

The Impact of Parental Involvement on the GPA of South Asian American Highschool Students in New Jersey

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Abstract: This mixed-methods study explores the relationship between parental involvement and the weighted GPA of South Asian American high school students in New Jersey—an underrepresented group in educational research. Through a correlational analysis of survey responses from 32 students and qualitative content analysis of focus group discussions, the study categorizes parental involvement into minimal, mediocre, and excessive levels. The findings reveal a weak positive correlation between all levels of parental involvement and GPA, with the strongest (though still weak) correlation observed among students with excessively involved parents. Focus group insights suggest that students with minimal or mediocre parental involvement report greater self-reliance and stress when involvement increases, while those with excessive involvement generally find it supportive rather than burdensome. Cultural and generational differences emerged as key factors influencing parental engagement, particularly with parents unfamiliar with the U.S. school system. These results challenge the model minority stereotype by highlighting the diversity within the South Asian American student population and suggest that optimal academic outcomes are not solely dependent on the degree of parental involvement. The study contributes to a nuanced understanding of educational dynamics in immigrant communities and calls for culturally responsive support systems in schools.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There are nearly 185,000 South Asian Americans living in New Jersey (A COMMUNITY of CONTRASTS: SOUTH ASIANS in NEW JERSEY) and this number continues to grow. The U.S Census Bureau reports a 60% increase in South Asian immigrants between 2010 and 2022, bringing the total to nearly 4.6 million individuals (Farivar). South

Asian Americans trace their ancestry to “Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives” (“Demographic Information | SAALT”).

These students are often stereotyped as a model minority which perceives them “...as intelligent, well off, and able to excel in fields such as math and science”(Shi and Zhu).

However, this type casting can be harmful as this stereotype does not reflect the diverse socioeconomic backgrounds or lived experiences of South Asians (Ruiz et al.) and often leads to labeling by teachers and parents. Research done by Shi and Zhu emphasize the diversity of Asian Americans. Therefore the researcher assumed the level of parental involvement varies throughout South

Asian American Families, aligning with Shi and Zhu’s idea that Asian Americans are a diverse group.

Additionally, studies regarding parental involvement’s impact on students’ success shows mixed results. Excessive parental involvement has negative consequences, while mediocre involvement improves “[a child’s] academic achievement, cognitive development, and English Language ability” (Tebben). Minimal involvement can lead to lower self esteem in children due to lack of support. These findings led the researcher to hypothesize that parental involvement has no correlation with weighted GPA in South Asian High Schoolers as the previous research showed no direct correlation. However, past studies conducted fail to mention South Asian students as participants in their study. Therefore this research will follow the same population throughout all levels of involvement and will help fill a gap in literature by exploring an underrepresented community in this context. This will help clarify whether the patterns observed in other groups apply to South Asian students or if other factors come into play.

➤ Gap in the Research

Existing research regarding parental involvement focuses on East Asian, Hispanic, and African American students (Hatfield; Liu and White; P. E and Yvonne) but

lacks insight into its impact on South Asian American High School students. It is of high importance to address this gap as society needs to “underscore the need to shift away from a view of Asian Americans as a monolithic group towards one that accommodates a diversity of Asian experiences and achievements” (Shi and Zhu). Additionally studies in the current scholarly conversation focus on one level of involvement per each study. To fill these gaps, this study aims to answer the research question “To what extent does the Level of Parental Involvement Influence the Weighted GPA of South Asian High Schoolers in New Jersey” by portraying South Asian Americans with multiple levels of parental involvement to showcase how parental involvement varies between South Asian families.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *The Model Minority Myth*

The model minority stereotype often impacts how South Asian students are evaluated in the classroom, as educators treat them as a monolithic group. A study conducted by Ying Shi and Maria Zhu, explored how teachers rated Asian Students compared to white students. The study found that Asian students were 3.7% more likely to be overrated and 2.6% less likely to be underrated compared to white students, with the bias being more pronounced for South Asians”(Shi and Zhu) due to the model minority stereotype.

Shraddha Patel’s qualitative study, contrasting with Shi and Zhu’s quantitative study, shows how this stereotype affects students. In interviews students revealed the pressure to meet the high expectations associated with the model minority stereotype. One participant Roshni explained, “I’m Indian, I need to be the smartest one here, it’s part of my identity I feel like I’ve

kind of associated being Indian and being smart . . . So I feel like that also does build some unwanted pressure or stress ” (Patel). This internalized pressure is also seen in Rupam Saran’s study. A student shares “ In my last science test my score was 85 and my father and uncle were upset. I heard that I should pay more attention to my [studies]... I need a break” (Saran).

Through these studies it is clear that a certain level of parental involvement and external pressures can reinforce the model minority stereotype, which can be harmful to South Asian American highschoolers (Shi and Zhu). The study being conducted aims to portray South Asian American Students who differ from each other in terms of level of parental involvement, contrasting with the model minority stereotype present in the current scholarly conversation.

This study will encourage other educators to dispose of the model minority stereotype, and instead adapt to each student’s individual needs.

➤ *Excessive Involvement*

Saran’s study highlighted how a participant’s family reacted negatively to a test grade, which aligns with the concept of “helicopter parenting”. Helicopter parents tend to “pay extremely close attention to their child in every aspect...” (Shake et al.). A study comparing worksheets done in class with worksheets done at home under parental supervision found that helicopter parents negatively affect children as parents “hover” in ways that disrupt the learning process (Tabaeian). Helicopter parenting is prevalent in many Asian households (Hwang et al.) leading to the stress mentioned by Saran’s participant. Similarly, Lauren Michelle Hatfield’s study explored how helicopter parents pressure their child into taking courses inadequate for them (Hatfield). Hatfield provided an anecdote where a participant described being forced to take a certain math class despite struggling in the subject, further reinforcing Tabaeian’s conclusions that some parents are disrupting the learning process for students.

Tabaeian’s study also found that “A significant number of upper elementary students (ages 10-15) lacked independence, with many relying heavily on parental assistance for homework and assignments” (Tabaeian). Hatfield’s study extends this to older students, recounting a story of a college student, whose mother took control of his academic life after he failed to attend classes. Despite an agreement with his professors, he never submitted any work (Hatfield). These findings underscore the need to reduce helicopter parenting. The study being conducted will provide new insights into the effects of excessive parental involvement, potentially helping to prevent academic struggles in both younger students and older students.

➤ *Mediocre Involvement*

Some parents engage in only home-based involvement which positively affects the academic achievement of children from immigrant families (Liu and White). For this portion of the paper, parents who take part in solely home-based involvement are considered mediocly involved. A study by George Zhou and Lan Zhong where 12 chinese immigrant parents were interviewed found that “language barrier, lack of time and energy, and unfamiliarity with the Canadian school culture” limited participants’ involvement in school activities (Zhong and Zhou). Similarly, Eunjung Kim’s study on Korean American families found that parental involvement is mainly home-based with minimal school-based involvement (Kim) likely due to the factors highlighted in Zhong and Zhou’s study. These studies highlight the presence of mediocly involved parents in the East Asian Community, on the other hand this study aims to explore how similar levels of involvement may apply to South Asian families.

Mengmeng Yin’s study goes into the effects of the mediocre involvement portrayed in Kim’s, Zhou’s and Zhong’s studies. By analyzing data from the Children of Immigrants longitudinal study, Yin found “Home-based parental involvement had a stronger positive effect on academic achievement compared to school-based involvement” (Yin). Similarly Charles Tebben’s research

found that “Parental involvement from immigrant parents has a significant positive impact on their children’s academic achievement, cognitive development, and English Language ability” (Tebben). The findings from Charles Tebben and Mengmeng Yin show that mediocre parental involvement enhances the academic performance of students, contrasting with the negative effects of excessive involvement. This likely happened due to the fact that these studies were not conducted with the same population. This study focuses on one population, South Asian Americans, which will likely offer more consistent insights on parental involvement and its effects on academics.

➤ *Minimal Involvement*

Research has shown that parental neglect negatively impacts children’s academic achievement. A study by Onolemhenmhen P. E and Osunde Yvonne focused on how educational neglect affects senior secondary school students in Edo State, Nigeria. This study defines educational neglect as “all forms of material, moral, financial and academic deprivation that a child could suffer in matters pertaining to their schooling or student needs at school... A child that is educationally neglected is often one that lacks material resources, moral, financial and academic support to carry on with various engagements at school.” (P. E and Yvonne). Similarly, Didimalang Letlojane found that “Parental neglect is associated with ... academic failures, poor language development, low self esteem, lack of competence, insecurity, and high rate of dropouts from school.” (Letlojane). Both studies emphasize that minimal parental involvement is detrimental to students’ success and that higher parental involvement is necessary for academic achievement.

Additionally “Child Neglect (educational and social neglect combined) significantly predicted students’ academic performance ... in Edo State” (P. E and Yvonne). Letlojane’s study supports the notion that childhood neglect is associated with low self esteem (Letlojane). If students lack confidence they are less likely to complete their schoolwork effectively, leading to a cycle where poor results lead to constant lowering of self esteem (Zhao et al.). The studies conducted by Didimalang Letlojane, Onolemhenmhen P. E and Osunde Yvonne highlight the relationship between parental neglect and academic achievements. While previous research has highlighted the effects of solely minimal parental involvement this research will look at parental involvement more broadly by exploring how various levels of involvement affect South Asian students. This will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how parental involvement affects weighted GPA.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

➤ *Study Design*

To fulfill the goal proposed by the research question “To what extent does the level of Parental Involvement Influence the Weighted GPA of High School aged South Asian Americans in New Jersey?” a two part mixed method study was conducted. This approach allowed both for a

qualitative and quantitative analysis of how the level of parental involvement has an effect on the GPA of the participants. A mixed method was the best means for the researcher as when writing the literature review the researcher often used both a qualitative study and a quantitative study to support a perspective. All research procedures were approved by the institutional review board.

➤ *Correlational Analysis*

For the quantitative aspect of this study the researchers use correlational analysis, a nonexperimental method involving the collection of data to assess the relationship between 2 variables. To collect data participants completed a survey reporting their weighted GPA and a rating of their parents’ involvement using a likert scale of 1-6 (Appendix A). The survey was organized into two sections: home-based involvement and school-based involvement modeled after Eunjung Kim’s study, which found significantly higher levels of home-based parental involvement compared to school-based (Kim). After recognizing there were different ways parents can show their involvement, the researcher ensured both were included.

The researcher’s survey was adapted from a tool used by The Colorado Department of Education, which was originally intended for parents of elementary schoolers. The questions were modified to better fit the highschool aged participants of this study. The survey consists of 17 multiple choice questions after the consent information (Appendix D) allowing participants to complete the survey in under five minutes. Participants were asked for the appropriate consent information based on their age (Appendix B and Appendix C). Participants could not proceed without providing the proper consent details.

This survey was open to South Asian American highschoolers from mid-January to mid-February. This timeframe allowed ample opportunity for participants to respond at their convenience. The survey was promoted through social media (Appendix F) as well as fliers that were hung up around high school X (Appendix G).

The data collected from the survey was then compiled on a google sheet, with contact information and additional details stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher. Then, each participant’s average level of parental involvement was calculated by finding the mean of the likert scale responses using the AVERAGE function in google sheets. Based on the results, each participant was categorized into one of the 3 categories: minimal, mediocre, or excessive parental involvement. The researcher decided to categorize the participants in these groups, as they reflect the levels commonly discussed in current studies, which is indicated in the literature review. From there the researcher calculated the correlation coefficient (the r value) of each group through the CORREL function in google sheets. The researcher’s decision to employ the use of a likert scale allowed all results to be quantified making it a straightforward process for categorization. A qualitative aspect in this portion of data collection was excluded, as in an open ended question the participant can express overlap

across multiple levels of involvement. Since the research question focuses on “the level” not “the levels” of involvement participants can only be assigned to one category to ensure clarity and alignment with the purpose of the study.

➤ *Content Analysis*

For the qualitative aspect of this study the researcher used Content Analysis which is a method for analyzing textual data. The data was collected through three focus groups, each one based on the participants level of involvement. Focus groups were chosen over interviews as they allow participants to build on each other's ideas encouraging better conversation, while also allowing the researcher to represent a bigger percentage of the diverse population to cover all aspects of this conversation.

Although the survey was open to all South Asian American High School students in New Jersey, the focus groups will be conducted with participants from Highschool X, which the researcher attends. The focus groups were conducted during the school's 40-minute Teacher's Assisted Guidance block (similar to a homeroom) which allowed for face to face discussions during school hours. This likely increased the willingness to participate in the discussions as participants will not have to make unnecessary effort to travel to the location of the focus group. Face-to-face focus groups also helped mitigate distractions commonly found in remote settings. As noted by Maeva Flayelle and others, remote settings can lead to distractions from the participants' environment, resulting in a less engaging discussion. (Flayelle et al.) Each focus group lasted 20-25 minutes and was recorded using Google Meet for transcription and coding purposes. Participants were informed about this in the consent forms. All recordings were stored securely on the researcher's password-protected computer.

The study had 3 different focus groups, 1 for excessive involvement, 1 for mediocre involvement, and 1 for minimal involvement. Therefore, each discussion was run on

different days and received a different set of questions based on the level of parental involvement they experience. The recorded discussions were transcribed, and the common themes were identified through a coding document. The qualitative data, combined with the survey data, helped provide deeper insights into participants perceptions of parental involvement and its potential impact on weighted GPA.

To gather participants for the focus groups, students from Highschool X who completed the survey were contacted via email. 3 separate emails were sent, each one contacting a group based on their level of involvement (Appendix H). Attached to the email was a sign up sheet in which the participants could sign up to participate with their assigned group based on their level of involvement.

➤ *Delimitations*

Delimitations were established to assist in meeting the timing requirements and simplifying the research process. The subjects of this study are South Asian American High School students living in New Jersey. South Asian Americans are under researched, as they are often treated as a monolithic group rather than a diverse group (Zhong and Zhou). This justifies the need for further research to be conducted on South Asian Americans. Additionally there is limited research on parental involvement regarding highschool aged participants, with most studies focusing on either elementary or college aged students (Tabaiean; Hatfield). The researcher made the decision to focus on South Asians that live in New Jersey specifically as “over 9.1% of South Asians in the US live in NJ. Around 5% of NJ's population are of South Asian Origin” (Satagopan et al.) As there is a high population of South Asians in New Jersey, this study will be most beneficial to educators and other researchers in that state. Lastly the researcher made the decision to conduct face to face focus groups in order to eliminate any distractions and to encourage quality conversation among participants.

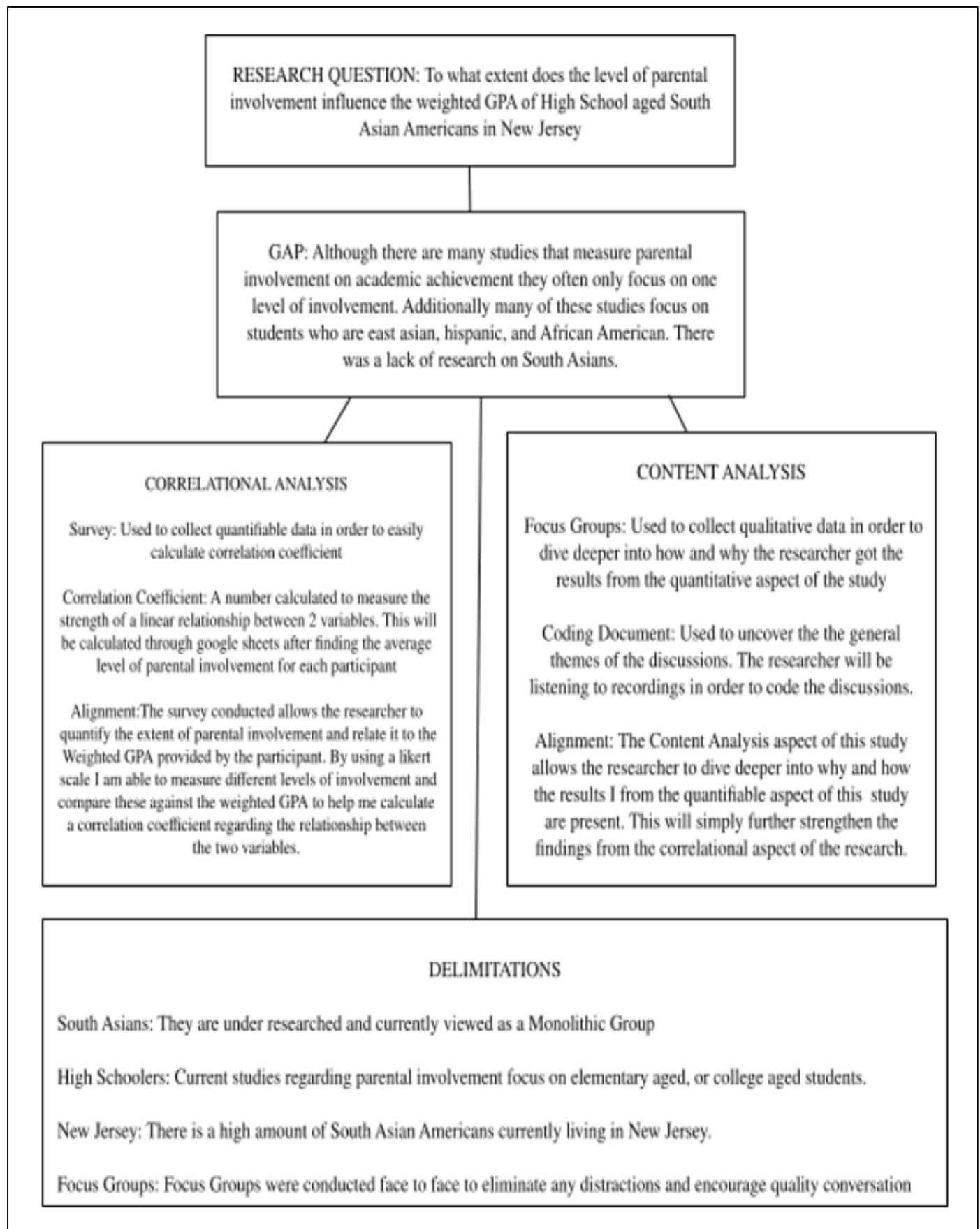


Fig 1 Summary of Research Design and Methodology Section

Caption: To provide a clear overview of the study's approach and methodology, figure 1 outlines the key components of the research design.

IV. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

➤ Survey

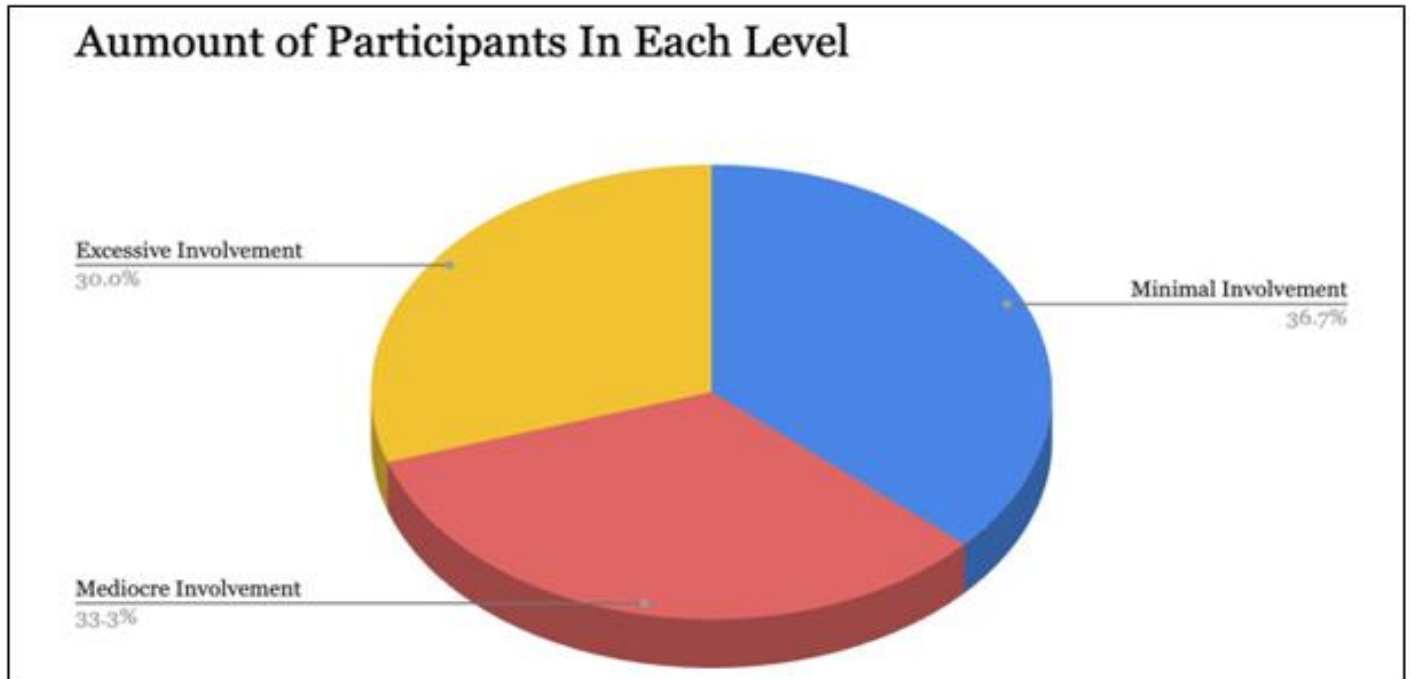


Fig 2 Amount of Participants in Each Level of Involvement

Caption: 32 survey results were analyzed. Based on the responses to the survey, participants were split into three groups: Minimal Involvement, Mediocre Involvement, and Excessive Involvement. Chart 1 indicates that there were 11

individuals in the Minimal involvement group, 10 in the Mediocre Involvement group, while there were 9 participants in the Excessive Involvement group

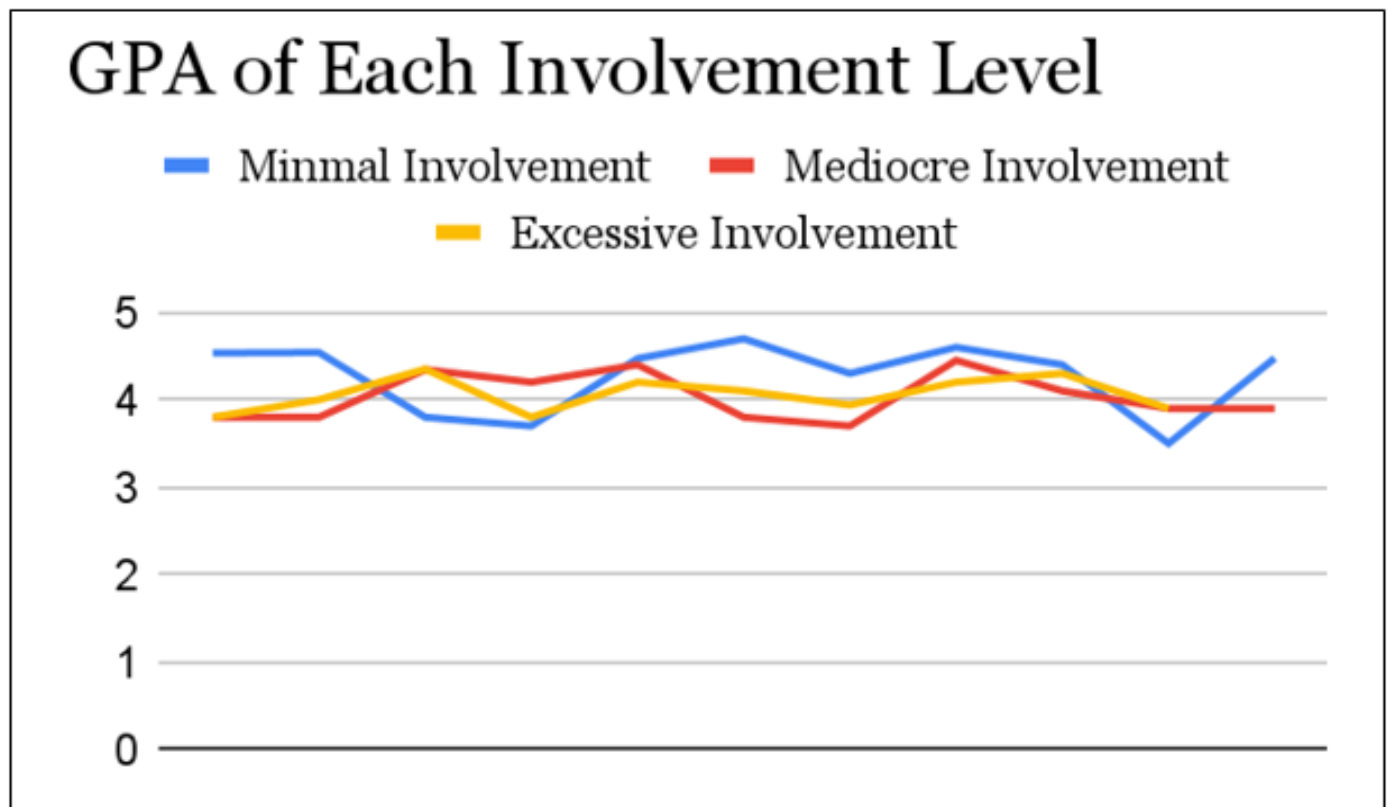


Fig 3 GPA of Each Involvement Level

Caption: Figure 3 depicts the range of the Weighted GPAs reported by participants at each involvement level. Across all participants, the Weighted GPAs spanned from 3.5 to 4.698. The average Weighted GPA for the Minimal

Involvement group was 4.27, for the Mediocre Involvement group it was 4.036, and for the Excessive Involvement group was 4.06.

Table 1 Parental Home-based Involvement

Questions	Never, (%)	1 or 2 times this year, (%)	4 or 5 times this year, (%)	Once a week, (%)	A few times a week, (%)	Daily, (%)
A parent talks with me about the school day	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (9.4%)	2 (6.3%)	14 (43.8%)	13 (40.6%)
A parent check to see if I finished my homework	6 (18.8%)	4 (12.5%)	1 (3.1%)	2 (6.3%)	12 (37.5%)	7 (21.9%)
A parent helps me study for tests	11 (34.4%)	9 (28.1%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
A parent reviews and discusses the schoolwork I bring home	15 (46.9%)	7 (21.9%)	4 (12.5%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
A parent asks what I am learning in school	1 (3.1%)	4 (12.5%)	5 (15.6%)	11 (34.4%)	6 (18.8%)	5 (15.6%)
A parent asks how well I am doing in school	1 (3.1%)	3 (9.4%)	7 (21.9%)	4 (18.8%)	7 (21.9%)	8 (25%)
A parent talks to my teachers	20 (62.5%)	10 (31.3%)	2 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Caption: Table 1 depicts the home-based parental involvement of 32 participants who completed the survey using a 6 Point Likert Scale (refer to Appendix A). As seen in the table, parents usually take involvement by talking to their child about the school day, with 43.8% reporting that

they talk a few times a week and 40.6% reporting that they discuss daily. Parents are least likely to take involvement by talking to their child's teacher as 62.5% of respondents reported that their parent never talks to their teachers.

Table 2 Parental School-based Involvement

Questions	Never, (%)	1 or 2 times this year, (%)	4 or 5 times this year, (%)	Once a week, (%)	A few times a week, (%)	Daily, (%)
parent helps out at my school	18 (56.3%)	13 (40.6%)	1 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
A parent attends special events at school	7 (21.9%)	12 (37.5%)	10 (31.3%)	2 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.1%)
A parent volunteers to go on class field trips	1 (12.5%)	4 (87.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
A parent attends PTA meetings	26 (81.3%)	5 (15.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.1%)	0 (0%)
A parent goes to our school's open house	20 (62.5%)	11 (34.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.1%)	0 (0%)

Caption: Table 2 depicts the school-based involvement of 32 participants who completed the survey using a 6 Point Likert Scale (refer to Appendix A). The table shows that most parents show a minimal amount of school-based involvement as majority of the participants answered they have never or have rarely participated in school-based involvement

➤ Correlational Analysis

A correlation coefficient was found for each level of parental involvement, using the CORREL function in google sheets. Three scatter plots, one for each level, was created to show the relationship between parental involvement and GPA. The x axis of each graph portrays the level of parental involvement which was found by averaging each participant's Likert scale responses from the survey. The y axis represents the weighted GPA which was reported in the first section of the survey.

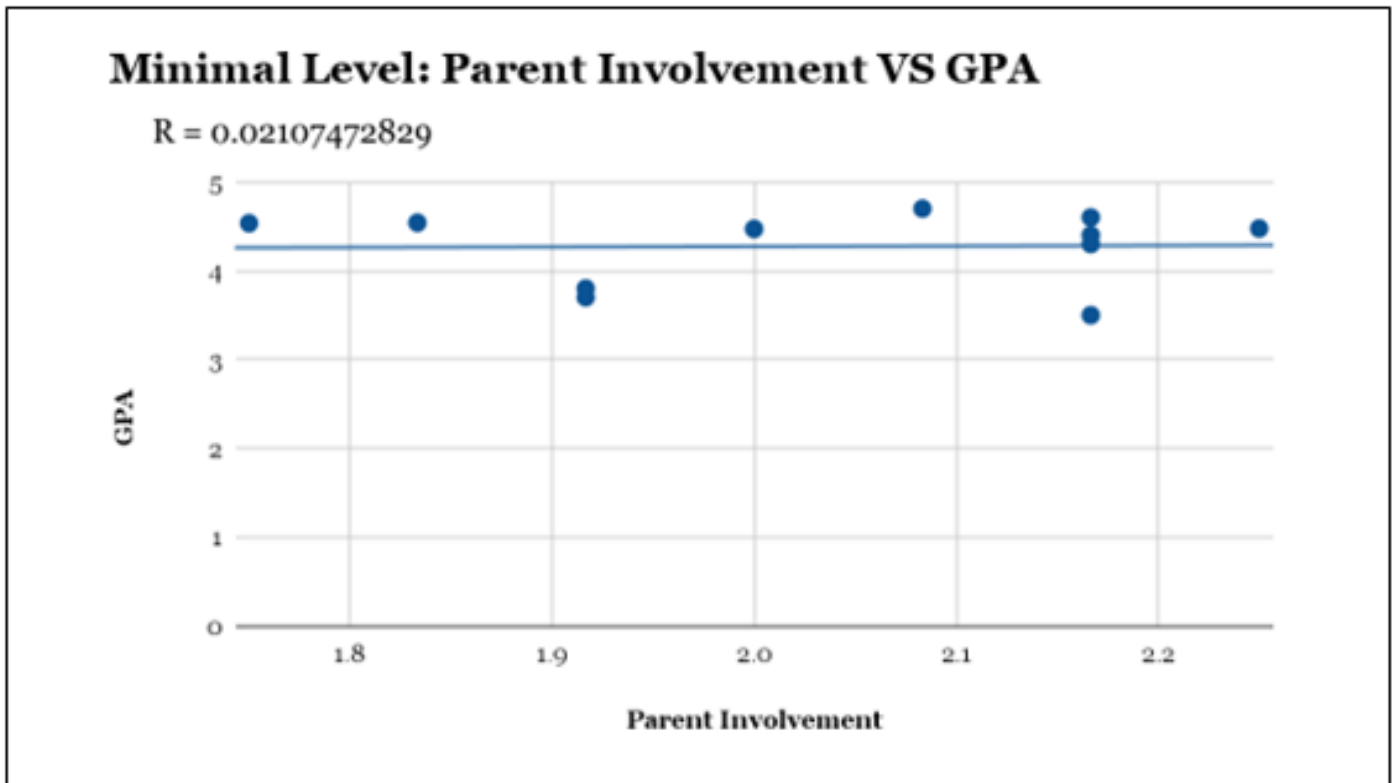


Fig 4 Minimal Level: Parental Involvement VS GPA

Caption: Figure 4 indicates a very weak positive correlation between the minimal involvement level, which ranged from 1.75 to 2.25, and weighted GPA, which ranged from 3.5 to 4.698. The correlation coefficient of

0.02107472829 suggests that parents who are minimally involved have little impact on their South Asian high schoolers weighted GPA. . Reference appendix E for the specific xy coordinates.

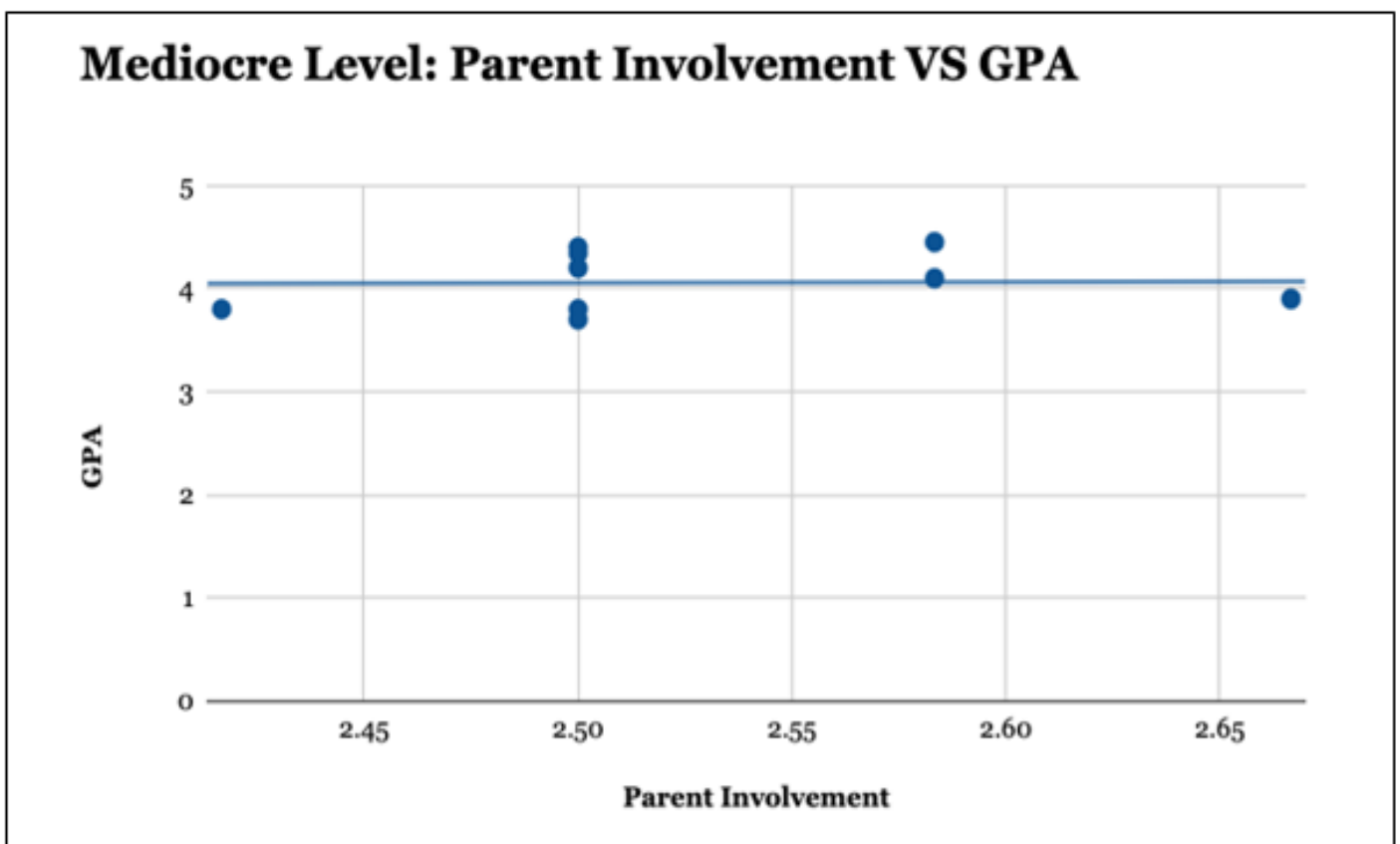


Fig 5 Mediocre Level: Parental Involvement VS GPA

Caption: Figure 5 indicates a very weak positive correlation between the mediocre involvement level which ranged from 2.416666667 to 2.666666667, and weighted GPA which ranged from 3.7 to 4.343. The correlation

coefficient of 0.1451302191 suggests that parents being medicorely involved has little impact on their South Asian high schoolers weighted GPA. Reference Appendix E for the specific xy coordinate.

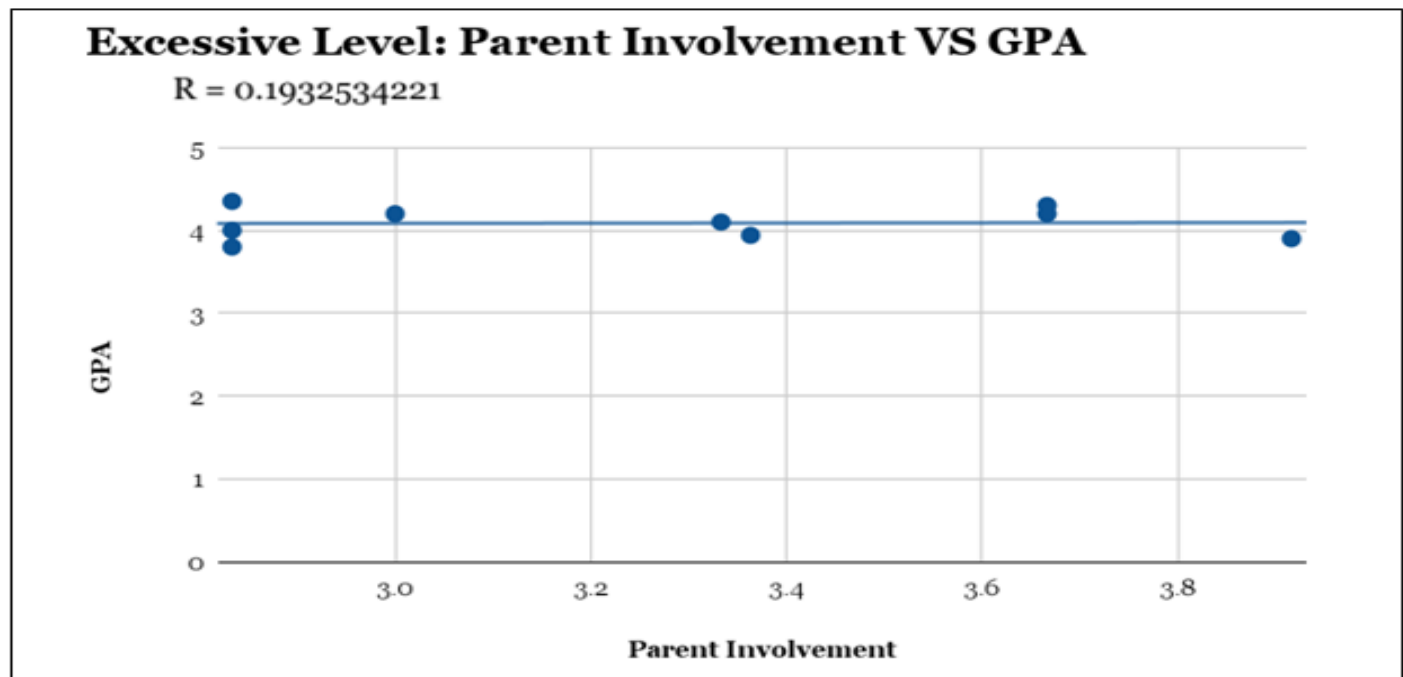


Fig 6 Excessive Level: Parental Involvement VS GPA

Caption: Figure 6 indicates that there is a very weak positive correlation between the excessive involvement level which ranges from 2.75 to 3.916666667, and weighted GPA which ranges from 3.8 to 4.35. The correlation coefficient of

0.1932534221 suggests that parents being excessively involved has little impact on their South Asian high schoolers weighted GPA. Reference appendix E for the specific xy coordinates.

V. QUALITATIVE RESULTS

8 respondents to the survey volunteered to partake in a focus group to provide a deeper reflection on the answers of their survey. Participants from each category were invited to participate in a discussion on separate days. The focus groups were then analyzed using thematic coding for various emerging themes which varied for each focus group.

➤ Minimal Involvement

Table 3 Thematic Coding of Minimal Involvement Group

Theme	Key Points	Quotes from Participant(s)
Minimal Parental Involvement Leading to Self Reliance	Participants felt a minimal level of involvement leads to self reliance	Participant A Participant D
	Increased parental involvement could add stress	Participant R
	Some participants desired more motivation or encouragement	Participant D
	Parent's lack of concern regarding college added stress	Participant A
	Parental absence sometimes acted as motivation	Participant R
Family Dynamics Impact on Parental Involvement	Siblings influenced level of parental involvement	Participant A Participant D Participant R
	Parent's unfamiliarity with the American school system affected their involvement	Participant A Participant D Participant R
	Parents try to reduce their involvement level based on their own past experiences	Participant D

Caption: Table 3 provides a portion of the coding document from the focus group discussion regarding participants who had minimally involved parents. Throughout the whole discussion 12 codes appeared, the majority consisting of themes relating to self reliance and family.

➤ *Minimal Parental Involvement Leading to Self Reliance*

Participants with minimally involved parents felt that their parents' lack of involvement had little impact on their performance as they mainly relied on themselves. Participant A emphasized that he would perform the way he wanted regardless of parental input, while participant D agreed noting her self motivation. They also mentioned that increased parental involvement would cause stress and potentially lower their GPA, with participant R expressing that parental helicoptering would increase stress. Although participants felt comfortable with their level of parental involvement participant D and participant A, wished for more encouragement and concern regarding their schooling. However, Participant R felt that her parents' absence was

motivating, as it pushed her to perform better.

➤ *Family Dynamics Impact on Parental Involvement*

The participants in the minimal involvement focus group agreed that their siblings influence their parents' involvement level. Participant D and Participant A both have older siblings and often rely on them due to their parents limited involvement. In contrast, Participant R with a younger sibling feels that he often takes attention off of her. Regarding their parents' lack of involvement, the participants believed it stemmed from their unfamiliarity with the American School system. Participant A said that his parents are "clinging on to the Indian school system". Participant D notes that her parents, who faced lots of pressure during their educational journey, now avoid it, expecting good results without applying pressure. Participant R also notes that her parents view the American system as flawed.

➤ *Mediocre Involvement*

Table 4 Thematic coding of the mediocre involvement group

Theme	Key Points	Quotes from Participant(s)
Mediocre Parental Involvement and its effects on Academic Stress	Participants felt that mediocre parental involvement had little effect on performance	Participant Y Participant V
	Too much involvement seen as stressful	Participant Y Participant N
	Participants desired more encouragement	Participant Y Participant V Participant N
	Participants desired more support at some point of their academic career	Participant Y Participant V
	Participant felt that current level of involvement is adequate	Participant N
Cultural Differences Affect on Parental Involvement	Sibling Dynamics have an influence on parental expectations	Participant N Participant V Participant Y
	Parent's expectations are influenced by culture	Participant N Participant V Participant Y
	Parent's unfamiliarity of the American school system can lead to miscommunication and added pressure	Participant N Participant V Participant Y
	Parents intend to see the participants succeed	Participant N Participant V Participant Y

Caption: Table 4 provides a portion of the coding document from the focus group discussion regarding participants with mediocely involved parents. Throughout the whole conversation 18 codes appeared mainly consisting of the themes of how parental involvement, cultural differences, and generational differences affect academic performance.

➤ *Mediocre Parental Involvement and its Effects on Academic Stress*

Participants with mediocely involved parents agreed that it had little effect on their academic performance. Participants Y and V both expressed that they would perform well regardless of parental involvement. Participant Y mentioned that increased parental pressure would add stress and negatively affect her GPA, while Participant N agreed that too much involvement would cause unnecessary

stress. All participants desired more encouragement. Participant Y wished for more involvement earlier in her academic life to develop better work habits. Participant V wishes for more support in managing school pressures. On the other hand Participant N felt that her parents level of involvement was helpful as it allowed her more independence and responsibility.

➤ *Cultural Differences affect on Parental Involvement*

Participants discussed how their siblings affect their parents expectations. Participant N shared that initially her parents pressured her more, but as she got older shifted focus to her younger brother in the gifted and talented program. She felt that her parent's expectations were shaped by their cultural background, leading to more involvement in her brother's academics. Similarly Participant V noted that her parents paid more attention to her younger brother

without applying pressure. Participant Y shared that her older siblings experienced more pressure when they were her age, however as she started becoming older her parents began to trust her, leading to less involvement in her academics. Despite these differences in expectations between siblings, all participants recognized that their parents' expectations were influenced by their culture. The

participants observed that their parents' unfamiliarity with the American Education System sometimes caused miscommunications or added pressure, but they acknowledged that their parents' intended to see them succeed.

➤ *Excessive Involvement*

Table 5 Thematic coding of the Excessive Involvement Focus Group

Theme	Key Points	Quotes from Participant(s)
Parental Support and Motivation	Parents provide academic support, motivate, and encourage higher-level classes	Participant B Participant K
	Parents offer emotional support when students face doubts or struggles	Participant B
	Participants encourage students to take on challenges, but without pressuring them	Participant B Participant K
	Focus is on understanding the material, not just grades	Participant B Participant K
Cultural and Generational Influences	Parents want their children to avoid struggles they faced as immigrants	Participant K Participant B
	Their parents immigrant background leads to an emphasis on school success to make life easier for their children	Participant K
	Perception of schoolwork differs between generations	Participant K
Parental Education on School System	Participants don't feel that further knowledge of the school system by parents would improve outcomes.	Participant B Participant K
	Parental Support is considered more helpful than specific knowledge of the school system	Participant B
Family Dynamics	Parental involvement varies between the participant and their sibling	Participant B Participant K

Caption: Table 5 provides a portion of the coding document from the focus group discussion regarding participants with excessively involved parents. Throughout the whole discussion 14 codes appeared majority consisting of the themes parental support and motivation and cultural contexts.

➤ *Parental Support and Motivation*

When participants were asked about the impact of their parents' involvement on their academic performance, both participant B and participant K emphasized how crucial their parents' support was. Participant B stated "Without them I would be a lot lazier.", while Participant K felt she would have stayed in lower level classes without her parents' involvement. Both participants clarified that while their parents encouraged them to take higher level classes it was not pressurizing. They also agreed that their parents focus is not solely on getting good grades "but rather understanding what you are learning" (Participant B). Participant K shared that her parents' level of involvement allows her to "tell [her] parents [she] wasn't ready for the test and that [she will] do better next time, [she will] actually be ready. [she] feel(s) that's what actually counts."

➤ *Cultural and Generational Influences on Parental Involvement*

Both participants agreed that their parents excessive involvement stems from the desire to help their children avoid the struggles they faced. While both participants found their parent's involvement useful, they noted differences between their perceptions of the school system.

Participant K notes "How they used to spend time on their assignments is much different than we do... we get a lot of work... but we get time to do it over a course of a few days." Despite this both agreed that educating their parents in the American school system would not improve their academic performance. Family dynamics also influence parental involvement. Participant B noticed that her parents increased involvement after being less involved with her older brother, benefitting her academic performance. Participant K, the oldest sibling, also notes that her parents were more involved with her than her sibling, which initially caused envy but now she sees it as beneficial for her sibling.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In terms of answering the research question “To what extent does the level of parental involvement affect the weighted GPA of South Asian High Schoolers in New Jersey?” - the researcher was able to come to the answer that the level of parental involvement has a weak positive effect on the weighted GPA of South Asian High Schoolers in New Jersey. This partially disproves the researcher's hypothesis that parental involvement has no correlation with weighted GPA as there was a positive correlation found, however the correlation coefficient being less than or equal to 0.1 suggests that the correlation found is weak (Akoglu).

➤ Survey

The data from Table 1 and Table 2 partially support the researcher's assumption that parental involvement level varies throughout South Asian Families. Table 1 shows a similar number of participants experiencing low levels of involvement as participants experiencing high levels of involvement, indicating a range of involvement levels. However Table 2 reveals that most participants report low levels of school-based parental involvement. Not only does this partially disprove the researcher's assumption but it also suggests that, while many parents are engaged at home they may be less involved in school-related activities.

This partially supports the assumption as the results from the home-based involvement section portrays varied results but the school-based involvement section does not. This finding aligns with Eunjung Kim's study which found that Korean American families exhibited high home-based involvement but low school-based involvement (Kim). These similarities could suggest that cultural factors may influence how Asian parents engage in their children's education, possibly prioritizing home-based involvement. A notable cultural factor that may have influenced the participants parental involvement is the model minority stereotype which portrays

Asian Americans as “intelligent, well off, and able to to excel in fields such as math and science” (Shi and Zhu) as this is a stereotype many Asians share.

Additionally Chart 1 indicates that parental involvement levels vary evenly across the South Asian American community, with similar numbers of individuals exhibiting excessive, mediocre, and minimal levels of involvement. Chart 2 portrays a wide range between the GPA's of all participants, with the weighted GPAs spanning from 3.5 to 4.698. This finding contradicts the “model minority stereotype” that is portrayed in Ying Shi and Maria Zhu's study, which portrays Asian Americans as a monolithic high achieving group. In contrast, the variation in GPA and parental involvement among South Asian students challenge this stereotype.

➤ Correlational Analysis

Figure 3 which portrays a correlation coefficient of 0.02107472829 indicates that minimal parental involvement has a weak positive correlation with Weighted GPA. This contrasts with the findings from Onolemmhen P. E, Osunde Yvonne and Didimalang Letlojane which found that Parental Neglect often leads to a decline in academic performance. Although their studies focus on those with a much lower level of involvement than the participants in the minimally involved group of this study, the contrasting negative correlation is important to note. This contrast suggests that even minimal parental involvement can have a less harmful effect on academic performance than expected based on prior research.

Figure 4 with a correlation coefficient of 0.1451302191 indicates that a mediocre level of parental involvement also has a weak positive correlation with Weighted GPA. This aligns with the findings of Liu and White, as well as Zhou and Zhong who concluded that mediocre involvement benefits the academic performance of children from immigrant families. However, these studies were classified as mediocre involvement studies as the parents who took part in only exhibited home-based involvement. The participants in this study were classified into the mediocre involvement group due to the results of home-based involvement levels and school-based involvement levels being averaged together. Despite this the studies still came to similar conclusions most likely due to the fact that both types of involvement still reflect a moderate level of parental engagement.

Figure 5 showing a correlation coefficient of 0.1932534221 indicates that excessive parental involvement has a weak positive correlation with weighted GPA. This contradicts the findings of Lauren Michelle Hatfield and Mahsa Tabaiean, which found that excessive involvement can lower GPA due to disruptions in learning. However, their research did not focus on Asian students. Hatfield's focus was on college students who were reflecting on high school, while Tabaiean's focus was on 8th grade students who are expected to complete their work independently. As Asian students were not mentioned, the possibility that cultural factors may play a role in the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is highlighted.

➤ Focus Groups

During the discussions it was evident that the participants with excessively involved parents differed greatly from those with minimal or mediocre involvement. Participants with excessively involved participants did not wish for their parents to be less involved even when it meant being pushed to take difficult classes as they believed it prepared them for future academic challenges. This finding contrasts with Hatfield's study, where similar involvement was perceived as controlling and “the worst ever”. Participants with minimally involved parents aligned more with Hatfield's findings, expressing that an increase in involvement would cause stress and lower their weighted GPA. Those with mediocrely involved parents had mixed

opinions. Participant V and Participant Y initially believed their performance is independent of parental involvement, but later Participant Y and N agreed that an increase in parental involvement would lead to stress. It was interesting that the mediocre and minimal involvement focus group came to similar conclusions as their correlation coefficients are farther apart compared to the minimal and excessive focus groups. Although the correlation coefficient between parental involvement and GPA varied between the mediocre and minimal groups, they shared similar views on stress. This suggests that statistically measuring parental involvement effects on weighted GPA may not fully capture how students perceive the impact of parental involvement on their GPA.

All participants acknowledged that their guardians' lack of knowledge on the American School system was a limiting factor-especially in the minimal and mediocre involvement groups. This aligns with Zhou and Zhong's study regarding Chinese immigrant parents in Canada, who found that "language barrier(s), lack of time and energy, and unfamiliarity with the Canadian school culture..." (Zhong and Zhou) were obstacles to higher levels of involvement. The struggles identified in Zhou and Zhong's participants mirror those of the South Asian American participants in this study, suggesting that the struggle to take part in school-based involvement may be the case for many other immigrants, as this finding is applicable to South Asian Americans in New Jersey and East Asian Canadians.

The data collected from the focus group discussions agree with the results from the correlational analysis as all participants expressed that their parents' level of involvement was adequate to maintain their academic standings. This is evident as all focus group participants agreed that they don't want their parents' level of involvement to change, and the correlational analysis indicates that the participants level of involvement has a weakly positive affect on their weighted GPA.

➤ *Implications*

This study challenges the model minority stereotype by portraying South Asian Americans through a diverse lens. The findings suggest that parental involvement is not the only indicator of academic success as its effect on weighted GPA is presented as relatively weak, across all involvement levels. For parents, this may help alleviate the pressure of staying heavily involved, especially when facing certain barriers. Schools can support parents by offering workshops to help them navigate the school system without expecting high involvement.

Regarding students, this study reassures scholars that parental involvement is not the sole indicator of their academic performance. This may reduce stress and encourage students to focus on other factors that can impact their GPA significantly.

➤ *Limitations*

Throughout this study there are many limitations that the researcher had to consider. A major limitation was the

researcher's inability to prevent any potential bias in survey responses and focus group discussions. This study assumed participants put full effort in honesty when playing a part of this study. Another major limitation is the small sample size. Although 34 individuals responded to the survey 32 responses were analyzed. One of the participants were excluded as they failed to indicate they were South Asian, while the other failed to provide a Weighted GPA. These responses had to be removed as this study aims to explore the relationship between parental involvement and the Weighted GPA of South Asian American high school students. As only 32 responses were analyzed, the generalizability of the findings were limited. The sample used might not represent the broader population of South Asian American High

School students in New Jersey as most participants attend High School X, which is located in a wealthy county. Therefore, participants in less fortunate areas of New Jersey may not be well represented through this study. Additionally, group classification was determined by averaging their home-based school-based involvement. As a result, participants with a high level of involvement in one setting and a low level of involvement in another setting were placed into the mediocre involvement group. This may have had an impact on the researcher's conclusions as participants that are experiencing high levels of involvement in one setting may have perceived their parents as highly involved overall, which could have affected their responses during the focus group discussions.

➤ *Future Directions*

This study's delimitations present opportunities for more research. Future researchers can perform a similar study with students from diverse racial backgrounds and various locations allowing for a broader understanding of parental involvement across different communities. This could provide valuable insight into how socio-economic and regional factors influence parental involvement and student outcomes. This would allow educators to develop more inclusive educational strategies and interventions. Additionally, expanding the sample size beyond the 32 participants in this study would increase the generalizability of these findings, providing a more comprehensive perspective on the relationship between parental involvement and weighted GPA. A larger sample size would portray more student experiences and more accurately portray the diversity within the South Asian community leading to stronger conclusions regarding the topic of parental involvement effects on South Asian students.

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APPENDICES

➤ Appendix A: *Likert Scale #1-6*

Note: This scale was referenced from a survey conducted by The Colorado Department of Education in a document titled “Measuring Parent Engagement and Family Involvement in schools.”

- Never
- 1 or 2 times this year
- 4 or 5 times this year
- Once a week
- A few times a week
- Daily

➤ Appendix B: *Parent Consent Information*

We invite you and your child to take part in a research study being conducted by the Principal Researcher Sarah Khan (sarah.khan@motsd.org) who is a student at Mount Olive High School: 18 Corey Road Flanders, NJ, 07836 as part of their AP Research Project: The Impact of Parental Involvement on South Asian American Highschool Students

If you would consent for your child to participate in the following study, we ask that you sign this consent form. The study is described below.

Description: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between parental involvement and the Weighted GPA of South Asian American highschool students in New Jersey.

This study seeks to understand how different levels of parental involvement may influence academic success, as well as to gain deeper insights on South Asian American teenagers.

Confidentiality: Children’s answers will not be associated with their name. Rather, each child will be given an identification number on the interviewer’s sheet. All data regarding your child will be destroyed after the study is complete. All information will be stored on a password protected computer which only the researcher will have access to. After the study is completed all files regarding the study will be deleted.

➤ *Study Procedures:*

• *Step 1: Survey Completion*

Participants will first complete a survey that asks about their weighted GPA and the level of involvement in their education. Participants will be asked to rank their parents’ involvement on a scale of 1-6 based on different aspects. The survey will take 5-6 minutes to complete. Once survey distribution is completed the researcher will be calculating multiple correlation coefficients based on the numerical results generated from the study.

• *Step 2: Focus Group Discussion*

After completing the survey, if chosen, participants will be invited to participate in a focus group, based on their survey responses where they can share personal experiences about their parents’ involvement on their weighted GPA. During the discussion the researcher will ask open ended questions about the topic. This focus group will be recorded using google meet for audio and transcription purposes. This recording will be stored safely on my password protected computer and will only be used for the purpose of this research. After the focus groups are completed the researcher will transcribe the audio and code the responses for key themes. By filling out this consent form, the participant consents to being chosen to be a part of a focus group

➤ *Risks & Benefits:*

• *Emotional Discomfort during focus groups*

Participants may feel uncomfortable when discussing personal anecdotes related to parental involvement or academic challenges. To minimize this the researcher will ensure that a safe and respectful environment will be maintained throughout the discussion. Participants will also be made aware of their right to leave the focus group discussion at any time.

• *Negative Emotional Impact from Discussion*

Participants may experience stress or negative emotions when discussing academic challenges or parental involvement. To minimize this the researcher will make the participants aware of the support services available for students.

You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

Contact Information: If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the Principal

Investigator whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Principal Investigator, please contact Mount Olive High School at 973-927-2208.

Freedom to Withdraw: I understand that my child has the right to stop participation at any time during the study.

Grievance Procedure: If I have any concerns or am dissatisfied with any aspect of this study I may report my grievances anonymously if desired to Mount Olive High School at 973-927-2208 or by letter to Mount Olive High School 18 Corey Road Flanders, NJ, 07836.

Parents Initials

By signing this form, I give permission for my child to participate in the research project entitled: The Impact of Parental Involvement on South Asian American Highschool Students. I understand that my child's right to withdraw from participating or refuse to participate will be respected and that their responses and identity will be kept confidential.

Have you read and agreed to the following terms and conditions?

Yes

No

➤ *Appendix C: Informed Consent Information*

The Impact of Parental Involvement on the GPA of South Asian American Highschool Students in New Jersey

➤ *Principal Investigator*

Sarah Khan

sarah.khan@motsd.org

AP Research Student

Mount Olive High School

➤ *Purpose of Study*

You are being asked to take part in a research study, The Impact of Parental Involvement on the GPA of South Asian American Highschool Students in New Jersey. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the Principal Investigator if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between parental involvement and the Weighted GPA of South Asian American highschool students in New Jersey. This study seeks to understand how different levels of parental involvement may influence academic success, as well as to gain deeper insights on South Asian American teenagers.

➤ *Study Procedures*

• *Step 1: Survey Completion*

Participants will first complete a survey that asks about their weighted GPA and the level of involvement in their education. Participants will be asked to rank their parents' involvement on a scale of 1-6 based on different aspects. The survey will take 5-6 minutes to complete. Once survey distribution is completed the researcher will be calculating multiple correlation coefficients based on the numerical results generated from the study.

• *Step 2: Focus Group Discussion*

After completing the survey, if chosen, participants will be invited to participate in a focus group, based on their survey responses where they can share personal experiences about their parents' involvement on their weighted GPA. During the

discussion the researcher will ask open ended questions about the topic. This focus group will be recorded using google meet for audio and transcription purposes. This recording will be stored safely on my password protected computer and will only be used for the purpose of this research. After the focus groups are completed the researcher will transcribe the audio and code the responses for key themes. By filling out this consent form, the participant consents to being chosen to be a part of a focus group

➤ *Risks*

Your responses to the survey and focus group will be anonymous. Please do not write any identifying information on your survey and focus group. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents

Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.]

All information will be stored in a password protected computer that only the researcher has access to.

➤ *Contact Information*

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the Primary Investigator whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator, please contact Mount Olive High School at 973-927-2208.

➤ *Voluntary Participation*

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the Principal Investigator. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Participants initials

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without penalty. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Have you read and agreed to the following terms and conditions?

Yes

No

Appendix D: *Survey Questionnaire*

Note: These survey questions were referenced from a study conducted by The Colorado Department of Education in a document titled “Measuring Parent Engagement and Family Involvement in schools.”

You do not meet the requirements to participate in this study! Please exit the survey

This is due the fact that you are either not of South Asian Descent, you are not enrolled in a highschool, you do not currently reside in New Jersey, or you have not given the proper consent information. This study is looking for participants who fit this demographic.

Home Based Involvement

A parent talks with me about the school day

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent checks to see if I finished my homework

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year

4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent helps me study for tests

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent reviews and discusses the schoolwork I bring home

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent asks what I am learning in school

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent asks how well I am doing in school

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent talks to my teachers

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent helps out at my school

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent attends special events at school

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year

4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent volunteers to go on class field trips

1: Never

School Based Involvement

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent attends PTA meetings

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

A parent goes to our school's open house

1: Never

2: 1 or 2 times this year

3: 4 or 5 times this year 4: Once a week

Thank you for filling out this survey!

5: A few times a week 6: Daily

You may be contacted if you meet the standards to be a part of a focus group. Appendix E: *XY coordinates for scatter plots*

➤ Minimal Involvement

X (Parental Involvement)	Y (Weighted GPA)
1.75	4.534
1.83333333333333	4.54
1.91666666666667	3.8
1.91666666666667	3.7
2	4.47
2.08333333333333	4.698
2.16666666666667	4.3

2.16666666666667	4.6
2.16666666666667	4.4
2.16666666666667	3.5
2.25	4.475

➤ *Mediocre Involvement*

X (Parental Involvement)	Y (Weighted GPA)
2.41666666666667	3.8
2.41666666666667	3.8
2.5	4.343
2.5	4.2
2.5	4.4
2.5	3.8
2.5	3.7
2.58333333333333	4.45
2.58333333333333	4.1
2.66666666666667	3.9
2.66666666666667	3.9

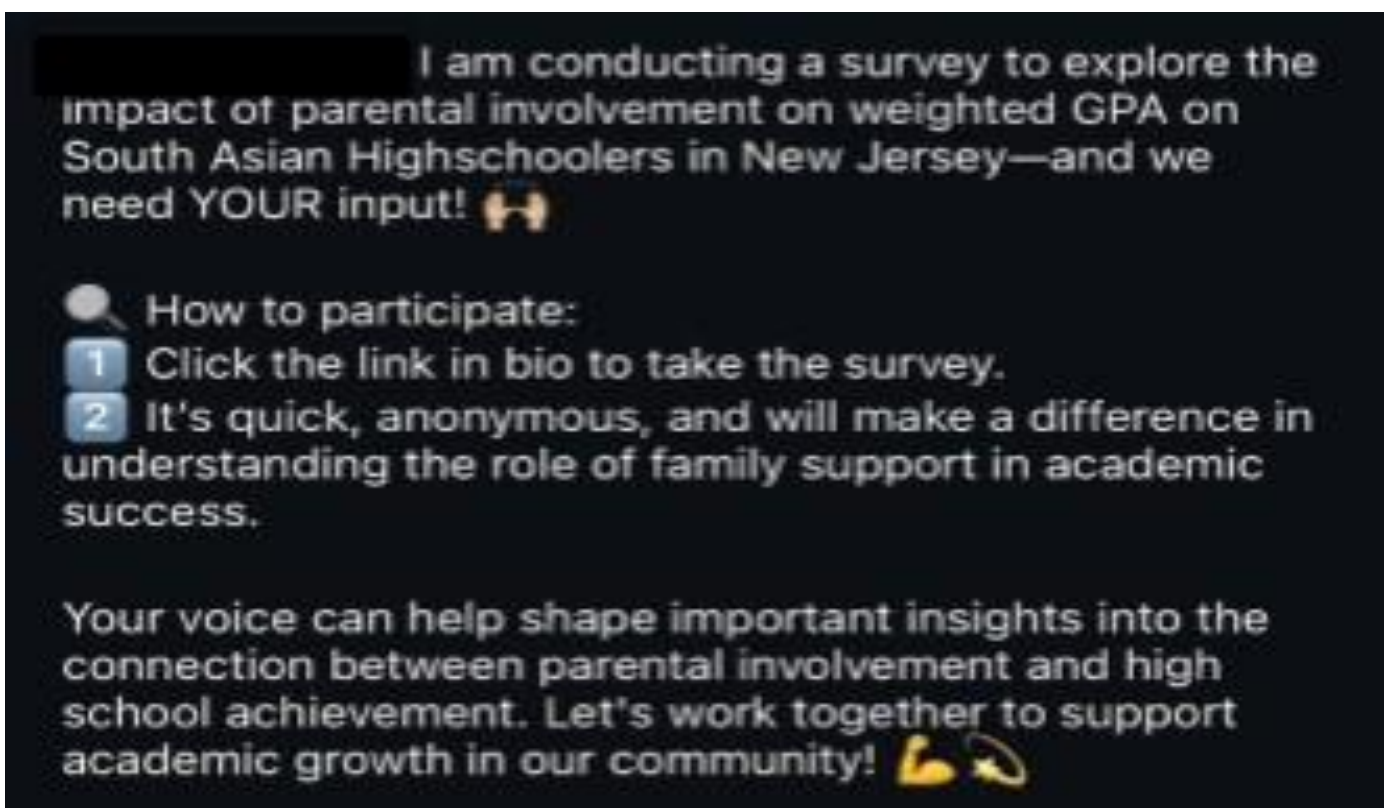
➤ *Excessive Involvement*

X (Parental Involvement)	Y (Weighted GPA)
2.75	3.8
2.83333333333333	4
2.83333333333333	4.35
2.83333333333333	3.8
3	4.2
3.33333333333333	4.1
3.36363636363636	3.94
3.66666666666667	4.2
3.66666666666667	4.3
3.91666666666667	3.9

➤ *Appendix F: Social media posts*



This was posted on the platform reddit to encourage individuals to take the survey.



This caption was used in addition to the flier made to advertise this study on the platform Instagram.



➤ Appendix H: *Email to participants*

The Impact of Parental Involvement on the GPA of South Asian American High school students in New Jersey.

Hello I hope you are doing well. I am writing to invite you to participate in the second phase of my study "The Impact of Parental Involvement on the GPA of South Asian American High school students in New Jersey." You previously took a survey for this study, and your input was greatly appreciated. I am now ready to move forward with the next stage and would be grateful for your participation.

The **focus group** will be recorded for transcription and analysis purposes, but please be aware that your identity will remain completely anonymous in my final paper. While your participation is not mandatory, it would be a tremendous help in furthering the goals of this study. The insights you provide will contribute to helping teachers understand the diversity within the South Asian community, instead of viewing it as a monolithic **group**, as it is often represented.

If you are interested in joining the **focus group**, please sign up via the attached [sign-up sheet](#). The discussions will take place on **APPROPRIATE TIME** and appropriate passes will be sent to you on the morning of the session.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me directly.