

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FROM QATAR EDUCATION SURVEY 2018

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Summary

Around the world, schools are closed to protect against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, a situation that has affected the education of many children immensely. Similar to many other countries, on March 2020, Qatar's government announced a nationwide closure of schools and higher education institutions amid fears of the spread of the coronavirus. Given the current circumstances, educational institutions worldwide have turned to homeschooling, a phenomenon that is increasingly replacing the real classroom environment. More than ever before, parents are now faced with the challenge of keep their child's education going as best they can. Given the current health circumstances, parental involvement in the education of their children is critical. Indeed, research indicates that parental involvement is an essential factor influencing student educational attainment and development (1; 2).

The Qatar National Development Strategy (2011-2016 & 2018-2022) stresses the importance of parental participation in the education of children. In line with the recommendations outlined in the NDS, the current policy brief examines relevant determinants of parental involvement in child's education in Qatar. The results presented below can help policy makers, educators and school administrators understand, support and improve the involvement of parents in the education of their children, which will in turn improve children's academic achievement.

Main findings

- Parents with children going to International school have higher levels of participation in school events and activities.
- Qatari parents' participation in social, sports and other school-related activities or attendance in school events is lower than of non-Qatari parents.
- Parents of children in International schools appear to communicate with their children in higher proportions than parents of students in Government and other schools.
- Non-Qatari parents reported communicating with their children about school-related matters more than their Qatari counterparts did.
- Student absenteeism is more common in government and other schools than in International schools.
- Finally, plans for higher education are slightly higher for students in International schools than those in Government schools.

Policy Recommendations

- Encourage and support active parent participation in students' education, especially in Government schools.
- Provide assistance to Government schools on how to involve parents and increase their participation in their child's education.
- Try to understand the factors affecting low parental participation for Qataris parents.
- Finally, keep in mind that encouraging parent involvement cannot be done without consideration of the family situation and cultural context that may facilitate or hinder parental involvement.

WHAT IS PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT?

Parent involvement involves “parents and families working together to improve the development of children and adolescents”(1). Common characteristics indicative of parental involvement include communication components (e.g., frequent contacts between parents and school), home-based components (e.g., parent support and supervision during homework) and school-based activities (e.g., parental involvement in school clubs and events) (2).

While the quality of teachers, effective pedagogical strategies or solid curriculum are key factors that influence students’ academic achievement, research confirms that the best predictor of student academic achievement is the extent to which families encourage learning at home and involve themselves in their child’s education (3).

Prominent among the benefits that parental involvement brings about, we count higher graduation rates, higher achievement in reading, better attendance and more homework completion and greater enrolment in post-secondary education (4).

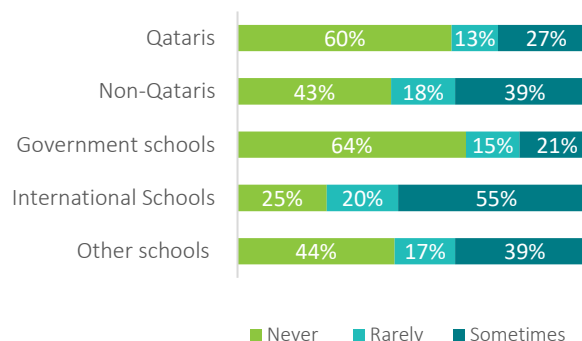
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD’S EDUCATION: MAIN FINDINGS

School-based activities

Results show that for school-based activities such as attending a school event in which their child participated (Figure 1), participating in social, sports, and other activities (Figure 2), and attending school award ceremony (Figure 3), the trend is similar and is such as non-Qataris attend or participate in higher proportions than Qataris parents. Looking at the school type, the data reveal that parents in International schools tend to attend or participate in higher proportions than parents in Government schools.

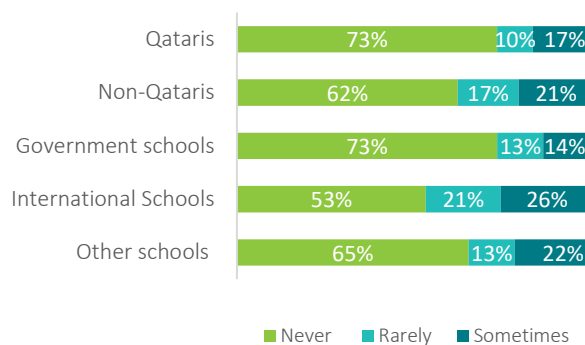
Attending a school event in which their child participated

Figure 1: Attending a school event in which their child participated, by nationality and school type



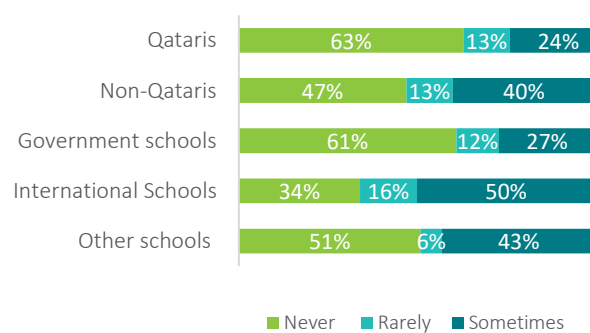
Participating in social, sports, and other activities

Figure 2: Participating in social, sports, and other activities, by nationality and school type



Attending school award ceremonies

Figure 3: Attending school award ceremony, by nationality and school type

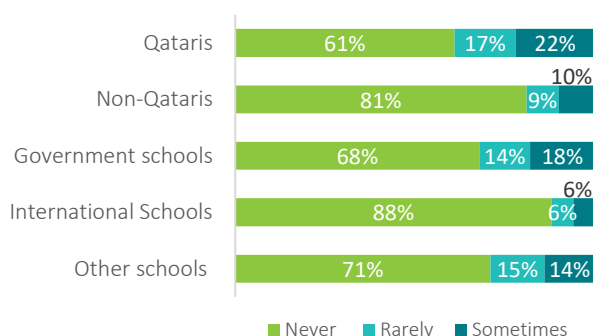


Non-Qatari parents attend school-activities in higher proportions than Qatari parents.

On the contrary, with regards to attending lessons in their children classroom (Figure 4) and participating in the school parents' council (Figure 5), Qataris parents are more involved than non-Qataris parents on one hand. On the other hand, participation by school type is higher for parents in Government schools than for parents in International schools.

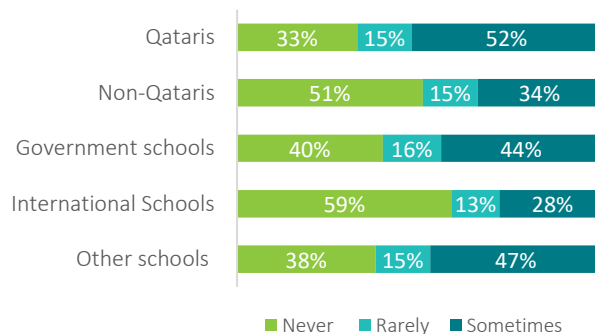
Attending lessons in his/her classroom

Figure 4: Attending lessons in his/her classroom, by nationality and school type



Participating in the school-parents council

Figure 5: Participating in the school parents' council, by nationality and school type

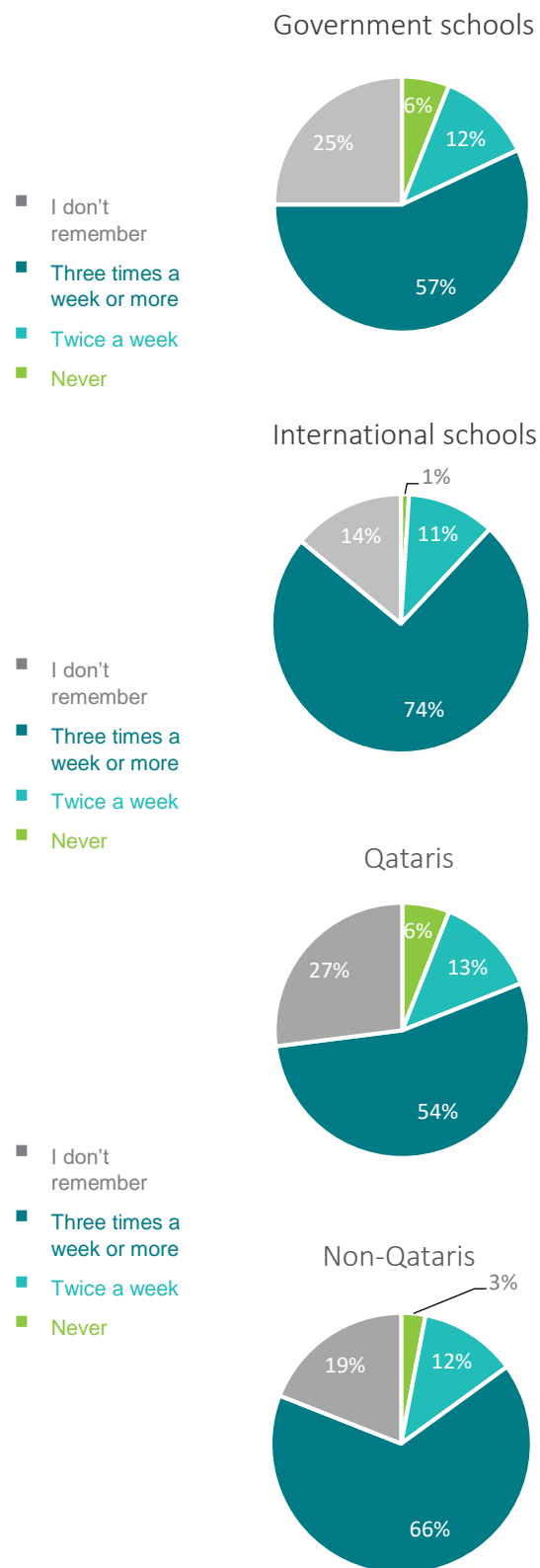


Communication and home-based activities

Parental involvement in children's education also refers to discussing school matters in general. Accordingly, we asked students how often their parents or guardians talked to them about school or a subject studied in class in the past week. Results show that parents in International schools tend to talk more with their children about school than parents in Government schools. From the students' perspective, 74% of the students in International schools answered they talk with their parents about school three times a week or more compared to 57% of the students in Government

schools. Likewise, 66% of non-Qataris students they talk with their parents about school three times a week or more compared to 54% of Qataris students.

Figure 6: In the past four weeks, how often did you talk to your parents or guardians about your school? By school type and nationality



Parents in international schools tend to talk more to their children about school than parents in Government schools.

Another notable result relevant to parental involvement is the comparatively low proportion of parents checking or assisting with their child's homework, with no other significant change taking place with respect to the different types of school and nationality: more than a third (37%) of students at Government and International school and (41%) of students at other schools.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD'S EDUCATION: MAIN IMPLICATIONS

Parental involvement influences student motivation, which in turn affects students' achievement. In this study, students reported not putting in their maximum efforts in their studies. Our data show that:

- 12% of the Qatari students strongly agree that "(they) do not put in (their) maximum effort in studying", compared to 10% of the non-Qatari students.
- As for the school type, the data show that 12% of the students in Government schools and 10% of the students in other schools, agree that "(they) do not put in (their) maximum effort in studying". Only 8% of the students in International schools.
- With regards to educational aspiration, 30% of the students from Government schools aspire to graduate from a university (with a BA) and 47% of them aspire to finish postgraduate studies with an advanced degree. As for the students from International schools, only 17% of them aspire to graduate from a university and as much as 51% of them aspire to finish postgraduate studies with an advanced degree.
- Looking at the same aspirations from a nationality perspective, it is clear that non-Qatari students have slightly higher aspirations for higher education than Qatari students. 31% of the Qatari students aspire to graduate from a university (with a BA) and 44% aspire to finish postgraduate studies with an advanced degree (MA, PhD, etc.).

By contrast, 25% of non-Qatari students aspire to graduate from a university with a BA and up to 49% aspire to finish postgraduate studies with an advanced degree (MA, PhD, etc.).

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive data

Students (n=1639)	Number	Percentage
Government schools	868	52.96%
International schools	483	29.47%
Other schools	288	17.57%
Parents (n=1142)		
Government schools	532	46.58%
International schools	390	34.15%
Other schools	220	17.57%
Schools (n=34)		
Government schools	21	61.76%
International schools	7	20.59%
Other schools	6	17.65%

Data collection

- "Qatar Education Study" (QES 2018)
- Data collection for parents and their children was through paper survey (PAPI)
- Data collection January 2018

References

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2. Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106, 105-130.
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