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Impact of Community Programs on The Students' Achievement: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Community programs and partnerships between schools and communities have been widely introduced to support students' academic pursuits; however, evidence of their effectiveness is often inconsistent, especially across different program frameworks and levels of involvement. This systematic review seeks to combine existing studies on the impact of organized community-based initiatives on students' academic performance, pinpoint the most effective program formats and engagement techniques, and provide evidence-based recommendations for educators and policymakers, particularly in low-resource and high-need environments. In accordance with PRISMA guidelines, a thorough search was conducted across several academic databases, including ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Research published from 2019 to 2025 was evaluated based on established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Of 68 records identified, eight peer-reviewed articles met the necessary methodological standards and were included in the final analysis. The results reveal that community programs significantly improve student educational outcomes not only by providing direct academic assistance but also by enhancing motivation, quality of teaching, school atmosphere, and support systems. Furthermore, partnerships integrated into the school curriculum and sustained over time yielded greater academic benefits than loosely structured or brief initiatives. The intensity of engagement characterized by shared leadership, consistent communication, and stable resources emerged as a vital element in the success of the programs. Nevertheless, contextual challenges such as insufficient funding, ineffective leadership, and poor coordination were identified as factors that undermine program effectiveness. In general, this review emphasizes that effectively designed community partnerships can significantly boost student achievement, yet their success relies on intentional structure, integration, and ongoing institutional backing.

Keywords: community programs, school–community partnerships, student academic achievement, learning outcomes, low-resource educational contexts

1. Introduction

Community programs have been increasingly utilized and adapted to support students' academic success. However, quantitative evidence on how different community-based programs and school–community partnerships influence measurable learning outcomes remains fragmented, inconsistent, and insufficiently synthesized, particularly across varying program structures and levels of community engagement. This lack of consolidated empirical evidence limits educators' and policymakers' ability to identify which community programs are most effective at improving academic performance, especially in low-resource, high-need educational contexts.

In Indonesia, community involvement and school-community collaborations enhance student learning outcomes by increasing parental participation, motivation to learn, and academic support. Research on Indonesian public and rural schools indicates that structured community programs, such as parent-teacher collaborations and partnerships with local organizations, are associated with measurable improvements in students' academic performance, including test scores and classroom achievement. Nonetheless, data show significant diversity in outcomes due to changes in program design, implementation quality, and stakeholder participation levels, underscoring the importance of rigorously synthesizing quantitative evidence across diverse contexts (Chen, Kuo, & Smith, 2023).

Evidence from diverse developing environments highlights both the promise and the limitations of community-based interventions. In Burkina Faso, West Africa, Sanfo (2020) found that community participation was positively associated with primary school children's learning outcomes; however, the magnitude of this impact depended on the community's ability to provide ongoing support and resources. Similarly, a qualitative case study in Ghana's Yendi Municipality found that poor school leadership, insufficient funding, and poor communication greatly hampered meaningful community involvement, limiting children's academic success (Damwah, 2025). These studies demonstrate that, while community engagement can improve academic success, program effectiveness is heavily influenced by structural constraints and implementation quality.

Given the growing reliance on community-based programs to address academic underperformance and educational disparities, particularly in low- and high-resource settings, there is an urgent need to rigorously synthesize quantitative information on their efficacy. A comprehensive evaluation is required to reconcile disparate findings, compare community program structures, and determine engagement tactics that consistently increase measured academic outcomes. This study intends to provide evidence-based insights to schools, educators, and policymakers on how to promote community-school collaborations that effectively improve children's academic achievement.

1.1 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to comprehensively review, synthesize, and critically evaluate existing empirical research regarding the impact of structured community-based programs on students' academic performance. More explicitly, this systematic review sought to answer the following objectives:

1. Identify the impact of various community programs and school–community partnerships on student learning outcomes.
2. Determine the program structures and community engagement strategies that most effectively enhance academic performance; and
3. Provide evidence-based insights to inform schools, educators, and policymakers in enhancing community–school partnerships, especially in low-resource, high-need environments.

2. Literature Review

Community programs play a pivotal role in supporting and nurturing students' academic success by providing additional learning opportunities, mentorship, community activities, and resources beyond the classroom walls. Sarah et al. (2023) disclosed that community

involvement helps motivate students and strengthen the learning environment. Thus, it demonstrates that community-based partnerships play a crucial role in fostering quality learning and advancing student achievement.

In recent years, community programs have been increasingly used and adapted to aid students' academic achievement across various educational settings. These programs offer learners extra learning opportunities, mentorship, academic support, and access to resources outside the standard classroom environment. However, despite their widespread implementation, quantitative evidence on the impact of different community-based initiatives and school-community collaborations on measurable learning outcomes remains fragmented, inconsistent, and poorly compiled, especially across diverse program formats and levels of community involvement. Consequently, this lack of unified empirical evidence restricts educators and policymakers from identifying which community programs effectively enhance academic performance, particularly in low-resource and high-need educational environments.

In Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, community engagement and collaborations between schools and communities have been shown to improve student learning outcomes by boosting parental participation, motivation, and academic support. Research conducted in public and rural schools suggests that organized community programs, such as collaborations between parents and teachers and partnerships with local organizations, are associated with observable improvements in students' academic outcomes, including test scores and classroom performance (Sarah et al., 2023). Nevertheless, considerable variation in outcomes has been observed, largely due to differences in program design, implementation quality, and stakeholder engagement levels. As a result, this underscores the need for a thorough synthesis of quantitative evidence across contexts to identify which models of community participation are most effective (Chen, Kuo, & Smith, 2023).

Similarly, findings from developing regions further highlight both the advantages and challenges of community-based interventions. In Burkina Faso, Sanfo (2020) found that community involvement was positively correlated with primary school students' learning outcomes; however, the strength of this correlation depended on the presence of ongoing support and local resources. Similarly, a qualitative case study in the Yendi Municipality of Ghana found that ineffective school leadership, insufficient funding, and poor communication substantially obstructed meaningful community engagement, thereby limiting students' academic advancement (Damwah, 2025). Collectively, these findings indicate that while community participation can enhance academic achievement, its effectiveness is heavily influenced by structural conditions and the quality of implementation.

Beyond direct educational benefits, community partnerships also enhance overall educational progress by reinforcing learning environments. Sarah et al. (2023) found that community involvement improves teaching quality, thereby boosting student motivation and academic success. This suggests that community programs impact achievement not just by providing additional academic support but also by enhancing teaching practices and engaging students in the classroom. Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) found that students who participated in organized community service programs outperformed those who did not in reading, with specifically designed in-school services yielding the greatest improvements. Their results highlight the importance of program structure and delivery methods in shaping educational outcomes.

Furthermore, studies across various settings indicate that community engagement also fosters non-cognitive development in students, thereby supporting their academic success.

Park, Kim, and Chai (2023) found that partnerships among schools, families, and communities enhanced both cognitive outcomes (academic performance) and non-cognitive outcomes, including self-efficacy and motivation. Nonetheless, they observed that such partnerships do not completely eliminate educational disparities associated with family background. Therefore, these results emphasize the necessity for additional equity-focused interventions alongside community-based initiatives.

Although there is an expanding body of evidence advocating community participation, earlier research primarily focused on isolated or context-specific forms of engagement. This has created a gap in understanding the exact mechanisms by which structured community programs affect measurable academic results. Additionally, inconsistencies in definitions, assessment methods, and implementation strategies hinder the identification of best practices. Research consistently points out that community involvement remains inconsistent, often limited by scarce resources, ineffective leadership, and inadequate coordination (Sanfo, 2020; Sivananthan & Wedikandage, 2023; Damwah, 2025).

In light of these challenges and the increasing reliance on community-centered programs to address academic underachievement and educational inequalities, especially in low-resource, high-need areas, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive synthesis of quantitative and empirical data. Such a synthesis is necessary to reconcile differing findings, compare program structures, and pinpoint engagement strategies that reliably lead to improved academic results.

To address this necessity, this systematic review aims to critically evaluate and integrate recent findings on the impact of community programs on student achievement. In doing so, it seeks to identify successful program models and clarify the circumstances under which they thrive. Ultimately, this research aspires to provide evidence-based recommendations for schools, educators, and policymakers to strengthen school-community partnerships that effectively enhance students' academic performance.

3. Methodology

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR), a highly regarded research method. SLR closely adheres to scientific principles by identifying, evaluating, and consolidating the most pertinent evidence related to the research objective, thereby offering informative, evidence-based insights.

A systematic search strategy for articles published on the impact of community programs on the students' achievement was performed in ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, Research Rabbit, Science Direct, Scholar.Kyoobobook, Abjournals, Dominican Scholar, Digital Commons, ResearchGate, Sage Journals, AERA, and Scispace.

The authors devised a systematic review protocol using specific search terms, employing both "text word searching" and truncation. The following search terms were used: "impact of community programs on students' achievement" and "effects of community programs on students' achievement." Searching for keywords or phrases is anywhere in the document's citation (article title, journal name), not the article's full text. The truncation search technique is used to broaden search results by finding variations of a word, such as "impact", "effects," "community services," and "community programs." These approaches aimed to comprehensively gather relevant literature on the impact of community programs on the students' achievement within the specified context.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

All original research articles on the impact of community programs on the students' achievement, fulfilling the following eligibility criteria, were included:

- i. Articles conducted outside of the country.
- ii. Studies examining community-school partnerships, community-based programs, after-school programs, or community services related to student learning or achievement.
- iii. Articles published in peer-reviewed journals, in English, from 2019 to 2025.

All articles with the following criteria were excluded:

- i. Articles falling outside of the impact of community programs on the students' achievement.
- ii. Articles published before the year 2019.
- iii. Commentaries, review documents, letters, discussion papers, posters, conference abstracts, and congress reports.
- iv. Articles not published in peer-reviewed journals and articles with no full text available.

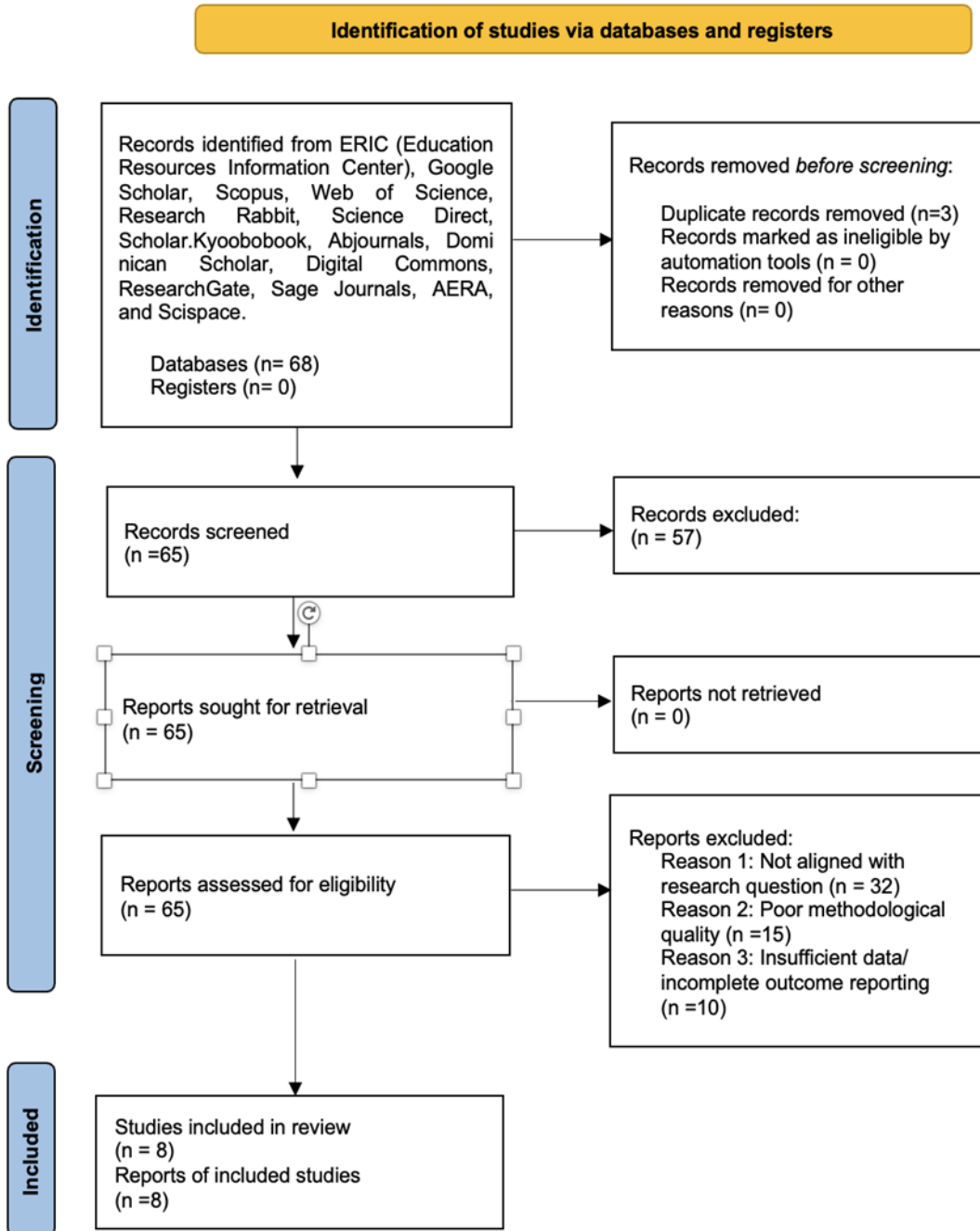
Database searches across several scholarly sources yielded 68 results. Three duplicate studies were eliminated at the first identification stage, leaving 65 distinct records that moved on to screening. 57 papers were eliminated for failing to meet the review's inclusion criteria after all 65 records were examined using titles and abstracts.

To determine eligibility, all 65 remaining full-text reports were located and obtained. 57 research articles were disqualified during the eligibility phase for the following reasons:

- i. 32 were not aligned with the research question,
- ii. 15 demonstrated poor methodological quality, and
- iii. 10 lacked sufficient data or had incomplete outcome reporting.

After applying all inclusion and exclusion criteria, 8 studies met the methodological rigor and relevance criteria. These studies were therefore included in the final review and used to synthesize evidence on how structured community programs support student learning.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow of information through the phases of the systematic review, showing the number of records identified, screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the final review.



4. Results

Table 1. *Characteristics and key findings of the studies included in this systematic literature review, including authorship, study titles, study designs, sample populations, and main results.*

Author (Year)	Title of the Study	Country	Study Design	Sample/ Population	Key findings
Sarah, W. V., Ismanto, B., & Sanoto, H. (2023)	Exploring the Role of Community-Based Partnership for Enhancing Academic Achievement: Empowering Students Through Quality Teaching	Indonesia	Quantitative correlational study; survey and CFA using Structural Equation Modeling (AMOS 26.0)	189 teachers from junior and senior high schools in Siborong-Siborong sub-district, North Sumatra	Community-based partnerships significantly improved teaching quality, thereby enhancing students' academic achievement and motivation through collaboration among schools, communities, and teachers.
.-C., Kuo, N.-C., & Smith, B. (2023)	Exploring the Impacts of Community Services on Student Reading Achievement in a Title I School	United States	Quasi-experimental, two-phase post-hoc design; i-Ready reading assessment; t-tests, regression, and ANOVA	347 elementary students (ages 5–10) in a Title I school	Students who received community services had significantly higher winter reading percentile rankings than those who did not. Targeted in-school services produced the greatest improvements compared to afterschool, holistic in-school, and in-home services.
Sanfo, M. B. J.-B. (2020)	Leaving no place behind: Community participation and primary school students' learning achievements in Burkina Faso's small-scale gold mining communities	Burkina Faso	Quantitative study using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) and standardized test data	The sample used in this study contains observations on 70 schools and 1273 students.	Community participation in school life is positively associated with students' learning achievements. However, the strength of the association varies depending on which community members are involved and whether local communities have adequate resources to support schools.
Sivanathan & Wedikandage (2023)	The Impact of Community Contribution on the Academic Achievement of Students	Sri Lanka	Quantitative descriptive survey design	10 principals, 10 deputy principals, 40 teachers, 20 parents, 20 past pupils (purposive sampling)	Community contribution to schools is currently low; school actions to enhance community involvement are high; school actions moderately improve community contribution; community contribution has a moderately positive effect on students' academic achievement; stronger school–community relationships lead to higher student achievement.
Mihee Park, Jinhee Kim, & Yourim Chai (2023)	The Effects of the School–Family–Community Partnerships on Students' Outcomes	South Korea	Quantitative longitudinal study using a three-level growth curve model	Gyeonggi Education Panel (4th–6th waves, 2015–2017); first grade middle	Parental involvement and community engagement significantly improve cognitive (academic achievement) and non-cognitive (self-efficacy)

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Author (Year)	Title of the Study	Country	Study Design	Sample/ Population	Key findings
				school students	outcomes; strong community–school connections promote student growth; partnerships do not reduce educational gaps caused by family background; teacher cooperation shows no significant effect.
Agape Kanyiri Damwah (2025)	Exploring the Effect of School-Community Relationship on Students’ Academic Performance	Yendi Municipality, Ghana	Qualitative case study	60 participants (focus group discussions + interviews)	Low community involvement in school management due to weak communication, insufficient funding, and poor leadership; low involvement negatively affects JHS students’ academic performance; improving communication, strengthening school–community partnerships, and securing resources enhances outcomes.
Thomson & Beard (2019)	Positive Parent and Community Engagement: A Case Study of an Urban District and Student Well-Being	Canada (Presentation location: Toronto; Study based on an urban district in the U.S. – Columbus City Schools)	Qualitative (Eleven semi-structured interviews analyzed)	Eleven (11) district and community leaders	Family and community engagement activities positively supported student well-being and academic achievement. Focus on attendance and well-being preceded higher achievement gains. Nine insights informed a positive parent & community engagement plan. Strategic recommendations help Urban districts engage families to improve well-being and achievement. Interdisciplinary evidence and narratives support leadership and engagement practices.
Hikmat (2025)	Social Capital and Student Achievement: A Systematic Literature Review of Family, Community, and Institutional Influences	Indonesia	Systematic Literature Review	N/A	Social capital influences student achievement across family, community, and institutional domains. Family involvement is the strongest determinant; community and institutional factors provide additional significant impacts. Emphasizes the need for a holistic, integrated framework.

The findings of this review indicate that community programs and school-community collaborations significantly influence student learning outcomes in various ways. Instead of solely enhancing academic performance through direct assistance, these partnerships improve overall learning environments by boosting student motivation, fortifying academic support networks, enhancing school climate, and raising the quality of instruction (Sarah et al., 2023; Park et al., 2023). These indirect pathways help clarify why community involvement can result in notable academic improvements, even in the absence of explicitly educational programs. By explaining how these outcomes occur, the review fills a notable gap in the research, which has often reported positive results without adequately addressing the underlying mechanisms. Thus, student achievement is revealed not just as a classroom occurrence but as the outcome of an interconnected learning ecosystem influenced by social and institutional resources.

The findings also illustrate that the success of community collaborations heavily relies on their design and execution. Programs seamlessly integrated into the school day, closely aligned with learning objectives, and sustained through ongoing collaboration were found to yield greater academic improvements than loosely affiliated after-school or home-based initiatives (Chen et al., 2023). Furthermore, the level of engagement defined by ongoing communication, shared leadership, and mutual accountability was found to be more significant than the sheer number of involved stakeholders (Sanfo, 2020; Sivananthan & Wedikandage, 2023). These findings refine the current literature by demonstrating that meaningful integration, rather than simple participation, determines program effectiveness. By pinpointing particular structural and relational elements linked to improved outcomes, the review directly addresses calls for clearer evidence regarding the most effective types of partnerships and their rationale.

Lastly, the findings carry important implications for educators and policymakers, especially in resource-limited, high-need settings where community partnerships often serve as vital support systems. While these collaborations are often touted as cost-effective solutions, the evidence suggests that their effectiveness diminishes without clear coordination, sufficient funding, and effective communication frameworks (Damwah, 2025). Conversely, well-designed partnerships can enhance instructional capacity, close opportunity gaps, and foster more equitable learning environments (Park et al., 2023). These insights stress that partnerships must be purposefully designed, properly funded, and continuously assessed to achieve effectiveness. For educators, this emphasizes the importance of viewing community engagement as an instructional resource rather than a secondary activity, while for policymakers, it highlights the necessity of standardized frameworks and long-term investment in sustainable collaboration models.

5. Conclusion

The study shows that community-based partnerships and programs frequently increase student academic performance, both directly through focused learning assistance and indirectly through improved teacher quality, motivation, and school-community engagement. Evidence suggests that well-organized and well-supported programs can greatly improve learning, especially in low-resource settings, even though the types and efficacy of community involvement vary by context. The evaluation also emphasizes the ongoing need for more thorough, systematic research to inform the creation and execution of programs. To maximize the beneficial effects of community activities on school achievement, communication, resource allocation, and collaboration mechanisms must be strengthened.

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