



Parent Teacher Meeting in a Medical College: Attitude of the Stake Holders

KEYWORDS

Parent, Student, Meeting, Medical institute

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ABSTRACT A qualitative questionnaire based study was conducted to assess the awareness of the stakeholders regarding the parent teacher meetings (PTM) being conducted in a medical institute. 350 students, 227 parents, 82 teachers and 10 management personnel participated in the study.

The findings indicate that majority of the students, teachers, parents and management are aware of the conduction and purpose of PTM being conducted in the institute. Also students, teachers, parents and management approved the usefulness of PTM and its helpfulness in better teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Most of the stake holders in the study favored that PTM's should be organized once in a year. A major information collected was that the attendance of parents and students for the PTM decreased substantially as they went to their higher classes. Hence, the perspective of parents and students needs to be changed regarding their attendance in PTM's in higher classes.

Introduction:

In recent years, family involvement in school is a central issue. The central idea derived is based on the fact that family involvement leads to better attendance, higher scores increased motivation and lower absenteeism in students. Apart from the fore mentioned criteria focused on student outcome, parents represent an important part in the design, articulation and implementation of the quality focused education initiatives. This finding is stressed upon by educational researchers.[1] Parent teacher meetings (PTM) are focused on such a thought, however research reveals that as the child progresses towards higher studies parents involvement is limited, as teachers usually do not reach beyond annual and semi-annual parent teacher conferences.[2] The power and importance of both the teacher and parental judgement cannot be overlooked. The attitudes and aspirations of parents and of children themselves predict later educational achievement. International evidence suggests that parents with high aspirations are also more involved in their children's education [3] Hence, though such interventions are necessary once a student progresses to higher studies, the perspective and thoughts of the students, parents, teachers and the management needs to be assessed and valued before such interventions take place. A potential challenge lies in the fact that many obstacles may hinder parental involvement. These obstacles may include narrow conceptualization of parental involvement, negative attitude of the teacher and college, occupational and cultural characteristics.[4] Keeping this in mind the present survey was carried out to assess the attitude of the stake holders i.e students, teachers, parents and management regarding PTM conducted in the institute.

Aims and objectives:

To assess the attitude of the stake holders regarding parent teacher meetings conducted in the institute.

Material and methods:

After approval of the institutional ethics committee, a questionnaire based survey was carried out at NKP Salve

Institute of Medical Sciences, Nagpur. A prevalidated questionnaire with a likert scale was distributed to 100 teachers, 400 students with their parents and 10 people in the management. The study was a qualitative approach. The research tool was a questionnaire. Before handing the questionnaire all the participants were informed regarding the intentions of the study and they were ensured that the study would provide valuable information to the college and the community in a larger perspective. The questionnaire was distributed to the students in a specified classroom, to the teachers and management personally and to the parents either through post or email (which was verified personally). All the stake holders were asked to submit the filled in questionnaire at a specified location either personally, through email or letters. Informed consent was taken from all the participants.

Statistical analysis was calculated using percentile method.

Results

As per the data received, 350 students, 227 parents, 82 teachers and 10 management personnel responded.

All the students (I, II and III MBBS) were aware that the college holds regular parent teacher meetings and the purpose of the meeting was related to assess the academic progress, attendance and any other matters related to the student, parent and institute. As in table I, though the students think that the frequency of the meetings is sufficient, the usefulness of such meetings and the frequency of students attending the meetings also diminished as they progress to higher terms and it was related to the parent not attending the meeting. The students agreed that parent involvement can increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness, however were reluctant (74%) that the problems be directly discussed with the parents.

As in table II, the parents were aware of such parent teacher meetings, but time constraint (54%) proved to be major hindrance for them to attend the meetings. Though they agreed to the usefulness and frequency of such meet-

ings, the number of parents attending these meetings diminished as the student progressed in their studies. 70% of the parents agreed that the communication sent to them regarding the meeting was appropriate. The parents agreed that parent involvement can increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

As in table III, only 48.8% teachers were aware of PTM being carried out in the institute. All of the teachers approved the usefulness of PTM and its helpfulness in better teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Though the teachers could not comment regarding the communication sent to the parents, 70% thought that the communication was not taken seriously by the parents and 80% opined that the frequency of the PTM is sufficient.

As in table IV, 70% of the management was aware of the conduction and purpose of PTM being carried out at the institute. However, they opined that the frequency of such PTM should be twice in a year. All of them agreed that parental involvement is important for maintenance of a good rapport of the medical college, however 50% agreed that the parents be involved in policy setting processes.

Discussion:

The present study seeks to reach into the awareness of the students, teachers, parents and management regarding the PTM being conducted at the institute.

Dor A[5] suggested that the teachers seem to be in favour of parental involvement and are empowered by it. Teachers are aware of the benefits that parental involvement has for children and they understand and identify with the importance of this issue. Along with the positive attitudes and empowerment which, according to the teachers, accompany parents' involvement, it is important to note that not one of the teachers interviewed suggested that parents' involvement include mutual engagement in decision making. In other words, the positive attitudes were only regarding specific aspects, such as financial and administrative. The teachers find this kind of involvement helpful and beneficial, as long as the parents are compliant and are willing to respond to their instructions.

Peters M [6] stated that levels of parental involvement vary among parents, for example, mothers, parents of young children, Black / Black British parents, parents of children with a statement of Special Educational Needs are all more likely than average to be very involved in their child's education.

Davis-Kean and Schnabel [7] indicated that parental education influences expectations, in that having higher parental education is significantly related to having higher expectations of children's achievement. However, it is also likely that parents with higher education have higher attaining children for whom they have higher expectations.

A literature review by Gutman and Akerman[8] found that most parents have high aspirations for their young children; however these aspirations are likely to change as children grow older because of economic constraints, children's abilities and the availability of opportunities.

Charles Desforges [9] suggested that the extent of parental involvement diminishes as the child gets older and is strongly influenced at all ages by the child characteristic-

lytaking a very active mediating role.

Raffaele and Knoff [10] have shown that unless a whole-community, strategic approach to

parental involvement is undertaken, and unless this work is embedded in the school's teaching and learning strategy and development plan, little return on effort can be expected. Outside this strategic approach, parental involvement activities tend to be ad-hoc, short term and to lack follow through.

Ghate and Ramella [11] acknowledged that parenting programmes do afford optimism and 'programmes of short duration, coming comparatively late in young people's lives ... might have helped 'apply the brakes' on a sharp downward course'.

Ramirez [12] suggested that although the teachers desire parents to be involved in their children's education, it is not as important to respond or communicate with the parents of the students.

The findings indicate that majority of the students, teachers, parents and management are aware of the conduction and purpose of PTM being conducted in the institute. Also students, teachers, parents and management approved the usefulness of PTM and its helpfulness in better teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Thus our findings are in concordance with other studies which highlight the positive attitude of the stakeholders to identify and understand issues.[13,14]

Most of the stake holders in our study favoured that such PTA's should be organised once in a year. Although there was consistency in the method of communicating about the PTM to the parents and the students, a major information collected was that the attendance of parents and students for the PTM decreased substantially as they went to their higher classes. This is strongly indicative of the fact that the reason is not miscommunication. The major hindrance for the absence was the time constraint of the parents followed by the feedback of the student to the parents regarding the PTM being non compulsory.

Whatever may be the reasons for large absenteeism in PTM's of higher classes the efforts required to organize such interactions in the form of time, man-hours and man power is huge and hence it is a matter of more extensive study on whether such activities have usefulness only in first and second year and should not be ventured for higher classes.

Table I
Inputs of students regarding parent teacher meetings

	First MBBS(n=145)	Second MBBS(n=120)	Final MBBS(n=85)
Awareness of meeting	145(100%)	120(100%)	85(100%)
Purpose of meeting:			
Academic progress, attendance, others	145(100%)	120(100%)	85(100%)
Agree to Usefulness of meeting	52(35.9%)	4(3.3%)	None
Whether Frequency of meeting sufficient	145(100%)	120(100%)	85(100%)

No of students attending PTM	91(62.8%)	5(4.2%)	Never
Reasons for not attending –absence of parent	54(37.2%)	120(100%)	85(100%)
Communication from college about PTM received	145(100%)	114(95%)	80(94%)
discussion of problems be in front of parent and teacher	Not important: 23(15.9%) Slightly important:122(84.1%)	Slightly important:120(100%)	Not important: 68(80%) Slightly important:17(20%)
PTM and student achievement	145(100%)	120(100%)	85(100%)
PTM and teacher effectiveness	145(100%)	120(100%)	85(100%)

Awareness of meeting	40(48.8%)
Parental involvement important for maintenance of rapport of a medical college	82(100%)
PTM and teacher effectiveness	82(100%)
PTM helps in assisting ward in education	82(100%)
PTM and student achievement	82(100%)
Communication from college about PTM properly sent	No comments
Communication not taken seriously by parents	58(70.7%)
Whether Frequency of meeting sufficient	66(80.5%)
Whether PTM structured	40(48.8%)
Agree to Usefulness of meeting	82(100%)
Is it important to talk of problems of students in front of both teachers and parents	82(100%)

Table II
Inputs of parents regarding parent teacher meetings

	First MBBS(n=134)	Second MBBS(n=53)	Final MBBS(n=40)
Awareness of meeting	134(100%)	53(100%)	38(95%)
Purpose of meeting:			
Academic progress, attendance, others	134(100%)	39(73.6%)	40(100%)
Agree to Usefulness of meeting	134(100%)	53(100%)	40(100%)
Whether Frequency of meeting sufficient	25(18.6%)	53(100%)	40(100%)
No of parents attending PTM	98(73.13%)	8(15.1%)	Never
Reasons for not attending –			
a.time constraint	20(14.9%)	12(22.6%)	37(92.5%)
b.Ward says it is not compulsory	2(1.4%)	34(64.2%)	
Communication from college about PTM received	120(89.6%)	46(86.8%)	40(100%)
PTM and student achievement	134(100%)	53(100%)	40(100%)
PTM and teacher effectiveness	134(100%)	53(100%)	40(100%)

Table IV
Inputs of management regarding parent teacher meetings

	Management (n=10)
Awareness of meeting	7(70%)
Purpose of meeting:	
Academic progress, attendance, others	7(70%)
Usefulness of PTM in professional institute	10(100%)
Whether Frequency of meeting sufficient	No Should be taken twice in a year
Parental involvement important for maintenance of rapport of a medical college	10(100%)
Involvement of parents for policy setting processes	Agree:5(50%) Strongly agree(5(50%)

Table III
Inputs of teachers regarding parent teacher meetings

Teachers (n=82)

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