rather than targeting specific sub-groups, and by monitoring the characteristics of respondents as data were collected to identify any obvious imbalances. The study acknowledges, however, that volunteer participation inevitably introduces some degree of self-selection. Parents who chose to complete the questionnaire may differ systematically from those who did not most likely being more engaged with their children's education and more comfortable with school-related communication. This potential bias must be considered when interpreting findings, and the study addresses it by comparing respondent characteristics with available school demographic data and by being transparent about the limitations of the sample.

The voluntary and anonymous nature of participation was communicated clearly to all prospective participants. Teachers were informed that their participation was not required, that their responses would not be shared with school leadership in identifiable form, and that they could withdraw at any point without consequence. Parents received similar assurances through the questionnaire materials and through the communication channels used for recruitment. Anonymity was particularly important given the sensitivity of some questionnaire items, which addressed topics such as family practices, communication with teachers, and student behaviour. By guaranteeing anonymity, the study sought to reduce social desirability bias and to encourage honest responding.

The inclusion of both teachers and parents as participants reflects the study's mesosystemic orientation. Bronfenbrenner's theory positions the mesosystem the interactions between home and school as a key determinant of developmental outcomes, and the study operationalises this by collecting

parallel data from both sides of the home-school relationship. Teachers and parents occupy different positions in relation to the student and may therefore perceive involvement and its effects differently. Teachers observe student behaviour in the classroom and may attribute changes to parental engagement or its absence. Parents observe their children at home and may have different understandings of how their involvement influences behaviour at school. By including both perspectives, the study can examine the degree of convergence or divergence between them and can assess whether alignment between parent and teacher perceptions is associated with more favourable behavioural outcomes.

The sample size of 48 teachers and 96 parents was determined by a combination of statistical and practical considerations. For the quantitative component of the study, the sample provides adequate power to detect moderate associations between involvement and behaviour at the aggregate level, though it is not large enough to support complex multivariate modelling with many predictors. The study therefore adopts an analytical approach that is appropriate to the sample size, focusing on descriptive comparisons, correlational analyses, and the examination of patterns across subgroups rather than on formal hypothesis testing with stringent significance thresholds. For the qualitative component, the sample provides a sufficient pool from which to recruit interview participants who can offer in-depth perspectives on the themes emerging from the survey data. Interview participants will be selected purposively from among questionnaire respondents who indicate willingness to participate further, with attention to achieving diversity in role, experience, and perspective.

The participants in this study are not merely sources of data but are understood as knowledgeable agents whose perspectives are essential to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. Teachers bring professional expertise and daily observation of student behaviour; parents bring intimate knowledge of their children and of the family practices that shape their engagement with school. The study's methodological approach is designed to honour these perspectives, to integrate them systematically, and to generate findings that are grounded in the experiences of those most directly involved in the home-school relationship. The participant sample comprises 48 teachers and 96 parents, evenly distributed across two schools, selected to ensure representation across subject areas, grade levels, and roles. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and recruitment strategies were designed to reach a broad cross-section of each school community. The inclusion of both teachers and parents reflects the study's mesosystemic focus and enables the examination of convergence and divergence in perceptions of parental involvement and its relationship to student behaviour.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected over a six-week period in the second term of the academic year. Teacher questionnaires were administered during staff meetings to ensure high response rates. Parent questionnaires were distributed via school communication platforms and returned through sealed collection boxes at each school. Additionally, the research team accessed anonymised behavioural incident records for the term, including documented disruptions, disciplinary referrals, and positive behaviour acknowledgements.

The sequencing and administration of data collection were designed to maximise both response rates and data quality while respecting the constraints and rhythms of school life. The six-week window was chosen to allow sufficient time for comprehensive data gathering without imposing undue burden on participants or disrupting normal school operations. It also permitted the research team to establish a presence in each school, build rapport with staff and parents, and follow up on non-responses all of which are critical for achieving adequate participation rates in school-based research. The administration of teacher questionnaires during staff meetings was a deliberate strategy to secure high response rates. Teachers are frequently overburdened with administrative tasks and survey requests, and questionnaire fatigue is a well-documented challenge in educational research. By integrating data collection into existing scheduled meetings rather than asking teachers to complete questionnaires on their own time the study reduced the effort required for participation and signalled that the research was valued by school leadership. This approach also allowed the research team to provide standardised instructions, answer questions, and ensure that questionnaires were completed independently rather than collaboratively. The presence of the research team during administration further enhanced the credibility of the study and provided an opportunity to address any concerns about confidentiality or the purpose of the research. The study acknowledges that administering questionnaires in a group setting may introduce social desirability pressures, as teachers may feel observed by colleagues or administrators. To mitigate this, questionnaires were completed anonymously, and the research team emphasised that responses would not be shared with school leadership in identifiable form.

The distribution of parent questionnaires via school communication platforms required a different approach, tailored to the realities of family life and the diverse circumstances of parents. Unlike teachers, parents are not regularly gathered in one place, and their availability varies widely according to employment, caregiving responsibilities, and other commitments. The use of school communication platforms whether digital systems such as parent portals, messaging applications, or traditional printed letters sent home with students allowed the study to reach parents through channels they already used to engage with the school. This approach had the advantage of familiarity: parents were not being asked to navigate an unfamiliar system or to take unusual steps to participate. It also introduced variability in how the questionnaires were received and perceived. Parents who were already highly engaged with school communications may have been more likely to notice and respond to the questionnaire, potentially introducing a self-selection bias that over-represents more involved parents. The study addresses this limitation by comparing the characteristics of respondents with the broader parent population and by acknowledging the potential for bias in its interpretation of findings.

The use of sealed collection boxes at each school was intended to address concerns about confidentiality and to provide a tangible, low-threshold means of returning completed questionnaires. Parents who might be reluctant to return questionnaires through their children perhaps because they were uncertain whether their responses would remain private could deposit them directly into a secure box at the school. The sealed boxes also signalled the research team's commitment to protecting participant confidentiality, which was particularly

important given that the study addressed sensitive topics such as family practices, communication with teachers, and student behaviour. The boxes were placed in accessible locations, such as near the school office or in the parent waiting area, and were checked regularly by the research team.

The collection of behavioural incident records supplemented the questionnaire data with objective, school-generated information about student behaviour. These records included documented disruptions, disciplinary referrals, and positive behaviour acknowledgements, providing a multi-dimensional picture of behavioural outcomes. The inclusion of both negative and positive indicators is significant: much of the existing literature focuses on problem behaviour, but the study recognises that behavioural outcomes encompass not only the absence of difficulties but also the presence of positive behaviours such as cooperation, engagement, and prosocial conduct. By examining both, the study can assess whether parental involvement is associated with reductions in problematic behaviour, increases in positive behaviour, or both.

The use of anonymised records was essential for ethical reasons. Behavioural incident records are sensitive documents that contain information about individual students, and their use in research requires careful safeguards to protect student privacy. Anonymisation ensured that the research team could analyse patterns and associations without accessing information that could identify individual students. The records were provided by school administrators in a format that removed names, student identification numbers, and other identifying details, while retaining information about the nature of the incident, the date, the year group, and the outcome. This approach allowed the study to link behavioural data to questionnaire responses at the aggregate level for example, by comparing average behaviour rates across schools or year groups without compromising individual confidentiality.

The combination of questionnaire data from teachers and parents with behavioural incident records reflects the study's commitment to methodological triangulation. Each data source has distinct strengths and limitations. Teacher questionnaires provide professional perspectives on student behaviour and parental involvement, but they may be influenced by teachers' expectations, biases, or limited knowledge of out-of-school factors. Parent questionnaires provide insight into family practices and perceptions, but they rely on self-report and may be subject to social desirability bias. Behavioural incident records provide objective documentation of behavioural events, but they capture only behaviours that come to the attention of school staff and may be influenced by variations in reporting practices across teachers and schools. By integrating these sources, the study can examine whether findings converge across methods and can interpret discrepancies in light of the strengths and limitations of each source.

The six-week data collection period also allowed for a longitudinal element within the study. Baseline questionnaire data were collected in the first two weeks, providing a snapshot of involvement and behaviour at the start of the observation period. Follow-up data were collected in the final two weeks, allowing the study to examine changes over time. The behavioural incident records covered the entire term, providing a longer-term view of behavioural patterns. This

combination of repeated measures and continuous records enabled the study to examine both short-term fluctuations and more stable patterns, enriching the analysis beyond what a single cross-sectional snapshot could provide. Several practical and ethical considerations shaped the data collection procedures. The research team coordinated closely with school administrators to minimise disruption to school routines. Questionnaire administration was scheduled to coincide with existing meetings or communication cycles, and the research team was flexible in responding to unforeseen events such as examinations, staff absences, or school closures. The study obtained ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board and complied with all applicable requirements for research involving human participants, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. The research team was attentive to issues of equity and inclusion in data collection. Parents with limited literacy, limited proficiency in the language of the questionnaire, or limited access to digital communication platforms may face barriers to participation. The study addressed these barriers by offering questionnaires in multiple formats and languages where feasible, by providing assistance with completion on request, and by ensuring that alternative means of participation such as telephone interviews were available for those who could not complete written questionnaires.

The data collection procedures were designed to be transparent and replicable. Detailed records were maintained of when and how data were collected, how participants were recruited, and what steps were taken to ensure data quality. This documentation supports the study's claims to rigour and allows other researcher to assess the reliability of the findings or to replicate the study in other contexts. The data collection procedures combined teacher questionnaires, parent questionnaires, and behavioural incident records to generate a rich, multi-source dataset. The administration strategies were tailored to the circumstances of each participant group, balancing the need for high response rates with respect for participants' time and confidentiality. The six-week period allowed for both baseline and follow-up data collection, introducing a longitudinal element within the constraints of a single term. The integration of multiple data sources supports methodological triangulation and enhances the credibility of the study's findings.

Analytical Approach

Quantitative questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics and comparative tests (independent samples t-tests and chi-square tests where appropriate) to identify significant differences between the two school communities. Qualitative responses to open-ended questionnaire items were thematically analysed to identify patterns in how parents and teachers conceptualise the involvement-behaviour relationship. Behavioural incident records were analysed for frequency and severity patterns. The analytical approach adopted in this study reflects its embedded mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative strategies to address the research questions from multiple angles. Rather than treating the two strands as separate enterprises, the analysis is structured to allow findings from each to inform and illuminate the other. Quantitative results identify patterns and associations across the sample; qualitative findings provide depth, context, and interpretive purchase on those patterns. The integration of behavioural incident records

adds a third, independent source of evidence that can corroborate or complicate the picture emerging from self-report data. The quantitative analysis began with descriptive statistics to characterise the sample and the key variables of interest. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were calculated for all questionnaire items relating to parental involvement and perceived behavioural outcomes. These descriptive analyses served several purposes. They provided a profile of the sample, allowing the research team to assess the representativeness of respondents relative to the broader school populations. They established baseline levels of involvement and behavioural outcomes at each school, against which subsequent comparisons could be made. They identified distributional characteristics such as skewness or ceiling effects that might influence the choice of subsequent statistical tests. The descriptive findings are reported separately for each school, enabling direct comparison of the involvement profiles and behavioural patterns at the two sites.

Comparative analyses were conducted to examine differences between the two school communities. Independent samples *t*-tests were used for continuous variables, such as composite scores of involvement quality or behavioural ratings, to determine whether mean levels differed significantly between School X and School Y. Chi-square tests were employed for categorical variables, such as the presence or absence of specific involvement behaviours or the frequency of particular behavioural incidents. These tests were selected because they are appropriate for the sample size and the level of measurement of the variables involved, and because they provide a clear and interpretable basis for identifying between-school differences. Where assumptions for parametric tests were violated for example, where distributions were markedly non-normal or variances were significantly unequal non-parametric alternatives such as the Mann-Whitney *U* test were employed. Effect sizes were calculated alongside significance tests to provide an indication of the magnitude of observed differences, recognising that statistical significance alone can be misleading when sample sizes are modest.

The comparative tests were complemented by correlational analyses examining associations between involvement dimensions and behavioural outcomes within each school. Pearson or Spearman correlation coefficients were computed, depending on the distributional characteristics of the variables, to assess the strength and direction of relationships. These analyses allowed the study to examine whether particular forms of involvement such as academic socialisation, homework support, or communication quality were more strongly associated with positive behavioural outcomes than others, and whether these associations differed across the two school contexts. Given the relatively small sample size, these analyses are interpreted with appropriate caution, and the study refrains from making strong causal claims on the basis of correlational evidence alone.

The qualitative analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses followed a thematic approach. Responses were transcribed, organised, and coded systematically to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories. The coding process began with open coding, in which responses were read closely and assigned descriptive codes capturing their content. These codes were then grouped into broader categories and, ultimately, into overarching themes that reflected the central concerns and perspectives expressed by participants. The thematic analysis

attended not only to the frequency of particular themes but also to their content and the ways in which participants articulated their views. Differences between parent and teacher perspectives were examined explicitly, as were differences between the two schools. The qualitative findings are presented alongside the quantitative results, enabling the reader to see how the statistical patterns are instantiated in the words and experiences of participants.

The analysis of behavioural incident records proceeded in two stages. Records were coded by type documented disruptions, disciplinary referrals, and positive behaviour acknowledgements and by severity where applicable. Frequencies were then calculated for each category, both overall and by grade level, allowing the study to examine the distribution of behavioural incidents across the school population and to identify any patterns associated with particular year groups. The frequency and severity data were examined in relation to the questionnaire data, allowing the study to assess whether schools or grade levels with higher levels of parental involvement also exhibited lower rates of problematic behaviour or higher rates of positive behaviour acknowledgement. As with the correlational analyses, these comparisons are interpreted as suggestive rather than definitive, given the constraints of the design and the potential for confounding variables.

The integration of the three data sources teacher questionnaires, parent questionnaires, and behavioural records was achieved through a process of triangulation. Findings from each source were compared and contrasted, with attention to points of convergence and divergence. Where findings converged for example, where both parent and teacher reports indicated that communication quality was high and behavioural incidents were low the study could have greater confidence in the robustness of the pattern. Where findings diverged for example, where parents reported high levels of involvement but teachers perceived it as ineffective the study could explore the reasons for the discrepancy through the qualitative data and through further analysis of the contextual factors at each school. This integrative approach is central to the study's ability to generate insights that are both nuanced and credible.

Several analytical considerations warrant explicit acknowledgment. The sample size of 48 teachers and 96 parents, while adequate for the descriptive and comparative analyses conducted, limits the complexity of the statistical modelling that is feasible. The study therefore prioritises clarity and interpretability over elaborate multivariate techniques, focusing on patterns that can be robustly identified within the constraints of the data. The reliance on self-report measures for involvement introduces the possibility of common method variance, in which associations between variables are inflated because they are measured through the same method. The inclusion of behavioural incident records, which are independent of self-report, partially mitigates this concern by providing an external criterion against which self-reported involvement can be assessed. The cross-sectional nature of the questionnaire data limits the extent to which causal inferences can be drawn. While the longitudinal element within the six-week data collection period provides some purchase on change over time, the study is careful to frame its findings in terms of associations and patterns rather than definitive causal claims.

The analytical approach also attends to ethical considerations in the handling and reporting of data. All analyses were conducted on anonymised data, and results are reported in ways that protect the identities of individual participants and schools. Where verbatim quotations are used to illustrate themes, they are presented without identifying details and with sufficient contextual information to aid interpretation without compromising confidentiality. The study is transparent about its analytical decisions, documenting the steps taken in coding, statistical testing, and triangulation so that readers can assess the rigour of the findings and the appropriateness of the conclusions drawn. The analytical approach combines quantitative and qualitative strategies within a comparative case study framework. Descriptive and comparative statistics identify patterns and differences between the two schools; thematic analysis of open-ended responses provides depth and interpretive context; and behavioural incident records offer an independent source of evidence on behavioural outcomes. The integration of these strands through triangulation enhances the credibility and richness of the findings, positioning the study to address its research questions in a manner that is both rigorous and contextually sensitive.

Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained from the relevant educational authorities and school principals. All participants received written information about the study's purpose and provided informed consent. Anonymity was preserved through coded identification, and no individual student or family data were accessed or reported. The ethical framework governing this study was designed to protect the rights and welfare of all participants while enabling the research to proceed in a manner that is both rigorous and respectful. Given that the study involved research in school settings, engaged both adults and minors indirectly, and addressed topics of a potentially sensitive nature including family practices, home-school communication, and student behaviour careful attention to ethical principles was essential at every stage of the research process. The study was guided by the core ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, as articulated in established research ethics frameworks.

Approval from educational authorities was sought and obtained before any data collection commenced. This involved submitting a detailed research proposal outlining the study's purpose, design, methods, and ethical safeguards to the relevant district or regional education offices. The approval process ensured that the study was aligned with educational priorities and that any concerns regarding disruption to school operations, burden on staff, or risks to students were addressed in advance. In addition to formal approval from educational authorities, permission was obtained from the principals of both participating schools. Principals were provided with comprehensive information about the study, including its objectives, the nature of the data to be collected, the time commitment required of teachers and parents, and the measures in place to protect confidentiality. Their consent was not merely procedural but reflected a genuine understanding of and support for the research, which is essential for the successful conduct of school-based studies. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Teachers and parents who agreed to complete questionnaires received written information sheets that explained the purpose of the research, what participation

would involve, how data would be used and stored, and the steps taken to protect anonymity. The information sheets were written in clear, accessible language and were made available in multiple formats printed and digital to accommodate different preferences and levels of access. Participants were explicitly informed that participation was voluntary, that they could decline to participate without any negative consequences, and that they could withdraw from the study at any point prior to data analysis without providing a reason. Consent was documented through signed forms for those completing written questionnaires and through explicit acknowledgement for those participating through digital platforms.

The voluntary nature of participation was emphasised throughout the recruitment process. Teachers were assured that their decision to participate or not would have no bearing on their professional evaluations or relationships with school leadership. Parents were assured that their decision would not affect their child's education or their relationship with the school. These assurances were particularly important given the power dynamics inherent in school settings, where teachers may feel pressure to comply with requests from administrators and parents may feel that participation is expected or that non-participation could have consequences for their children. By making voluntariness explicit and by providing multiple avenues for participation and non-participation, the study sought to ensure that consent was genuinely free and informed. Anonymity was a cornerstone of the study's ethical approach. All questionnaire responses were anonymised through the use of coded identification numbers, which allowed the research team to link data across sources such as connecting a teacher's questionnaire to a parent's questionnaire at the aggregate level without accessing identifying information. The codes were stored separately from the data and were accessible only to the principal investigator. In reporting findings, no individual participant is identified by name, role, or any combination of characteristics that could permit identification. Schools are referred to by pseudonyms (School X and School Y), and descriptive details are presented in ways that protect the identity of the institutions and their communities. Where verbatim quotations are used, they are presented without identifying details and with only the minimal contextual information necessary for interpretation.

The study did not access or report individual student or family data. Behavioural incident records were provided by school administrators in anonymised form, with names, student identification numbers, and other identifying details removed before the records were shared with the research team. The research team received only aggregate or de-identified data, meaning that no individual student's behaviour could be traced or reported. This approach protected student privacy while still allowing the study to examine patterns of behaviour at the school and grade level. Parents were informed that behavioural records would be accessed in anonymised form and that no information about their individual child would be used in the research. Confidentiality was maintained through secure data storage and handling procedures. Physical documents, such as completed questionnaires and consent forms, were stored in locked filing cabinets accessible only to the research team. Digital data were stored on password-protected devices and encrypted files, with access restricted to authorised personnel. Data will be retained for a period consistent with institutional and regulatory requirements, after which they will be securely

destroyed. These measures ensured that participants' information was protected throughout the research process and beyond. The study also attended to the potential for indirect harms arising from participation. Completing questionnaires about parental involvement and student behaviour could prompt reflection on sensitive family matters or evoke discomfort in participants who felt their involvement was inadequate or whose children had experienced behavioural difficulties. The information sheets provided contact details for support services, including school counsellors and community resources, and participants were encouraged to seek support if needed. The research team was trained to recognise signs of distress and to respond appropriately, though the nature of questionnaire-based data collection meant that direct interaction with participants was limited.

Ethical considerations extended to the interpretation and reporting of findings. Given the comparative design, there was a risk that findings could be read as evaluative that one school might be portrayed as more effective or more deficient than the other. The study takes care to frame its findings not as judgements of either school but as insights into how different involvement cultures operate and what consequences they may have for student behaviour. In reporting differences between schools, the study avoids deficit language and emphasises the contextual and structural factors that shape involvement practices. This framing reflects the study's commitment to conducting research that is respectful of participating communities and that generates knowledge of practical value without stigmatising individuals or institutions.

The study also considered issues of equity and inclusion in its ethical planning. Parents with limited literacy, limited proficiency in the language of the questionnaire, or limited access to digital communication channels may face barriers to informed consent and participation. The study addressed these barriers by offering questionnaires in multiple formats and languages where feasible, by providing assistance with completion on request, and by ensuring that alternative means of participation such as telephone interviews or oral completion were available. These measures were intended to ensure that the opportunity to participate was genuinely open to all parents, not only those with the resources and confidence to navigate written, English-language materials.

The study complied with all applicable institutional and regulatory requirements for research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to the commencement of data collection. The research team received training in research ethics and in the specific procedures relevant to school-based research. Any amendments to the study protocol such as changes to recruitment procedures or data collection instruments were submitted for ethical review and approval before implementation.

The ethical framework of this study was designed to protect the rights and welfare of all participants while enabling the research to proceed rigorously and respectfully. Approval from educational authorities and school principals, informed consent from all participants, anonymity through coded identification, and the exclusion of individual student and family data from the research process collectively ensured that the study met high ethical standards. The study's commitment to ethical practice is not merely a procedural requirement but a reflection

of its underlying values: respect for the individuals and communities who contributed to the research, and a commitment to generating knowledge that serves the interests of students, families, and schools.

QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENTS

Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was designed to capture teachers' perceptions of parental involvement among their students' families, as well as their assessment of behavioural patterns in their classrooms. The instrument combines Likert-scale items with open-ended questions to allow for both quantification and contextualisation.

Section A: Perceptions of Parental Involvement

1. In your experience, what proportion of your students' parents are actively involved in their child's education?
2. How would you rate the general frequency of communication you have with parents regarding their child's behaviour in class? (Very frequent / Frequent / Occasional / Rare / Never)
3. How would you rate the quality of your communication with most parents? (Excellent / Good / Adequate / Poor / Very poor)
4. What forms of parental involvement do you most commonly observe? (Check all that apply)
 - Attending parent-teacher conferences
 - Responding to teacher communications
 - Monitoring homework completion
 - Volunteering in school activities
 - Discussing behavioural expectations with child
 - Communicating with school about problems
5. In your experience, how do students whose parents are actively involved differ from those whose parents are not involved in terms of:
 - Classroom behaviour (Much better / Slightly better / No difference / Slightly worse / Much worse)
 - Homework completion (Much better / Slightly better / No difference / Slightly worse / Much worse)
 - Respect for teachers and peers (Much better / Slightly better / No difference / Slightly worse / Much worse)
 - Attendance and punctuality (Much better / Slightly better / No difference / Slightly worse / Much worse)

Section B: Perceptions of Behavioural Patterns

6. On average, how many behavioural incidents (disruptions, defiance, disrespect) occur in your classroom per week?
7. What are the most common behavioural issues you observe? (Open response)
8. To what extent do you believe parental involvement contributes to positive classroom behaviour? (To a great extent / Somewhat / Very little / Not at all)
9. Please describe any specific instances where parental involvement appeared to positively influence a student's behaviour. (Open response)
10. Conversely, are there instances where parental involvement appeared to have no effect or a negative effect on behaviour? (Open response)

Section C: School-Level Perceptions

11. How would you characterise the overall culture of parental involvement at this school? (Very strong / Strong / Moderate / Weak / Very weak)
12. What barriers to parental involvement do you perceive exist in your school community? (Check all that apply)
 - Parents' work schedules
 - Language or cultural differences
 - Parents' negative school experiences
 - Lack of teacher time to communicate
 - Parents not knowing how to help
 - School not welcoming to parents
 - Other: _____

Parent Questionnaire

The parent questionnaire mirrors the teacher instrument in structure, assessing parents' self-reported involvement practices and their perceptions of their child's behaviour in school.

Section A: Involvement Practices

1. How often do you communicate with your child's teachers about their progress or behaviour? (Weekly / Monthly / A few times per year / Rarely / Never)
2. What forms of involvement in your child's education do you engage in? (Check all that apply)
 - Attending parent-teacher conferences
 - Responding to teacher communications
 - Monitoring homework completion
 - Volunteering at school
 - Discussing behavioural expectations with my child
 - Communicating with school when problems arise
 - Discussing the importance of education with my child
 - Connecting school learning to everyday life
3. On average, how much time per week do you spend directly assisting your child with schoolwork?
4. How confident do you feel in your ability to support your child's education? (Very confident / Confident / Somewhat confident / Not confident)
5. What barriers, if any, prevent you from being more involved in your child's education? (Check all that apply)
 - Work schedule
 - Lack of information about how to help
 - Difficulty communicating with teachers
 - Feeling unwelcome at school
 - Other: _____

Section B: Perceptions of Child's Behaviour

6. How would you describe your child's behaviour in school? (Excellent / Good / Average / Poor / Very poor)
7. Has your child's behaviour ever been a concern raised by the school? (Yes / No)
8. Do you believe your involvement in your child's education affects their behaviour in school? (Yes, significantly / Yes, somewhat / No / Not sure)
9. How do you typically respond when you learn of a behavioural issue at school? (Open response)

Section C: Home-School Relationship

10. How would you rate the quality of your relationship with your child's teachers? (Excellent / Good / Adequate / Poor / Very poor)
11. Do you feel that teachers at this school are approachable and willing to discuss your child's behaviour? (Always / Usually / Sometimes / Rarely / Never)
12. What would help you be more effectively involved in supporting your child's behaviour at school? (Open response)

FINDINGS

Questionnaire Results: School X

Teacher Responses (n=24): Teachers at School X reported high levels of observable parental involvement. On question 1, 71% estimated that more than half of parents were actively involved. Question 2 indicated that 58% of teachers communicated with parents "frequently" or "very frequently." The quality of communication was more mixed: only 33% rated quality as "excellent" or "good," with 46% selecting "adequate."

For question 5, teachers perceived involved parents' children as "slightly better" (54%) or "much better" (21%) in classroom behaviour. However, 25% saw "no difference." On question 8, 67% believed parental involvement contributed "somewhat" or "to a great extent" to positive behaviour.

Open-ended responses revealed a nuanced picture. One teacher noted: "Parents come to conferences and respond to emails, but there's often a disconnect they seem to be going through the motions without real engagement." Another observed: "The parents who really partner with us those are the ones whose kids improve. Just signing forms isn't enough."

These findings present a picture of School X that is, on the surface, consistent with its reputation as a school with an active parental involvement culture. The majority of teachers perceived that more than half of parents were actively involved, and a substantial proportion reported frequent communication with parents. These figures align with the administrative data described in the site selection section, which indicated high parental participation rates in school events and relatively frequent parent-initiated contact with teachers. Taken at face value, they suggest a school in which parental involvement is both widespread and routinised.

Closer examination of the response patterns reveals a more complicated reality. The divergence between the frequency of communication and its perceived quality is particularly striking. While 58% of teachers reported communicating with parents frequently or very frequently, only 33% rated the quality of that communication as excellent or good. Nearly half 46% described it as merely adequate. This gap between frequency and quality echoes the central finding of the literature reviewed in Section 2.3: that the quantity of involvement is a poor proxy for its quality, and that the two dimensions may diverge substantially. At School X, it appears, communication is happening often, but much of it is not experienced by teachers as genuinely effective or meaningful. The open-ended responses illuminate the nature of this gap. The teacher who observed that parents "seem to be going

through the motions without real engagement" captures a phenomenon that has been documented in the literature on formalised involvement programmes: the risk that involvement becomes performative, enacted to fulfil institutional expectations rather than driven by genuine interest in or understanding of the child's learning. Parents attend conferences and respond to emails because these are the recognised markers of involvement, but the interaction may lack the substantive, collaborative quality that characterises genuine partnership. The second teacher's comment reinforces this interpretation: "The parents who really partner with us those are the ones whose kids improve. Just signing forms isn't enough." Here, the distinction is drawn explicitly between superficial compliance with involvement rituals and authentic partnership, with the latter identified as the driver of behavioural improvement.

The findings on perceived behavioural outcomes are consistent with this nuanced picture. That 75% of teachers perceived involved parents' children as slightly better or much better in classroom behaviour indicates a broadly positive association between involvement and behaviour. The fact that 25% saw no difference is notable. If involvement were uniformly beneficial, one would expect a higher proportion of teachers to report positive effects. The presence of a substantial minority reporting no difference suggests either that involvement's effects are conditional operating only under certain circumstances or for certain forms of involvement or that teachers' perceptions are shaped by factors other than involvement itself. The qualitative data point toward the former interpretation: it is not involvement per se that matters, but the quality of engagement, and where involvement is superficial, its effects on behaviour may be negligible.

The question 8 finding that 67% believed parental involvement contributed somewhat or to a great extent to positive behaviour similarly reflects qualified optimism. While a majority of teachers endorsed a positive contribution, the fact that a third did not do so is significant. It indicates that teacher perceptions of involvement's efficacy are not unanimous and that a substantial minority remain unconvinced of its behavioural benefits. This variation in perception is itself an important finding, as it may reflect differences in teachers' experiences with different families, different forms of involvement, or different student populations.

Taken together, the teacher responses from School X suggest a school in which the structures of involvement are well established but the quality of engagement is uneven. The high participation rates in formal activities and the frequency of communication are consistent with an active involvement culture, but the modest ratings of communication quality and the substantial minority reporting no behavioural difference suggest that the formalisation of involvement has not uniformly translated into effective partnership. The qualitative data indicate that teachers are acutely aware of this distinction and that they identify authentic partnership characterised by genuine engagement rather than ritual compliance as the form of involvement most closely linked to positive behavioural outcomes.

These findings have implications for the comparative analysis. School X represents a case in which involvement is high in quantity but variable in quality. If the literature's contention that quality matters more than quantity holds, we would expect

the involvement-behaviour relationship at School X to be weaker or more conditional than at a school where involvement is less frequent but of higher quality. The comparison with School Y, which reports lower formal participation but a stronger informal culture of substantive communication, will provide an opportunity to test this proposition.

The teacher data from School X also raise questions about the distribution of involvement within the school. The finding that 71% of teachers estimated that more than half of parents were actively involved implies that a substantial minority up to 29% of parents, by teachers' estimates were not actively involved. The study did not collect data on which parents were involved and which were not, but the literature on socioeconomic and contextual variations in involvement suggests that involvement may be unevenly distributed across the parent population. If involvement is concentrated among families with greater resources, confidence, or familiarity with school systems, then the benefits of involvement may also be concentrated, potentially exacerbating rather than reducing behavioural disparities.

The open-ended responses also invite reflection on the concept of the "disconnect" identified by one teacher. This term captures the experience of communication that occurs without genuine connection interactions that are technically completed but fail to establish the shared understanding and mutual commitment that characterise effective home-school partnership. The disconnect may arise from a variety of sources: differences in expectations between parents and teachers, cultural or linguistic barriers, the use of communication channels that do not facilitate genuine dialogue, or the sheer busyness of both parties that reduces interactions to transactional exchanges. Understanding the sources of this disconnect is essential for schools seeking to move beyond superficial involvement toward authentic partnership.

The teacher responses from School X reveal a school with high levels of observable involvement but variable quality of engagement. The frequency of communication is not matched by its perceived quality, and a substantial minority of teachers report no behavioural benefits from involvement. The qualitative data suggest that teachers distinguish between performative involvement and authentic partnership, identifying the latter as the driver of positive behavioural outcomes.

Parent Responses (n=48): Parents at School X reported moderate-to-high involvement in formal activities: 79% attended conferences, 65% monitored homework completion, and 71% discussed educational importance with their children. Only 42% communicated with teachers about behaviour issues, and only 28% volunteered at school.

On question 6, 52% described their child's behaviour as "excellent" or "good." On question 8, 61% believed their involvement affected behaviour "somewhat" or "significantly." Notably, on question 11, only 45% felt teachers were "always" or "usually" approachable about behavioural concerns.

These findings reveal a distinctive pattern of involvement at School X one characterised by high engagement in certain domains and markedly lower engagement in others. The

domains in which parents reported highest participation attending conferences, monitoring homework completion, and discussing the importance of education are those that align most closely with the school's formal involvement structures and with conventional expectations of what parental involvement looks like. These are, in a sense, the sanctioned forms of involvement: the activities that schools typically promote, measure, and celebrate. That the majority of parents reported engaging in them suggests that the school's formal involvement culture has been successful in mobilising parents around these recognised practices.

The domains in which participation was notably lower communicating with teachers about behaviour issues and volunteering at school point to limitations in the reach and depth of the involvement culture. The finding that only 42% of parents communicated with teachers about behaviour issues is particularly significant given the study's focus on behavioural outcomes. If fewer than half of parents are discussing behavioural matters with teachers, then the mesosystemic communication that Bronfenbrenner's theory identifies as central to developmental outcomes is occurring for only a minority of students. For the remaining majority, home and school may be operating in relative isolation with respect to behaviour, each responding to issues as they arise without the benefit of shared understanding or coordinated approach.

The low rate of volunteering 28% further suggests that involvement at School X is concentrated in receptive, passive forms rather than active, participatory ones. Attending a conference is a relatively low-threshold activity that requires parents to receive information; volunteering requires a greater investment of time and energy and represents a more active form of engagement with the school community. The gap between conference attendance and volunteering may reflect practical constraints such as work schedules and caregiving responsibilities, but it may also indicate that the school's involvement culture has been more successful in inviting parents to receive than in involving them as active contributors.

The finding on question 11 that only 45% of parents felt teachers were always or usually approachable about behavioural concerns is perhaps the most consequential for understanding the involvement-behaviour nexus at School X. Approachability is a precondition for the kind of substantive, problem-solving communication that the literature identifies as characteristic of high-quality home-school relationships. If fewer than half of parents perceive teachers as approachable about behavioural issues, then the potential for the mesosystem to function as a source of coordinated support is substantially constrained. Parents who do not feel comfortable approaching teachers with concerns may withhold information that could inform the school's response, may attempt to address behavioural issues in isolation, or may disengage from communication altogether. The result is a fragmented response to behavioural difficulties one in which home and school each address the same issues without the benefit of mutual understanding or shared strategy.

The parent responses also reveal a discrepancy between parents' perceptions of their own involvement and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement. While 61% of parents believed their involvement affected behaviour somewhat or significantly, only 67% of teachers believed parental

involvement contributed somewhat or to a great extent to positive behaviour. The slight gap between these figures is not dramatic, but it suggests that parents may be somewhat more optimistic about the efficacy of their involvement than teachers are. This divergence may reflect differences in perspective: parents may judge the effectiveness of their involvement by their children's behaviour at home or by their own sense of investment, while teachers judge it by what they observe in the classroom. Alternatively, it may reflect differences in the quality of involvement that parents believe they are providing and the quality that teachers perceive. The qualitative data from teachers, which distinguished between authentic partnership and going through the motions, suggest that teachers may be more attuned to the distinction between involvement that is genuinely effective and involvement that is merely enacted.

The finding that 52% of parents described their child's behaviour as excellent or good is notable in that it leaves nearly half of parents describing their child's behaviour in less positive terms. This distribution suggests that behavioural difficulties are not confined to a small minority of students but are experienced by a substantial proportion of families at School X. The fact that only 42% of parents communicated with teachers about behaviour issues means that many parents whose children experience behavioural difficulties are not discussing these issues with the school. The reasons for this non-communication are not captured by the questionnaire data, but the finding that only 45% of parents felt teachers were approachable about behavioural concerns offers one plausible explanation: parents may be reluctant to initiate conversations about behaviour if they anticipate that teachers will be unreceptive, judgemental, or unhelpful.

The parent responses also invite comparison with the teacher responses. Teachers estimated that 71% of parents were actively involved, but parents' self-reported involvement in specific activities ranged from 79% for conference attendance to 28% for volunteering. The discrepancy between teachers' global estimate of involvement and parents' reports of specific involvement behaviours suggests that teachers may be using a broad or impressionistic criterion for judging involvement one that is shaped by the most visible or salient forms of engagement while parents' reports reflect the specific activities in which they actually participate. This discrepancy highlights the value of collecting data from both stakeholder groups: each provides a partial perspective, and the comparison between them reveals the gaps and assumptions that shape how involvement is understood. Taken together, the parent responses from School X portray a parent community that is engaged in the conventional forms of involvement promoted by the school but less engaged in the more demanding or relational forms that the literature associates with positive behavioural outcomes. Parents attend conferences and monitor homework, but they are less likely to communicate about behavioural issues or to volunteer. Their perceptions of teacher approachability are modest, suggesting that the relational foundations for substantive home-school communication are not firmly established.

Behavioural Records: School X recorded 147 behavioural incidents over the term, with an average of 3.1 incidents per teacher per week. Incidents were concentrated among a smaller subset of students: 22% of students accounted for 68% of incidents.

These figures provide an important external criterion against which the questionnaire data can be assessed. Unlike self-report measures, which are susceptible to social desirability bias and perceptual distortion, behavioural records offer a relatively objective account of events that were documented by school staff. They therefore serve as a valuable counterpoint to the perceptions reported by teachers and parents, allowing the study to examine whether patterns evident in the questionnaire data are corroborated by independent evidence.

The overall frequency of incidents 147 over the course of a term indicates that behavioural disruptions are a regular feature of school life at School X. The average of 3.1 incidents per teacher per week suggests that most teachers encounter some form of documented behavioural event on a routine basis, though the distribution of these incidents across teachers is not uniform. Some teachers may record more incidents than others due to differences in their classes, their tolerance thresholds, or their reporting practices. The study acknowledges that the recording of behavioural incidents is not a purely objective process; what counts as an incident worthy of documentation may vary across teachers and contexts. Nevertheless, the aggregate figures provide a useful indication of the general level of behavioural challenge within the school.

The most striking feature of the behavioural records is the concentration of incidents among a relatively small subset of students. That 22% of students accounted for 68% of incidents reveals a highly skewed distribution, in which a minority of students are responsible for the majority of documented behavioural events. This pattern is consistent with research on behavioural difficulties in schools, which has consistently found that a small proportion of students account for a disproportionate share of disciplinary incidents. The concentration of incidents has significant implications for understanding the involvement-behaviour relationship. If behavioural difficulties are concentrated among a subset of students, then the effects of parental involvement or its absence may also be concentrated. The students who account for the majority of incidents may be those whose families are least involved, or whose involvement is least well aligned with the school's expectations. Alternatively, they may be students whose families are highly involved but whose involvement takes forms that are ineffective or counterproductive. The questionnaire data alone cannot resolve this question, but the concentration of incidents highlights the importance of examining involvement at the level of individual students and families rather than only in aggregate. The concentration of incidents also raises questions about the distribution of parental involvement at School X. If the students who account for the majority of behavioural incidents are also those whose parents are least involved, this would suggest a link between low involvement and behavioural difficulty. However, the study's design does not permit direct linkage of individual students' behaviour to their parents' questionnaire responses, since anonymity was preserved and no individual student or family data were accessed. The analysis therefore proceeds at the aggregate level, examining whether schools or grade levels with higher levels of involvement also exhibit lower rates of behavioural incidents. This aggregate approach cannot establish individual-level associations, but it can identify patterns that warrant further investigation. The behavioural records also provide a baseline against which the findings from School Y can be compared. If School Y records a substantially different number or distribution of incidents, this would

suggest that the two schools differ not only in their involvement cultures but also in their behavioural climates. Such differences would need to be taken into account in interpreting the comparative findings, as they may reflect variations in student populations, school policies, or reporting practices rather than differences in parental involvement alone. The study is attentive to these possibilities and interprets the behavioural data with appropriate caution. Comparing the behavioural records with the questionnaire data reveals both convergences and tensions. The finding that 25% of teachers at School X perceived no behavioural difference between children of involved and uninvolved parents is consistent with the behavioural records' indication that incidents are concentrated among a minority of students. If most students exhibit few or no behavioural incidents, then teachers may perceive little variation in behaviour across the student population, and the effects of parental involvement may be difficult to detect at the aggregate level. The behavioural benefits of involvement may be most visible among the subset of students who account for the majority of incidents students whose behaviour is most problematic and whose families' involvement may be most consequential. However, because the study cannot link individual students' behaviour to their parents' involvement, this hypothesis remains speculative.

The behavioural records also invite reflection on the relationship between involvement quality and behavioural outcomes. The teacher questionnaire data from School X suggested that involvement was high in quantity but variable in quality, with a substantial minority of teachers reporting no behavioural benefits. If involvement quality is indeed uneven, one would expect the behavioural records to show a persistent level of incidents, reflecting the fact that high-quality involvement the kind that might prevent or reduce behavioural difficulties is not universally present. The figure of 147 incidents over a term is consistent with this interpretation, suggesting that while the school's involvement culture may be active, it has not succeeded in eliminating or substantially reducing behavioural disruptions. The concentration of incidents among 22% of students also has implications for the design of interventions. If behavioural difficulties are concentrated among a minority of students, then targeted interventions directed at those students and their families may be more effective than universal approaches that treat all students alike. The literature on parental involvement suggests that families of students with behavioural difficulties may face particular challenges in engaging with schools, including stigma, previous negative experiences, and competing demands on their time and resources. Understanding these challenges and developing strategies to address them is essential for schools seeking to support the students who need it most. The behavioural records from School X highlight the importance of this targeted approach and set the stage for examining whether School Y exhibits a similar pattern of concentration or a different distribution of incidents. The behavioural records from School X reveal a pattern of regular but concentrated behavioural incidents, with a minority of students accounting for the majority of documented events. This pattern provides an objective counterpoint to the questionnaire data and highlights the importance of examining involvement and behaviour at both aggregate and individual levels. The concentration of incidents suggests that the effects of parental involvement may be most consequential for the subset of students whose behaviour is most challenging, and it

underscores the need for targeted interventions that address the specific circumstances of these students and their families.

Questionnaire Results: School Y

Teacher Responses (n=24): Teachers at School Y reported lower frequency but higher quality of parental involvement. Only 42% estimated that more than half of parents were actively involved (compared to 71% at School X). Communication frequency was lower: 38% reported "frequent" or "very frequent" communication. Quality ratings were substantially higher: 63% rated communication quality as "excellent" or "good."

For question 5, teachers perceived involved parents' children as "much better" (38%) or "slightly better" (42%) in classroom behaviour, with only 12% seeing "no difference." On question 8, 79% believed parental involvement contributed "to a great extent" to positive behaviour.

Open-ended responses emphasised depth over breadth. One teacher wrote: "We have fewer parents at events, but the ones who engage do so substantively. When a parent calls about behaviour, it's a conversation, not a complaint." Another noted: "The parents who partner with us are consistent. It's not about how often they come; it's about whether we're on the same page."

These findings present a striking contrast to the pattern observed at School X and offer compelling support for the quality-over-quantity thesis advanced in the literature review. At School Y, parental involvement is less widespread and less frequent than at School X, yet teachers perceive it as substantially more effective. The majority of teachers 63% rated communication quality as excellent or good, compared with only 33% at School X. This difference of thirty percentage points is substantial and suggests that the character of home-school communication at School Y is qualitatively different from that at School X. Where School X exhibited high frequency but modest quality, School Y exhibits lower frequency but markedly higher quality. This inverse relationship between frequency and quality is precisely what the literature on quality versus quantity would predict: involvement that is less frequent but more substantive may be more effective than involvement that is frequent but superficial.

The finding on question 5 reinforces this interpretation. At School Y, 80% of teachers perceived involved parents' children as much better or slightly better in classroom behaviour, compared with 75% at School X. More tellingly, only 12% of teachers at School Y saw no difference, compared with 25% at School X. The proportion of teachers reporting no behavioural difference is halved at School Y, suggesting that involvement at this school is more consistently associated with observable behavioural benefits. If involvement at School X is uneven in quality as the teacher responses suggested then it is understandable that a quarter of teachers would see no difference. At School Y, where involvement appears to be more consistently substantive, the perception of no difference is correspondingly rarer. The question 8 finding is perhaps the most striking. At School Y, 79% of teachers believed parental involvement contributed to a great extent to positive behaviour, compared with only 67% at School X who believed it contributed somewhat or to a great extent. The difference in

the intensity of endorsement is notable: teachers at School Y were not merely more likely to see involvement as beneficial; they were more likely to see it as highly beneficial. The category "to a great extent" captures a strong conviction about the efficacy of involvement, and the fact that nearly four in five teachers at School Y endorsed this category suggests that involvement is experienced not as a marginal or occasional influence but as a central and powerful determinant of student behaviour.

The open-ended responses provide rich insight into the mechanisms underlying these quantitative patterns. The teacher who observed that "the ones who engage do so substantively" captures the distinction between involvement that is enacted for its own sake and involvement that is directed toward genuine understanding and problem-solving. The phrase "substantively" implies depth, seriousness, and purpose qualities that may be lacking in involvement that is primarily performative. The same teacher's comment that "when a parent calls about behaviour, it's a conversation, not a complaint" is particularly illuminating. It suggests a relational dynamic in which communication about behavioural concerns is framed as collaborative inquiry rather than adversarial accusation. In such conversations, parents and teachers work together to understand the behaviour and develop a coordinated response, rather than each party defending its own position or assigning blame to the other. This collaborative framing is consistent with the literature's emphasis on the quality of family-school communication as a determinant of developmental outcomes.

The second teacher's comment "It's not about how often they come; it's about whether we're on the same page" articulates the quality-over-quantity principle explicitly. This teacher identifies alignment between home and school as the crucial variable, rather than the frequency of contact or the number of events attended. The phrase "on the same page" implies shared understanding, mutual commitment, and consistency of approach precisely the characteristics that Bronfenbrenner's theory identifies as constitutive of a well-functioning mesosystem. When home and school are aligned, the messages and expectations that students receive are coherent, and the support they receive is coordinated. When they are not aligned, students may receive conflicting messages and may find it possible to play one system against the other. The contrast between the two schools' open-ended responses is instructive. At School X, teachers described a disconnect between formal involvement and genuine engagement: parents attend conferences and respond to emails, but the interaction lacks substance. At School Y, teachers describe involvement that is less frequent but more meaningful: parents who engage do so substantively, and communication is characterised by conversation rather than complaint. These contrasting descriptions suggest that the two schools have developed different involvement cultures, each with its own strengths and limitations. School X has succeeded in mobilising a broad base of parents around formal activities but has not consistently translated this mobilisation into substantive partnership. School Y has cultivated a narrower but deeper form of engagement, in which the parents who do participate do so in ways that teachers experience as genuinely collaborative. The lower overall participation rates at School Y raise questions about equity and reach. If only 42% of teachers estimate that more than half of parents are actively involved compared with 71% at School X then a substantial proportion

of parents at School Y may be disengaged from their children's education. The teachers' emphasis on the quality of engagement among those who do participate may obscure the fact that many parents remain on the periphery. The literature on contextual variations in involvement suggests that parents who are least likely to participate are often those facing the greatest socioeconomic and structural barriers: parents working multiple jobs, parents with limited English proficiency, parents with negative experiences of schooling, and parents whose own educational trajectories were disrupted. If School Y's involvement culture is effective for those who participate but fails to reach those who do not, then its benefits may be unevenly distributed, and the students who most need support may be least likely to receive it.

The comparative findings also invite reflection on the relationship between involvement culture and school context. Why have the two schools developed such different approaches to parental involvement? The site selection section noted that both schools serve communities with comparable socioeconomic characteristics and student demographic profiles, which minimises the possibility that the differences are attributable to family background or community resources. This suggests that the differences in involvement culture are institutional rather than demographic products of school leadership, history, and practice rather than of the populations they serve. School X has invested in formal structures: a Parent-Teacher Association, workshops, volunteer programmes, and regular communication. School Y has cultivated informal relationships: regular, substantive conversations between parents and teachers, characterised by collaboration and mutual respect. These different approaches may reflect different philosophies of involvement, different leadership priorities, or different responses to the particular challenges and opportunities each school has faced.

The findings from School Y also have implications for the interpretation of the behavioural records. If, as the teacher data suggest, involvement at School Y is more consistently associated with positive behavioural outcomes, one would expect the school's behavioural records to reflect this. A lower frequency of incidents, or a different distribution of incidents, would corroborate the teacher perceptions and strengthen the case for the quality-over-quantity thesis. Conversely, if School Y's behavioural records show similar levels or patterns of incidents to School X, this would complicate the interpretation, suggesting that the perceived quality of involvement does not translate into measurable behavioural differences. The comparison of behavioural records across the two schools will therefore be a crucial element of the integrated analysis.

The teacher responses from School Y also raise questions about the generalisability of the quality-over-quantity finding. Is the effectiveness of School Y's informal, relational approach dependent on particular conditions such as small school size, a stable staff, or a cohesive community that may not be present in other contexts? Or is it a more general principle that schools can adopt regardless of their specific circumstances? The study cannot answer this question definitively, but the comparative design allows it to examine whether the patterns observed at School Y are consistent with the theoretical expectations derived from the literature and whether they suggest principles that might be transferable to other settings. The teacher responses from School Y reveal a school in which parental involvement is less frequent but more substantive than at

School X. Teachers rate communication quality more highly, perceive stronger behavioural benefits, and describe involvement in terms of partnership, alignment, and genuine engagement. The open-ended responses articulate a clear philosophy of depth over breadth, in which the quality of relationship matters more than the quantity of contact. These findings provide strong support for the quality-over-quantity thesis and set the stage for the comparison with parent responses and behavioural records in the following sections.

Parent Responses (n=48): Parents at School Y reported lower participation in formal school activities: 56% attended conferences (vs. 79% at School X), and only 21% volunteered. However, home-based academic socialisation was more prevalent: 83% discussed the importance of education, and 69% connected school learning to everyday life (compared to 58% at School X). Communication about behavioural issues was higher at School Y (58% vs. 42%), and perceived teacher approachability was substantially higher: 71% felt teachers were "always" or "usually" approachable (vs. 45% at School X).

On question 6, 63% described their child's behaviour as "excellent" or "good" (vs. 52% at School X). On question 8, 73% believed their involvement affected behaviour (vs. 61% at School X).

These findings present a distinctive profile of parental involvement at School Y one that diverges markedly from the pattern observed at School X and that aligns closely with the quality-over-quantity thesis. Where parents at School X reported high participation in formal school activities but lower engagement in home-based academic socialisation and behavioural communication, parents at School Y exhibit the inverse pattern. They are less likely to attend conferences or volunteer at school, but more likely to engage in substantive educational conversations at home, to communicate with teachers about behavioural issues, and to perceive teachers as approachable. This pattern suggests that involvement at School Y is oriented more toward the relational and developmental dimensions of engagement than toward the performance of formal, school-sanctioned activities.

The finding on conference attendance is particularly striking. Only 56% of parents at School Y attended conferences, compared with 79% at School X a difference of twenty-three percentage points. If conference attendance were the primary indicator of involvement, one would conclude that parents at School Y are substantially less engaged than their counterparts at School X. However, the other findings complicate this conclusion. Parents at School Y were more likely to discuss the importance of education with their children (83% vs. 71%), more likely to connect school learning to everyday life (69% vs. 58%), more likely to communicate with teachers about behavioural issues (58% vs. 42%), and substantially more likely to perceive teachers as approachable (71% vs. 45%). These findings suggest that involvement at School Y is not lower in absolute terms but differently distributed across the domains of engagement. Parents at School Y may be less visible at school events but more active in the home-based and relational dimensions of involvement that the literature identifies as particularly consequential for behavioural outcomes. The emphasis on home-based academic socialisation at School Y is consistent with the developmental literature reviewed in Section 2.2. As students move into

adolescence, direct assistance with homework and visible presence at school events become less strongly associated with positive outcomes, while academic socialisation practices communicating expectations, discussing learning strategies, fostering aspirations, and connecting school learning to life beyond the classroom emerge as the most powerful levers for improving engagement and behaviour. The parents at School Y appear to have adopted precisely these practices to a greater extent than parents at School X. The finding that 69% of School Y parents connected school learning to everyday life, compared with 58% at School X, is particularly significant. This practice sometimes termed "making learning relevant" or "contextualising education" helps students understand why their schoolwork matters and how it connects to their present and future lives. It is a form of involvement that does not require parents to possess advanced academic knowledge or to be physically present at school; it requires only that they engage their children in conversations that bridge the worlds of home and school. This form of involvement may be especially valuable for adolescent students, who are developing their own identities and seeking to understand the relevance of education to their lives.

The higher rate of communication about behavioural issues at School Y 58% compared with 42% at School X is directly relevant to the study's focus on the involvement-behaviour nexus. If parents at School Y are more likely to discuss behavioural matters with teachers, this suggests that the mesosystemic communication that Bronfenbrenner's theory identifies as central to developmental outcomes is more active at School Y than at School X. The fact that this communication is occurring for a majority of families at School Y means that, for most students, home and school are in dialogue about behaviour rather than operating in isolation. This dialogue may enable the kind of coordinated response that is most effective in addressing behavioural difficulties: parents and teachers sharing information, developing shared understandings, and agreeing on consistent approaches. The lower rate of behavioural communication at School X, by contrast, suggests that for many families, behavioural issues are addressed separately by home and school, with neither party fully aware of what the other is doing.

The finding on perceived teacher approachability is arguably the most consequential for understanding the involvement-behaviour relationship at School Y. That 71% of parents felt teachers were always or usually approachable about behavioural concerns compared with only 45% at School X represents a difference of twenty-six percentage points. Approachability is a precondition for the substantive, problem-solving communication that characterises high-quality home-school relationships. Parents who perceive teachers as approachable are more likely to initiate contact when concerns arise, more likely to share information that could inform the school's response, and more likely to persist in communication when difficulties are not immediately resolved. Parents who perceive teachers as unapproachable, by contrast, may withhold information, delay seeking help, or disengage from communication altogether. The high rate of perceived approachability at School Y suggests that the relational foundations for effective home-school partnership are more firmly established at this school than at School X. This may explain why behavioural communication is more frequent at School Y despite lower overall participation in formal activities: parents at School Y may feel that their

communication will be welcomed and taken seriously, and they therefore initiate it more readily. The findings on perceived behavioural outcomes reinforce the pattern observed in the teacher data. At School Y, 63% of parents described their child's behaviour as excellent or good, compared with 52% at School X. And 73% of parents at School Y believed their involvement affected behaviour, compared with 61% at School X. These differences suggest that parents at School Y not only engage in different forms of involvement but also perceive stronger behavioural benefits from their engagement. The higher proportion of parents describing their child's behaviour positively may reflect genuine behavioural differences, or it may reflect differences in parental expectations or standards. The study cannot definitively distinguish between these possibilities, but the convergence of parent and teacher perceptions both groups at School Y reported more positive behavioural assessments than their counterparts at School X suggests that the differences are not merely perceptual.

The parent responses from School Y also invite comparison with the teacher responses from the same school. Teachers at School Y emphasised depth over breadth, describing involvement as substantive and relational. Parents at School Y reported higher rates of home-based academic socialisation and behavioural communication, and higher perceived teacher approachability. These two sets of findings are mutually reinforcing: parents describe engaging in the forms of involvement that teachers describe as most valuable, and they perceive teachers as receptive to this engagement. The alignment between parent and teacher perspectives at School Y contrasts with the divergence observed at School X, where teachers described involvement as performative while parents reported high participation in formal activities. This alignment may itself be a crucial determinant of involvement effectiveness: when parents and teachers share an understanding of what constitutes meaningful involvement and when both parties perceive the other as engaged and receptive, the conditions for effective partnership are in place.

The lower participation in formal activities at School Y raises questions about equity and reach that parallel those raised in relation to the teacher data. If only 56% of parents attend conferences and 21% volunteer, then a substantial proportion of parents are not participating in these visible forms of involvement. The teachers' emphasis on the quality of engagement among those who do participate may obscure the fact that many parents remain on the periphery. The question of who is not participating and why is critical for assessing the equity implications of School Y's involvement culture. If non-participation is concentrated among families facing socioeconomic or structural barriers, then the benefits of School Y's relational approach may be unevenly distributed. The study's data do not permit a definitive answer to this question, but the finding that 42% of teachers estimated that fewer than half of parents were actively involved suggests that a significant minority of families are not engaged in the ways that teachers value most. The parent responses from School Y also prompt reflection on the relationship between involvement culture and school context. Why have parents at School Y adopted more home-based and relational forms of involvement while parents at School X have adopted more formal and school-based forms? One possibility is that the schools' different approaches to communication and relationship-building have shaped parents' expectations and behaviours.

School X's emphasis on formal structures the Parent-Teacher Association, workshops, volunteer programmes, and scheduled conferences may have signalled to parents that involvement means participating in these organised activities. School Y's emphasis on informal, relational communication may have signalled that involvement means engaging in substantive conversations, whether at home or with teachers. Parents may respond to the cues that schools provide about what involvement looks like and what forms of engagement are valued. This interpretation is consistent with the ecological systems theory that frames the study: the mesosystem is not simply a space in which parents and teachers interact; it is a space whose structure and norms are shaped by the school's practices and priorities.

The comparative findings also have implications for the interpretation of the behavioural records. If parents at School Y are more likely to communicate about behavioural issues and to perceive teachers as approachable, and if they report more positive behavioural outcomes, one would expect the school's behavioural records to reflect these patterns. A comparison of the behavioural records from the two schools will therefore be a crucial element of the integrated analysis. If School Y records fewer incidents, or a different distribution of incidents, this would corroborate the parent and teacher perceptions and strengthen the case for the quality-over-quantity thesis. If the behavioural records show similar patterns at both schools, this would complicate the interpretation, suggesting that the perceptual differences do not translate into measurable behavioural differences. The integration of behavioural data with questionnaire data is essential for assessing the robustness of the findings.

The parent responses from School Y reveal a community in which involvement is less visible in formal school activities but more prevalent in home-based academic socialisation, behavioural communication, and perceived approachability of teachers. Parents at School Y report more positive behavioural outcomes and stronger perceived effects of their involvement than parents at School X. These findings align with the teacher responses from School Y, which emphasised depth over breadth and described involvement as substantive and relational. Together, the parent and teacher data from School Y provide strong support for the quality-over-quantity thesis and suggest that the character of home-school relationships rather than the frequency of contact or the number of events attended is the key determinant of involvement effectiveness.

Behavioural Records: School Y recorded 98 behavioural incidents over the term, with an average of 2.0 incidents per teacher per week. The concentration effect was less pronounced: 28% of students accounted for 61% of incidents.

Comparative Summary

Indicator	School X	School Y
Parents attending conferences	79%	56%
Parents monitoring homework	65%	71%
Parents discussing behavioural expectations	71%	83%
Teacher-reported communication frequency (frequent+)	58%	38%
Teacher-rated communication quality (good+)	33%	63%
Perceived teacher approachability (parent report)	45%	71%
Behavioural incidents (term total)	147	98
Incidents per teacher per week	3.1	2.0
Teachers seeing "much better" behaviour among involved students	21%	38%

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Quality-Quantity Distinction

The most striking finding from this comparative analysis is that School Y, despite lower levels of formal parental participation, exhibited better behavioural outcomes and stronger teacher perceptions of the involvement-behaviour relationship. This pattern challenges the intuitive assumption that more involvement is necessarily better and aligns with existing research emphasising the primacy of involvement quality over quantity. The mechanism appears to operate through the quality of communication and relational trust between home and school. School Y parents reported substantially higher perceptions of teacher approachability, and teachers reported higher communication quality despite lower frequency. This suggests that when parents and teachers do interact, the interactions are more substantive, more collaborative, and more focused on problem-solving rather than compliance. The mesosystem the relational space between home and school appears to be more robust at School Y, even if the absolute number of touchpoints is lower.

This finding resonates strongly with the literature reviewed in Section 2.3, which established that the quality of parental involvement matters more than its quantity. The research on parent-teacher relationships for students with ADHD, for example, found that the quality of family-school communication had a substantial effect on child development and school success, independent of the frequency of contact. The present study's findings extend this insight to the general secondary school population and demonstrate its applicability in a comparative context. At School Y, the frequency of communication was lower than at School X 38% of teachers reported frequent or very frequent communication, compared with 58% at School X yet the quality of that communication was rated substantially higher. And it was School Y, not School X, that exhibited the more favourable behavioural profile. This pattern provides compelling evidence that frequency is not the operative variable; quality is.

The mechanism through which quality exerts its effects appears to involve several interrelated elements. Relational trust is one such element. Parents at School Y perceived teachers as substantially more approachable about behavioural concerns 71% compared with 45% at School X. Approachability is a precondition for trust: parents are unlikely to trust teachers with sensitive information about their children's behaviour if they do not believe that teachers will receive that information with understanding rather than judgement. When parents perceive teachers as approachable, they are more likely to initiate contact, to share concerns early rather than waiting until problems escalate, and to persist in communication when difficulties arise. The high rate of perceived approachability at School Y suggests that the relational foundations for trust are firmly established, and this trust may be the bedrock on which effective home-school partnership is built. Collaborative framing is another element. The teacher at School Y who observed that "when a parent calls about behaviour, it's a conversation, not a complaint" captures a crucial distinction. In a conversation, both parties are engaged in a joint inquiry, seeking to understand a situation and develop a response. In a complaint, one party is delivering a judgement or expressing dissatisfaction, and the other is placed in a defensive position. The collaborative framing of

behavioural communication at School Y suggests that parents and teachers approach behavioural issues as shared problems to be solved together rather than as grounds for mutual recrimination. This framing is consistent with the literature on effective home-school partnership, which emphasises the importance of shared goals, mutual respect, and coordinated action. When parents and teachers are "on the same page," as one teacher put it, the messages and expectations that students receive are coherent, and the support they receive is consistent. When they are not, students may receive conflicting messages, may exploit divisions between home and school, or may simply be confused about what is expected of them.

Substantive engagement is a further element. The teacher at School X who observed that parents "seem to be going through the motions without real engagement" identified a phenomenon that may be particularly prevalent in schools with formalised involvement structures. When involvement is defined primarily by attendance at events and completion of forms, parents may fulfil these requirements without developing the deeper understanding and commitment that characterise authentic partnership. The teacher at School Y who noted that "the ones who engage do so substantively" suggests that at School Y, involvement is not about fulfilling formal requirements but about genuine engagement with the substance of the child's education and development. This distinction between performative and substantive involvement is crucial. Performative involvement may satisfy institutional requirements and may even be counted as evidence of a strong involvement culture, but it does not necessarily produce the relational conditions that support positive behavioural outcomes. Substantive involvement, by contrast, involves genuine communication, shared problem-solving, and a commitment to the child's development that transcends the fulfilment of formal obligations.

The finding that School Y exhibited better behavioural outcomes despite lower formal participation also aligns with the longitudinal research on involvement trajectories discussed in Section 2.3. That research found that parents with low-but-stable involvement had children with more steeply declining behavioural engagement than those with low-declining involvement, suggesting that the stability and direction of involvement matter more than its absolute level. At School Y, involvement appears to be both stable and substantive the teachers' description of parents who "partner with us" and who are "consistent" suggests a pattern of sustained engagement rather than episodic participation. The consistency of involvement may be more important than its frequency: a parent who engages substantively a few times a year may have a greater impact than a parent who attends every event but does so without genuine engagement.

The quality-quantity distinction also has implications for how schools conceptualise and measure involvement. If quality matters more than quantity, then metrics that focus on participation rates the percentage of parents who attend conferences, the number of volunteer hours contributed, the frequency of communication may be misleading. These metrics capture the visible, countable dimensions of involvement, but they do not capture its relational quality. A school might record high participation rates while the actual quality of home-school engagement remains low, as appears to have been the case at School X. Conversely, a school might record lower participation rates while the quality of

engagement among those who do participate is high, as appears to be the case at School Y. The present study's findings suggest that schools should attend to both dimensions and should recognise that high participation rates do not guarantee effective involvement. The more important question is not how many parents are involved, but how they are involved whether their engagement is substantive, collaborative, and aligned with the school's goals for student development.

The quality-quantity distinction also invites reflection on the relationship between involvement and equity. If quality matters more than quantity, then efforts to increase involvement should focus not merely on increasing participation rates but on improving the quality of engagement. This has implications for how schools reach out to families who are not currently involved. Simply inviting more parents to attend events may increase participation rates without improving the quality of engagement, particularly if the events themselves do not foster substantive communication or relational trust. A more promising approach may be to focus on building the relational conditions approachability, trust, collaborative framing that enable substantive engagement when it occurs. This approach may be more resource-intensive and may not produce easily measurable results in the short term, but it may be more effective in promoting the kinds of involvement that actually benefit students.

The finding that the mesosystem at School Y appears more robust despite lower numbers of touchpoints also has theoretical implications. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory posits that the mesosystem the interactions between home and school is a key determinant of developmental outcomes. The present study suggests that the quality of these interactions, rather than their frequency, is what matters most. A mesosystem characterised by frequent but superficial interactions may be less developmentally supportive than one characterised by less frequent but more substantive interactions. This refinement of the theory is consistent with the broader literature on social support, which has consistently found that the quality of relationships matters more than their quantity for outcomes ranging from mental health to academic achievement. The present study extends this insight to the home-school mesosystem and suggests that the same principle applies: it is not how often parents and teachers interact, but how they interact, that shapes student behaviour.

The comparative design of the study allows these conclusions to be drawn with greater confidence than would be possible from a single-site study. Because School X and School Y serve communities with comparable socioeconomic and demographic profiles, the differences in involvement quality and behavioural outcomes cannot be attributed to differences in the populations they serve. This strengthens the case that the differences are institutional products of the schools' involvement cultures and practices rather than demographic. The implication is that schools have agency in shaping the quality of home-school engagement. By fostering relational trust, promoting collaborative communication, and encouraging substantive rather than performative involvement, schools can create the conditions for effective partnership even when the frequency of contact is relatively low. The findings also raise questions about the conditions under which high-quality involvement can be sustained. School Y's relational approach appears to be working well for the parents who are

engaged, but it is not reaching all families. The lower rates of formal participation at School Y suggest that a substantial minority of parents remain on the periphery. The challenge for schools seeking to emulate School Y's approach is to extend the benefits of high-quality engagement to a broader segment of the parent community while preserving the relational depth that characterises the involvement of those who are already engaged. This is a difficult balance to strike, and the study's findings do not provide a simple formula for achieving it. But they do suggest that the quality of relationships is the foundation on which any successful involvement strategy must be built.

The quality-quantity distinction emerges from this study as a central finding with significant theoretical and practical implications. The comparative analysis demonstrates that School Y, despite lower formal participation, exhibited better behavioural outcomes and stronger perceptions of the involvement-behaviour relationship. The mechanism appears to operate through the quality of communication, relational trust, and the collaborative framing of home-school interactions. These findings align with and extend the existing literature on involvement quality and suggest that efforts to improve parental involvement should focus on the character of engagement rather than solely on its frequency or breadth.

Developmental Considerations

The findings also resonate with developmental research indicating that the type of involvement matters differently for adolescents than for younger children. At the secondary level, direct homework monitoring and school presence are less impactful than academic socialisation practices communicating expectations, discussing the relevance of education, and fostering aspirations. School Y parents reported higher rates of these practices (83% vs. 71% discussing educational importance), which may explain the more favourable behavioural outcomes despite lower formal participation. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that parental homework assistance becomes less effective or even counterproductive in secondary school. School X parents monitored homework at slightly lower rates than School Y parents (65% vs. 71%), but this form of involvement may not translate into behavioural benefits at the secondary level.

The developmental literature reviewed in Section 2.2 provides a crucial interpretive lens for understanding these findings. Research by Hill and colleagues established that the type of involvement that matters shifts with student age: in elementary school, direct assistance with homework and visible presence at school events are strongly associated with positive outcomes, but by adolescence, these forms of involvement become largely ineffective or even counterproductive. What emerges as most powerful in the secondary years is academic socialisation the practices through which parents communicate expectations, discuss learning strategies, foster aspirations, and connect education to life beyond the classroom. The present study's findings align closely with this developmental perspective and suggest that the differences between School X and School Y may be partly attributable to the different forms of involvement that parents at each school have adopted. The finding that School Y parents reported higher rates of academic socialisation practices 83% discussing the importance of education and 69% connecting school learning to everyday life, compared with 71% and 58% respectively at

School X suggests that parents at School Y have, perhaps inadvertently, adopted the forms of involvement that developmental research identifies as most beneficial for adolescents. These practices do not require parents to possess advanced academic knowledge or to be physically present at school. They require only that parents engage their children in conversations that communicate the value of education, that connect school learning to the child's present and future life, and that foster the child's own aspirations and motivation. For adolescent students, who are developing their own identities and seeking to understand the relevance of education to their lives, these conversations may be more powerful than any amount of homework supervision or school event attendance. The contrast with School X is instructive. Parents at School X reported lower rates of the academic socialisation practices that developmental research identifies as most beneficial for adolescents. This pattern suggests that parents at School X may be investing their involvement efforts in forms that are developmentally less appropriate for secondary school students. They are monitoring homework and attending conferences activities that may have been effective when their children were younger but they are less engaged in the conversations and communications that matter most during adolescence. The teacher at School X who observed that parents "seem to be going through the motions without real engagement" may have been picking up on this developmental mismatch: parents are enacting the forms of involvement they have always enacted, without recognising that the developmental needs of their adolescent children have shifted.

The homework monitoring finding warrants careful interpretation. The data indicated that 65% of parents at School X monitored homework completion, compared with 71% at School Y a difference that actually favours School Y, though only slightly. This complicates the narrative that School X parents are more engaged in homework monitoring than School Y parents. What the data do show is that homework monitoring is a common form of involvement at both schools, and that it does not appear to be associated with the behavioural differences observed between them. This is consistent with the developmental literature: homework monitoring, when it takes the form of parental control and direct assistance, becomes less beneficial and potentially detrimental as students mature. The fact that School Y parents monitored homework at slightly higher rates than School X parents, yet exhibited better behavioural outcomes, suggests that homework monitoring is not the operative variable. What distinguishes the two schools is not the frequency of homework monitoring but the prevalence of academic socialisation practices and the quality of home-school communication.

The developmental perspective also helps to explain why the formal involvement activities that School X promotes so effectively conference attendance, volunteer programmes, workshops may not translate into behavioural benefits at the secondary level. These activities are designed to bring parents into the school and to provide them with information about their children's progress. They are, in essence, extensions of the elementary school model of involvement, in which visible presence and direct communication with teachers are the primary mechanisms through which parents support their children's education. For adolescents, however, the developmental task is different. Adolescents are seeking autonomy, developing their own identities, and negotiating the

transition from childhood dependence to adult independence. Parental involvement that is perceived as intrusive or controlling may provoke resistance rather than cooperation. What adolescents need from their parents is not more supervision but more support for their growing autonomy conversations that help them understand the relevance of education, that foster their aspirations, and that communicate confidence in their ability to succeed. The parents at School Y who engaged in these practices to a greater extent than parents at School X may have been providing precisely the form of support that their adolescent children needed.

The developmental perspective also has implications for how schools communicate with parents about involvement. If schools continue to promote the elementary model of involvement attendance at events, monitoring of homework, direct communication with teachers they may inadvertently encourage parents to adopt forms of involvement that are developmentally inappropriate for their adolescent children. Schools serving secondary students may need to rethink their involvement strategies to emphasise the practices that developmental research identifies as most beneficial: helping parents understand how to have conversations about the relevance of education, how to support their children's growing autonomy, and how to communicate high but attainable expectations. This is not to say that attendance at school events or communication with teachers is unimportant; these activities can still serve important functions, particularly for students who are struggling. But they should not be the primary focus of involvement efforts at the secondary level.

The developmental findings also invite reflection on the timing of involvement. The literature suggests that involvement effects are cumulative and that early involvement may set the stage for later outcomes. Students who benefit from high-quality involvement in the elementary years may enter secondary school with stronger foundations for behavioural self-regulation and academic engagement. Conversely, students who experience low-quality or inconsistent involvement in the early years may enter secondary school with weaker foundations, making the involvement they receive in adolescence all the more important. The present study cannot examine these longitudinal processes directly, but the developmental perspective suggests that the involvement-behaviour relationship at the secondary level is shaped by the history of involvement that preceded it. Schools seeking to support adolescent students may need to attend not only to current involvement practices but also to the cumulative involvement histories that students bring with them.

The developmental considerations also raise questions about the generalisability of the study's findings across grade levels. The present study focused on Grade 7, which occupies a transitional space between childhood and adolescence. Students in Grade 7 are beginning to assert their autonomy and to develop their own identities, but they are not yet fully adolescent. The forms of involvement that are most beneficial for Grade 7 students may differ from those that are most beneficial for older adolescents. Future research could examine whether the quality-over-quantity finding holds across different grade levels and whether the specific forms of involvement that are most effective shift as students mature.

The developmental perspective provides a crucial interpretive framework for understanding the study's findings. The differences between School X and School Y are not merely

differences in the quantity or quality of involvement; they are also differences in the forms of involvement that parents enact. School Y parents reported higher rates of academic socialisation practices the forms of involvement that developmental research identifies as most beneficial for adolescents while School X parents reported higher rates of formal participation. These differences in the form of involvement may help to explain why School Y exhibited better behavioural outcomes despite lower overall participation. The findings suggest that schools serving secondary students should focus their involvement efforts on promoting academic socialisation and supporting the developmental needs of adolescents, rather than simply encouraging parents to attend more events or monitor more homework.

Behavioural Concentration

An important pattern in the behavioural data is the concentration of incidents among a subset of students. At School X, 22% of students accounted for 68% of incidents; at School Y, 28% accounted for 61%. This concentration suggests that the involvement-behaviour relationship may be most consequential for a minority of students who are already at risk of behavioural difficulties. Research on parent-teacher relationships for students with ADHD has similarly found that family-school communication quality has substantial effects for children with behavioural challenges. The modest overall differences between schools may mask larger effects for high-risk subgroups. The concentration of behavioural incidents is one of the most robust findings of the study, and it has significant implications for both interpretation and intervention. The fact that a minority of students roughly one in four or one in five account for the majority of documented incidents suggests that behavioural difficulties are not evenly distributed across the student population. Most students exhibit few or no behavioural incidents, while a small subset accounts for a disproportionate share of disciplinary events. This pattern is consistent with research in school psychology and behavioural epidemiology, which has consistently found that behavioural difficulties are concentrated among a relatively small proportion of students. The present study extends this finding by examining it in the context of parental involvement and by comparing its manifestation across two schools with different involvement cultures.

The concentration of incidents has several implications for understanding the involvement-behaviour relationship. It suggests that the effects of parental involvement on behaviour may be most visible among the students who account for the majority of incidents. For the majority of students who exhibit few behavioural difficulties, variations in parental involvement may have little detectable effect on behaviour simply because there is little behavioural variation to explain. For the minority of students who exhibit frequent behavioural incidents, however, variations in involvement may be highly consequential. If these students' families are less involved, or if their involvement is less well aligned with the school's expectations, this may contribute to the persistence or escalation of behavioural difficulties. Conversely, if these families are able to develop the kind of substantive, collaborative engagement that characterises involvement at School Y, this may help to reduce the frequency or severity of incidents. The concentration of incidents helps to explain why the overall differences between schools may be modest despite

substantial differences in involvement quality. If behavioural difficulties are concentrated among a minority of students, then differences in involvement quality that affect only that minority will have a limited impact on aggregate behavioural statistics. The overall incident rates at School X (147 incidents) and School Y (98 incidents) do differ, but the difference is not dramatic because the majority of students at both schools exhibit few incidents, and the involvement-behaviour relationship is most consequential for the minority who do. The modest aggregate differences may therefore mask larger differences in the experiences of high-risk students. This possibility underscores the importance of examining behavioural data at the subgroup level rather than relying solely on aggregate statistics.

The concentration of incidents has implications for the design of interventions. If behavioural difficulties are concentrated among a minority of students, then targeted interventions directed at those students and their families may be more effective than universal approaches that treat all students alike. The literature on parental involvement and behavioural outcomes suggests that families of students with behavioural difficulties may face particular challenges in engaging with schools, including stigma, previous negative experiences of schooling, competing demands on their time and resources, and a sense of alienation from educational institutions. Understanding these challenges and developing strategies to address them is essential for schools seeking to support the students who need it most. The present study's findings suggest that the quality of home-school communication may be particularly important for these families. If parents of high-risk students perceive teachers as approachable and believe that communication will be collaborative rather than judgemental, they may be more likely to engage and their engagement may be more likely to benefit their children.

The comparison between the two schools' behavioural distributions is also instructive. At School X, 22% of students accounted for 68% of incidents; at School Y, 28% accounted for 61%. The concentration is slightly greater at School X, where the top 22% of students account for a larger share of incidents than the top 28% at School Y. This difference, while modest, is consistent with the broader pattern: School X, with its higher levels of formal but lower-quality involvement, exhibits a more concentrated pattern of behavioural difficulty, while School Y, with its lower levels of formal but higher-quality involvement, exhibits a slightly more diffuse pattern. One interpretation of this difference is that the higher-quality involvement at School Y may be providing some protective benefit that prevents students from developing the kinds of persistent behavioural difficulties that lead to frequent incidents. Alternatively, the difference may reflect variations in reporting practices or in the student populations served by the two schools. The study cannot definitively adjudicate between these interpretations, but the pattern is suggestive and warrants further investigation. The concentration of incidents also invites reflection on the concept of risk and resilience. Students who account for a disproportionate share of behavioural incidents may be those who are most vulnerable to a range of negative outcomes, including academic failure, school dropout, and involvement in the criminal justice system. For these students, the quality of the home-school mesosystem may be particularly consequential. Research on resilience has consistently found that supportive relationships with adults including parents and teachers are among the most powerful

protective factors for at-risk youth. When parents and teachers are aligned and when their communication is characterised by trust and collaboration, students receive consistent messages and coordinated support. When they are not aligned, students may receive conflicting messages, may exploit divisions, or may simply fall through the cracks. The present study's findings suggest that the quality of the mesosystem may be most important for the students who are most at risk the minority who account for the majority of behavioural incidents. The concentration of incidents also has implications for how schools measure and monitor behaviour. Aggregate statistics total incidents, incidents per teacher, incidents per week provide a broad overview of the behavioural climate but may obscure important patterns. A school with a moderate overall incident rate may nonetheless have a subset of students whose behaviour is severely challenging, or a subset of classrooms in which incidents are concentrated. Disaggregating behavioural data by student, by classroom, by time of day, and by location can reveal patterns that aggregate statistics conceal and can inform more targeted interventions. The present study's finding that a minority of students accounts for a majority of incidents suggests that schools should routinely examine the distribution of behavioural incidents, not merely their overall frequency. The concentration of incidents also raises questions about the relationship between involvement and behaviour at the individual level. The study's design does not permit direct linkage of individual students' behaviour to their parents' involvement, but the aggregate findings suggest a hypothesis that could be tested in future research: that the involvement-behaviour relationship is strongest for students who exhibit the most behavioural difficulties. This hypothesis is consistent with the literature on parent-teacher relationships for students with ADHD, which has found that family-school communication quality has substantial effects for children with behavioural challenges. If this hypothesis is correct, then efforts to improve parental involvement may yield their greatest benefits for the students who are most at risk. This would have significant implications for policy and practice, suggesting that schools should prioritise involvement initiatives for high-risk students rather than adopting universal approaches that may have little effect on those who need the most support.

The concentration of behavioural incidents among a minority of students is a key finding with important implications for interpretation and intervention. It suggests that the involvement-behaviour relationship may be most consequential for high-risk students, that aggregate differences between schools may mask larger differences for subgroups, and that targeted interventions may be more effective than universal approaches. The comparison between School X and School Y suggests that the quality of the mesosystem the relational space between home and school may be particularly important for students who are most vulnerable to behavioural difficulties. These findings extend the quality-over-quantity thesis by specifying the population for whom quality matters most and by highlighting the importance of attending to the distribution of behavioural outcomes, not merely their aggregate levels.

Implications for Home-School Partnership Models

The findings challenge the "more is better" model of parental involvement that often informs school policies. School X's high participation rates in formal activities may reflect a

compliance-oriented approach to involvement, where parents attend events and sign forms without developing the substantive partnerships that influence behaviour. School Y's model lower frequency but higher quality, with emphasis on home-based academic socialisation and collaborative communication appears more aligned with the developmental needs of secondary students. This interpretation is supported by research indicating that frequent parent-school contact can sometimes be negatively linked to behaviour, possibly because such contact is reactive (responding to problems) rather than proactive (preventing them). The quality of the relationship, rather than the frequency of contact, emerges as the critical variable.

The implications of these findings for home-school partnership models are substantial and warrant careful elaboration. The dominant model of parental involvement in many schools and the one that appears to operate at School X is what may be termed a participation model. In this model, involvement is measured by the extent to which parents participate in school-organised activities: attending conferences, joining the Parent-Teacher Association, volunteering at events, responding to communications, and monitoring homework. The underlying assumption is that more participation is better that students benefit when their parents are visibly and frequently engaged with the school. Schools operating under this model invest considerable resources in promoting participation: sending reminders, organising events, tracking attendance, and celebrating high participation rates. The model has intuitive appeal: it is easy to communicate, easy to measure, and aligns with a common-sense understanding of what involvement means.

The present study's findings suggest that the participation model has significant limitations, particularly at the secondary level. School X exemplifies a school that has succeeded in generating high participation rates 79% of parents attended conferences, 71% estimated that more than half of parents were actively involved yet the quality of communication was rated modestly, only 45% of parents perceived teachers as approachable about behavioural concerns, and 25% of teachers saw no behavioural difference between children of involved and uninvolved parents. The high participation rates did not translate into the substantive partnerships that the literature associates with positive behavioural outcomes. The participation model, in other words, had succeeded in generating involvement behaviour but had not succeeded in generating involvement quality.

The teacher at School X who observed that parents "seem to be going through the motions without real engagement" captured the essence of this limitation. When involvement is defined primarily by participation in formal activities, parents may fulfil the requirements attending conferences, signing forms, responding to emails without developing the deeper understanding, commitment, and relational trust that characterise authentic partnership. The participation becomes an end in itself rather than a means to the end of supporting student development. Parents may attend conferences because they are expected to, not because they believe the interaction will be meaningful or productive. They may monitor homework because it is what involved parents are supposed to do, not because they have a clear understanding of how their monitoring supports their child's learning. The result is a form of involvement that is high in quantity but low in quality

visible, measurable, and compliant, but not deeply consequential. School Y, by contrast, appears to operate under a different model one that may be termed a partnership model. In this model, involvement is defined not by participation in formal activities but by the quality of the relationship between home and school. The key indicators are not how many events parents attend or how often they communicate, but whether communication is collaborative, whether parents and teachers share an understanding of the student's needs, and whether the approaches taken at home and at school are aligned. The partnership model does not dismiss participation; indeed, parents at School Y who engage substantively may also attend conferences and communicate with teachers. But participation is understood as a means to partnership rather than an end in itself. The goal is not to maximise the number of touchpoints but to ensure that the touchpoints that occur are meaningful and productive.

The partnership model is supported by research indicating that frequent parent-school contact can sometimes be negatively linked to behaviour, particularly when such contact is reactive rather than proactive. When communication occurs primarily in response to problems when a student has misbehaved, when grades have dropped, when attendance has become irregular the contact may be experienced by parents as a summons or an accusation rather than as an opportunity for collaboration. Parents may become defensive, may avoid future contact, or may develop adversarial relationships with teachers. The frequency of contact may increase even as the quality of the relationship deteriorates. The present study's finding that School X had higher communication frequency but lower perceived quality and approachability is consistent with this pattern. Teachers at School X communicated with parents frequently, but much of that communication may have been reactive triggered by behavioural incidents or academic problems rather than proactive. Parents at School X, in turn, perceived teachers as less approachable, suggesting that the communication they experienced was not characterised by the warmth, respect, and collaborative framing that would encourage them to initiate contact themselves.

The partnership model, by contrast, emphasises proactive communication contact that occurs before problems arise, that focuses on the student's strengths and progress as well as areas for growth, and that builds the relational foundation that enables effective problem-solving when difficulties do occur. The teacher at School Y who observed that "when a parent calls about behaviour, it's a conversation, not a complaint" captured this distinction. At School Y, behavioural communication is not a summons or an accusation; it is a conversation between partners who share responsibility for the student's development. This framing is more likely to occur when the relationship has been established through proactive, positive communication over time, rather than being constructed entirely in response to crises. The partnership model also aligns more closely with the developmental needs of secondary students. As the literature reviewed in Section 2.2 established, the forms of involvement that are most beneficial for adolescents differ from those that are most beneficial for younger children. Direct homework assistance and visible presence at school events become less impactful, while academic socialisation communicating expectations, discussing the relevance of education, fostering aspirations becomes more important. The partnership model, with its emphasis on the quality of the home-school relationship and its

recognition that involvement can take many forms, is better suited to supporting these developmental needs than the participation model. A parent who engages in substantive conversations with their adolescent child about the relevance of education may be providing more valuable support than a parent who attends every school event but never discusses learning at home. The partnership model recognises and values these diverse forms of involvement, while the participation model may overlook them because they are not visible or countable.

The findings also have implications for how schools communicate with families. The participation model often relies on one-way communication: schools send information to parents, and parents are expected to receive and act on it. The partnership model, by contrast, emphasises two-way communication: schools create opportunities for parents to share their perspectives, ask questions, and contribute to decision-making. The finding that parents at School Y perceived teachers as substantially more approachable than parents at School X suggests that two-way communication is more developed at School Y. Parents feel that they can approach teachers, that their input will be welcomed, and that communication will be a dialogue rather than a directive. This perception is likely to encourage parents to initiate contact, to share concerns early, and to persist in communication when difficulties arise all of which contribute to more effective home-school partnership.

The partnership model also has implications for how schools allocate resources. The participation model often directs resources toward organising and promoting events: sending invitations, arranging logistics, tracking attendance, and following up with non-attenders. The partnership model, by contrast, directs resources toward building relational capacity: training teachers in communication and collaboration skills, creating time and space for substantive conversations with parents, and developing systems that facilitate ongoing dialogue rather than episodic contact. These investments may be less visible than a well-attended school event, but they may be more consequential for student outcomes. The present study's findings suggest that schools seeking to improve behavioural outcomes may benefit more from investing in the quality of home-school relationships than from investing in the quantity of participation opportunities.

The partnership model is not without its challenges. Building relational trust takes time and may not produce immediate, measurable results. It requires teachers to develop skills that may not be emphasised in their professional training, and it requires school leaders to prioritise relationship-building over more visible forms of involvement. It may also be more difficult to implement at scale: while a small school like School Y may be able to cultivate the kind of personalised, relational engagement that characterises its involvement culture, larger schools may find it more challenging to establish the same depth of relationship with every family. The study's findings should therefore be interpreted with attention to the specific conditions under which School Y's partnership model operates, and schools seeking to emulate it should consider how its principles can be adapted to their own contexts. The findings also suggest that the participation model and the partnership model are not mutually exclusive. Schools can promote both broad participation and deep partnership, and in some cases participation may provide the occasion for

partnership to develop. A parent who attends a school event may, in the course of that event, have a substantive conversation with a teacher that begins to build a collaborative relationship. The key is not to abandon participation but to ensure that participation serves the goal of partnership rather than becoming an end in itself. Schools should ask not only "How many parents participated?" but "What did that participation accomplish?" and "Did it strengthen the relationship between home and school in ways that benefit students?" These questions shift the focus from quantity to quality and from compliance to collaboration. The findings challenge the "more is better" model of parental involvement and suggest that a partnership model one that emphasises the quality of the home-school relationship over the quantity of participation is more aligned with both the developmental needs of secondary students and the conditions under which involvement benefits behaviour. School Y's model, with its emphasis on substantive communication, relational trust, and collaborative problem-solving, offers a compelling alternative to the participation-focused approach exemplified by School X. The implications for policy and practice are significant: schools should attend to the quality of home-school relationships, invest in relational capacity, and recognise that the most valuable forms of involvement may not be the most visible or countable ones.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The comparative case study design, while allowing for contextual depth, limits generalisability. The findings may not extend to elementary schools, where the involvement-behaviour relationship operates differently. Reliance on self-report questionnaires introduces potential social desirability bias, particularly regarding parent-reported involvement. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; it is possible that better-behaved students elicit more positive parental involvement, rather than the reverse. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to disentangle causal direction.

Beyond these primary limitations, several additional constraints on the study's design, execution, and interpretation warrant acknowledgment. Acknowledging these limitations is not an admission of failure but a necessary step in situating the findings within their proper context and in guiding future research. The value of a study lies not only in what it establishes but in what it clarifies about the boundaries of its own claims. Generalisability is a key concern. The comparative case study design, while allowing for contextual depth and the examination of institutional processes that would be invisible in a large-scale survey, necessarily limits the extent to which findings can be extended beyond the two schools studied. The two schools were selected purposively to represent contrasting involvement profiles, not to be statistically representative of secondary schools in general. The findings are therefore best understood as contextually grounded insights that may be transferable to comparable settings rather than as universally applicable conclusions. The question of transferability is particularly relevant given the developmental focus on Grade 7. The involvement-behaviour relationship may operate differently in elementary schools, where parental involvement tends to be more direct and where the developmental needs of students are different. Similarly, the relationship may operate differently in senior secondary years, when students are preparing for high-stakes examinations and when parental involvement may take

different forms. The study's findings should therefore be interpreted with attention to the specific developmental stage of the students involved. The reliance on self-report questionnaires is another limitation. Self-report measures are vulnerable to social desirability bias the tendency of respondents to present themselves in a favourable light. This concern is particularly acute for parents, who may overstate their involvement in order to appear as good parents, and for teachers, who may overstate the effectiveness of their communication with parents or their sensitivity to parental concerns. The use of parallel instruments for parents and teachers partially mitigates this concern by permitting cross-validation: where parent and teacher reports converge, the findings are more credible; where they diverge, the divergence itself becomes a topic of analysis. However, the study did not include any objective measures of involvement quality, such as observational data on parent-teacher meetings or recordings of communication. Future research could incorporate such measures to complement self-report data and to provide a more robust assessment of involvement quality.

Causal inference is a further limitation. The cross-sectional design of the questionnaire component precludes definitive conclusions about the direction of the relationship between parental involvement and student behaviour. It is possible that the relationship operates in the direction hypothesised that higher-quality involvement leads to better behaviour but it is also possible that better-behaved students elicit more positive involvement from their parents. Parents whose children are well-behaved may find it easier and more rewarding to engage with the school, while parents whose children exhibit behavioural difficulties may find engagement more challenging and may withdraw. The association between involvement and behaviour may therefore reflect, at least in part, the effect of behaviour on involvement rather than the reverse. The study's longitudinal element the collection of data at two points within the term provides some purchase on this question, but the time frame is too short to establish causal direction with confidence. Future research should employ longitudinal designs with longer follow-up periods to disentangle causal direction and to examine the developmental processes through which involvement and behaviour influence each other over time.

The measurement of involvement quality is also limited. While the study collected data on multiple dimensions of involvement, including frequency, form, and perceived quality, the measurement of quality relied on subjective ratings that may vary across individuals and contexts. What one parent considers high-quality communication, another may consider merely adequate. The study did not employ a standardised or externally validated measure of involvement quality, which limits the comparability of findings across studies. Future research could benefit from the development of validated instruments for assessing involvement quality in secondary school contexts. The behavioural data have limitations as well. The behavioural incident records provide valuable objective information about documented disruptions, disciplinary referrals, and positive behaviour acknowledgements, but they capture only behaviours that came to the attention of school staff. Behaviours that were not observed, not reported, or not recorded are invisible in these data. The records may also be influenced by variations in reporting practices across teachers and schools: some teachers may record incidents more readily than others, and the criteria for what constitutes a recordable

incident may vary. The behavioural data should therefore be interpreted as an indicator of the behavioural climate rather than as a precise measure of student behaviour. The sample has limitations. While the sample size of 48 teachers and 96 parents is adequate for the descriptive and comparative analyses conducted, it is relatively small for examining complex interactions or for detecting small effects. The sample is also volunteer-based, which introduces the possibility of self-selection bias. Parents who chose to complete the questionnaire may differ systematically from those who did not most likely being more engaged with their children's education and more comfortable with school-related communication. Teachers who chose to participate may similarly differ from those who did not. The findings may therefore over-represent the perspectives of more engaged parents and teachers, and the study's conclusions should be interpreted with this in mind.

The absence of student perspectives is another limitation. The study collected data from parents and teachers but did not include students as participants. Students are the central figures in the involvement-behaviour relationship, and their perspectives on how parental involvement affects their behaviour, motivation, and engagement would have enriched the analysis. Future research should include student voices to provide a more complete picture of the mechanisms through which involvement operates. The socioeconomic and cultural context is a further consideration. While the two schools were selected to be comparable in socioeconomic and demographic profile, the study was conducted in a specific geographic and cultural context, and the findings may not transfer to other contexts. Patterns of parental involvement are shaped by cultural norms, educational policies, and economic conditions, and what works in one setting may not work in another. The study's findings should therefore be interpreted with attention to the specific context in which the research was conducted. The absence of a measure of student behaviour prior to the involvement assessment is a final limitation. Without a baseline measure of behaviour, the study cannot determine whether students who exhibited better behaviour did so because of involvement or whether their better behaviour preceded and perhaps elicited involvement. The inclusion of baseline behavioural data in future research would strengthen the capacity to make causal inferences. Despite these limitations, the study makes a significant contribution to the literature on parental involvement and student behaviour. Its comparative design, its use of parallel instruments for parents and teachers, its integration of questionnaire and behavioural data, and its attention to the quality of home-school communication all represent advances over much of the existing research. The findings provide a compelling case for the importance of involvement quality and for the value of partnership-oriented approaches to home-school relations. Future research should build on these findings, addressing the limitations identified here and extending the inquiry to other contexts, developmental stages, and methodological approaches.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated whether parental involvement impacts student behaviour in the classroom, employing a comparative case study of two secondary schools with contrasting involvement profiles. The findings support a qualified affirmative conclusion: parental involvement does influence classroom behaviour, but the quality of involvement

particularly the quality of communication and the prevalence of academic socialisation practices matters more than the quantity of participation in formal school activities. School Y, characterised by lower formal participation but higher quality home-school communication and more prevalent academic socialisation, demonstrated fewer behavioural incidents and more favourable teacher perceptions. School X, despite higher formal participation rates, exhibited weaker communication quality and less positive behavioural outcomes. These findings suggest that schools should prioritise deepening the quality of home-school partnerships over maximising parental participation rates. For practitioners, the implications are clear: efforts to improve student behaviour through parental involvement should focus on building relational trust, fostering substantive communication about behavioural expectations, and supporting parents in academic socialisation practices rather than simply increasing attendance at school events. Professional development for teachers should emphasise communication skills and collaborative problem-solving with families. For parents, the findings suggest that consistent, supportive conversations about the importance of education and constructive engagement with teachers when issues arise may be more impactful than frequent visits to the school building. Future research should extend this comparative approach to elementary contexts, employ longitudinal designs to establish causal direction, and examine the involvement-behaviour relationship specifically among high-risk student subgroups where effects may be most pronounced.

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