



Influence Of Parental Involvement On Children Academic Activities In Promoting Academic Performance In Primary School: A Case Study Of Sokoto North Local Government

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ABSTRACT

Primary school provides the foundational building blocks for the development of children in all aspects of intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral development. Parent's involvement in a child's education is critical to the overall academic success of the child, concerning homework and assignment for academic excellence. The study investigated the impact of parent-child discussion of school activities in relation to homework on academic performance of secondary school students in Sokoto North Local government of Sokoto state, Nigeria. A cross-sectional research design was used adopting quantitative and qualitative research approach design which interview and questionnaire were used to collect data. The population was 1590 from which a sample of 110 respondents was selected using simple and purposive sampling techniques. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation co-efficient). While in qualitative methodological approach the data was thematically analysed. Findings in this study revealed that there is significant impact between parent-child discussion, homework and students' academic performance of secondary schools students, and there is also a significant relationship between parental child discussion of school activities and their academic performance. The findings also revealed that parental support, offering assistance with homework, encouragement monitoring of their academic progress can have a positive effect on children academic performance. The study recommends that teachers, educationists and leaders should create awareness in parents on the importance of the home environment learning such as assisting the children with homework, mentoring, coaching and guidance, which can lead to higher academic grades on academic performance of their children.

Keywords: Parent-Child Discussion, Activities, Homework, Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement has been defined and measured in multiple ways including activities that parent engages in at home and at school and positive attitude parents have towards their children's education (Lengua & McMahon, 2000). In other words, parental involvement is one factor that has been consistently related to a child's increased academic performance (Hill & Craft, 2003). The influence of parent involvement on academic success has not only been noted among researchers, but also among policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement into broader educational policy initiative (Entwisle & Epstein, 2001). The role of parental involvement in children's education has become a central issue in educational policy and research.

Parents play a crucial role in both the home and school environments. In general parental involvement is associated with children's higher achievement in language and mathematics, enrolment in more challenging programs, greater academic persistence, better behavior, better social skills and adaptation to school, better attendance and lower drop-out rates (Hernderson & Mapp, 2002). It is observed that parental involvement with children from early age has been found to equate with better outcomes especially in building their personalities, parents are primarily guides to them, and children try to copy them, and considered them that they are always right, so parents can shape their life as they can. Their involvement has positive impact on children's academic performance even when the background factor of such as social class, family size, has been taken into account (Earnest, Santos & Schneider, 2004).

Parental involvement is beneficial in improving children academic performance, evidence was found that greater parental involvement can lead to higher academic grades and academic excellence. Creating a positive learning environment is also important for child academic performance. Parent should make sure to create an atmosphere for learning such as providing space for reading, improvising learning materials and setting daily schedules in assisting their children. However, framing their children's education experience positively increase their academic performance.

Therefore parental involvement in education of their children has been significantly linked with the quality of education and academic performance of children. It may further contribute to mitigating the mass level failure of students in examinations that may indirectly cause wastage of parents' own resources as well as the public expenditure for imparting formal education in schools. For example, if 50 Percent of students fail examinations means loss of half of the public budget spent on educating the students and parents expenditure for purchasing books and other allied expenses for educating their children. Parental involvement in academic activities of their children may not only save personal and public spending but also it would contribute in improving the quality of education of children at individual and national level and also motivate the teachers to dedicate themselves in their duties in the classroom.

In order to inculcate knowledge in the minds of the students and to transfer knowledge to next generation; as we all know in Nigeria, secondary school is a defining stage or level of education and it is also a defining background especially in current education situation in Sokoto state where primary schools are needed to be reshuffled for both teaching and learning process in order to give the student an effective knowledge. In this regard measures have been taken to bridge the gap by given chances to some stake holders to intervene in school activates so us to came up with different strategies that will help in the process to give a proper knowledge to the children, since the primary school is the first stage that needs more concentration; therefore parental involvement in school activities need to be adopted according to the needs of the students so that proper guidance in learning can be given to them for effective academic performance.

Statement of the problem

It has been assumed that academic performance of students may not only depend on the quality of schools and the teachers, rather the extent of parental involvement has vital role to play in academic performance of their children (Bryan, et al., 2005). Parents are expected to be involved in their children's academic activities such as discussion about school activities, which is proved to be stronger predictor of academic performance from the family especially at home (Deslandes, Kimberly & Young, 1999). It has been observable and usually occurred so many times; the performance in the education sector has been greatly affected by many factors including the low parental involvement in education among others in Sokoto state. This might have led to the poor academic performance of some secondary school students in Sokoto north local government especially in the public secondary schools. This is what calls the attention of the researcher to carry out this research to find out the role that parental involvement plays in the academic performance of their children.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this research was to find out the influence of parental involvement on children academic activities in promoting academic performance in primary school: a case study of Sokoto north local government.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

MacNeal (2009) writes that parent-child discussion about school refers to ongoing conversations between parents and their children concerning school-related activities, programs, near and long-term school plans, and other academic issues. He further stated that it is the only dimension of parental involvement that was associated with improved academic performance and reduce problematic behavior (e.g. truancy).

In fact, levels of home discussion about school activities are relatively consistent across ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and family structure and between schools. This underscores the importance of education policy that focuses on supporting home-based discussion; policy that focuses on home discussion is more likely to be useful to all parents, rather than only those parents who choose to be involved at school (Williams, 2006).

In another view, Desimone (2008) indicates that parent-child discussion reap greater reward for children of high socio-economic status on their academic performance, because of their parental involvement. But other studies like Diersen (2008) stated that understanding the differential influence of parent-child discussion by socio-economic status is critical for policy decisions. If the influence of parent-child discussion exert greater rewards among students of high universal parental involvement interventions will actually tend to exacerbate the socio-economic status gap in academic performance. If on the contrary, the influence is greater among students of low socio-economic status families, then parental involvement programs can contribute to reduce academic inequalities associated with family background.

However, Epstein and Lee (2008) asserted that parent-child discussion is not as beneficial for children from poor families as affluent families. One possible explanation for this is that poor families are overwhelmed with so many hardships that depress academic performance that parent-child discussion can affect school work little. Furthermore, even if parent-child discussions are prevalent in low income households, there are still so many other prevailing issues, that it may not be enough to foster a significant change in academic performance of the children.

Consequently, this revealed that in non-poverty household when parents usually discuss with their children about school activities is has a positive influence on their children's academic performance. Therefore the effect of parent-child discussion appears to be more valuable for children who do not live in poverty. This could also be that there are so many other negative problems present in poverty stricken families, that even if parent do discuss with their children it really does not have a large effect on their children performance in school. Also the type of talk or why the parents discuss with their children about certain school activities or issue may be important factor. It is plausible that parent discuss with the children about grades but are yelling at them for not doing well in school (Hart & Resley, 2008). They further stated that children from poor families hear larger amounts of discouragement rather than encouragements. One thing to consider from all of the above views on this issue is that there is no specific indication of reliability of their view on this variable since none of them mention supportive measures that their saying is from empirical finding. Because family poverty is dichotomous it is not all equal there are either above the poverty or below the poverty, this should take into account in explaining the socio-economic status.

From the above views on this issue is that parents' socio-economic status even though plays a vital role on the children's academic performance where the parent will not be able to fulfil the entire requirement for their children's education but sometime they try to the best of their incomes to satisfied the basic need and insist the children to perform well in school. Because family poverty is

dichotomous it is not all equal there are some who are of lower class and middle class that earn little income to hold their family even though it is not enough.

Heckman (2007) conducted an experimental research on educational achievement beyond the classroom. He concluded that educational achievement depends on more than what takes place within school walls. He indicates that characteristics outside the formal educational setting or non-school factors also have a lot to do with whether children and adolescents are successful in school. The research was conducted in Europe and found that children whose parents got involved in their school activities especially parent-child discussion about school issues during the early childhood have high measures of cognitive ability during the early childhood years and eventually reach high levels of educational attainment.

Contrary to the above Keith, Darwin and Burch (2014) carried out longitudinal surveys research in American families and obtained demographic information on race, ethnicity and socio-economic status, the academic outcomes of the children as well as the information about the level of parental involvement. After comparing the average achievement of children whose parents regularly engage in each parental involvement to that of their counterparts whose parents do not, they found that most forms of parental involvement especially discussion of their school activities yielded no benefit to children's test scores on grades, regardless of racial or ethnic background or socio-economic standard. They further stated that in fact there were more instances in which children had higher levels of achievement when their parent were less involved than there were among those whose parents were more involved.

Huston and Ripke (2008) also asserted that children and teens are more likely to excel academically when parents set high academic standards and are highly involved in their daily lives especially having close relationship such as discussion with their parent about their school activities and their problems and feel that their parents provide them with emotional support. Such children have better academic performance, fewer suspensions, and higher levels of social competence than students without close parental relationships.

Considering the fact that discussion is another form of modelling approach of the children's behaviour in psychology, to some extent discussion with children at early elementary level will enhance their ability and also boost their competency and performance, so also to the teenagers it will help them to develop moral and aptitude and be able to choose the peer to belong to.

This study used a cross-sectional survey research design which involves gathering information on the entire population under the study at a single point in time. The researcher was interested in collecting information on groups of people with the same characteristics within the population, or on different issues (Ogundele, 2011). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to obtain the information needed in this research. It was consider finding out the impact of parent child discussion of school activities and academic performance in Sokoto North local government area of Sokoto state. The population of the study comprise 1590 secondary school students within the municipality of the study area from which the data necessary for the completion of this research was obtain. A sample of 110 respondents was considered in the selected secondary schools Sokoto Municipality. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview guide. The questionnaire was distributed to the students and it was based on likert scale; while the Interview guide was used for the parents and it was structured interview where the researcher asked each interviewee the same set of standardized questions based on the subject of study.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The data generated from the response of the participants in this study was analysed using the descriptive statistical table of percentage. The analyses of the findings are as follows:

Table 1.1 Parents often discuss with their children about school activities at home

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	16	15.0
Disagree	14	10.0
Neutral	14	10.0
Agree	30	40.0
Strongly agree	28	25.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2022

In table 1.1 above, it is indicated that 30(40%) of the respondents agreed that parents often visit the school to discuss about their children’s activities in the school, 28 (25%) of them strongly agreed, 16 (15%) were strongly disagreed while 14 (10%) disagree and another 14 (10%) were neutral. Therefore majority of the respondents agreed that parents often discuss with their children about school activities at home. Since the majority of the respondents were all agreed, it implies that parental child discuss about school activities at home has a relationship with their children’s academic performance. This is in line with Lengua & McMahon (2000) that parental involvement measured in multiple ways including the activities that parents engaged in at home and at school and the positive attitude the parents have towards their children’s academic performance.

Table 1.2 Parents often discuss with their children about their test or examination scores

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	14	10.0
Disagree	15	12.0
Neutral	18	16.0
Agree	27	32.0
Strongly agree	26	30.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2022

The above table 1.2 shows that 27 (32%) of the respondents agreed that parents often discuss with their children about their test or examination scores, 26 (30%) strongly agreed, 18 (16%) were neutral while 15 (12%) disagreed and another 14 (10%) were strongly disagree. Since majority of the respondents agreed, this implies that parents often discuss with their children about their test or examination scores. This is an indication that parents were involved into their children’s academic activities through discussion which also shows that it has a relationship with the pupils academic performance. This is in divergence with Keith, Darwin & Bruch (2014) who stated that parental involvement through discussion about children’s test scores yielded no benefit to their children.

Table 1.3 Parents usually discuss with children about their children’s wellbeing in the school and home

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	14	10.0
Disagree	15	16.0
Neutral	19	18.0
Agree	24	26.0
Strongly agree	28	30.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2022

Table 1.3 above shows that 28 (30%) strongly agreed that parents usually discuss with children about their children’s wellbeing in the school and home, 24 (26%) agreed, 19 (18%) were neutral, 15 (16%) disagreed while 14 (15%) of the respondents were disagreed. This indicates by the majority of the respondents agreed that parents usually discuss with children about their children’s wellbeing in the school and home. This implies that parents were involved in to their children’s academic activities through discussion about their children’s wellbeing in the school and home. This is in convergence with Abagi (2006) who asserted that parents’ contribution to their children’s academic performance is not only dependent on the communication they hold with their children but also caring for the children’s health and nutrition and listening to their children’s need.

Presentation of interview with Parents on discussion about school activities with children

To support the above data presentation, interview conducted with the parents indicated that parents were involved into discussion with their children at home as most of the parents interviewed acknowledge that they were engaged in discussion with their children. One of the parents said:

“I usually discuss with my child about school activities” (P1)

In addition another parent stated that:

“I involve my- self in discuss with my child most of the time to see his intellectuality in other to guide him on his assignment as per as his homework in order to have good performance” (P2)

Another pupil said:

“Yes I usually engaged with my child for his class lessons, I also assist him to do his home work perfectly” (P3)

This can be an indication that parents do involve themselves into their children’s academic activities in Sokoto North municipality which has a relationship with the performance of the children. When parents show concern to their children in their academic activities, the children might perform better academically than those whose parents are not. Therefore there is a possibility for the children to be scoring lower marks when the parents have no concern about what is happening at the school.

Furthermore the parent when they were asked during the interview conducted claimed that they had been in the school to discuss about their children’s academic progress. One of the parents stated that:

“I usually time to time go to the school to discuss about my child’s academic activities as well academic performance during visitation I use to enquire about his assignment, home work performance” (P5)

In another related development one of the parent added that:

“Actually I visit the school to discuss with the head teacher about my child academic progress during career day as well as advising the teachers on frequent homework and assignment for the children” (P6)

Another parent stated that:

“I usually go to the school to enquire my children academic progress every month. I always used to assist them as well as guide them on their homework and assignment which is part of making them to become successful in their education” (P10)

Additionally another parent said:

“When I notice that my son doesn’t want to go to school I would go and ask if there is problem there in the school. I always monitor the performance of my children time to time to find out their academic progress” (P4)

Therefore it is an indication that the parents do engage in discussion with their children about their school activities at home, before going to discuss anything about their children’s academic performance at the school. This was further evidence that parents played an active role to ensure academic performance of their children. Children’s academic needs keep on changing regularly. This finding is consistent with finding of Williams (2002) who stated that simply discussing with kids about school activities have more of an effect than contact between parents and school and parental volunteering. Similarly this finding is also coincide with the finding of Jeynes (2005) who asserted that discussion with children about school activities had a greatest impact on student academic performance when parents consistently communicate their belief in their children’s potential and communicate that they expect them to be able to succeed academically, students do better.

Table 2.1 Summary of Pupils Examination Scores from Three Schools in the Sokoto North municipality

	Frequency	Percent
0-79 Fail	20	24.2
121-159 Pass	37	36.7
160 above Excellent	43	39.2
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2022

Table 2.1 above gives the breakdown of students’ second term examination scores for JSS1, SS1, and SS3 in the selected secondary schools in Sokoto North municipality for the period of 2019.

Table 2.2 Relationship between Parental Discussion with children about school activities and students' Academic Performance

		Parental discussion with children about their school activities	Academic Performance
Parental discussion with children about their school activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.235
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	100	100
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.235	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	100	100

Source: Primary Data 2022

The table 4.15 above is the result of Pearson Correlation analysis shows a significant relationship between the parental discussion with children about Pupils' homework and academic performance of the pupils by given the low positive value of the computed correlated index (.235). The P-value (0.04) being less than the significant alpha $P < 0.05$ indicates that the results were statistically significant. The result implies that parental discussion have had low significant relationship on the academic performance of their children in Sokoto North municipality. According to Cohen (1988), this suggests that there is low positive significant relationship between the parental discussion with children about school activities and academic performance of the students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the Correlation analysis the study found out that there is significant relationship between the Parents discussion about school activities such as homework, assignment and pupils' academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected given the computed correlated index .235 at the P-value of 0.04. Interview conducted in this researcher also shows that there is relationship between the parental involvement and pupils' academic performance through discussion of the school activities such as guidance, assistance, mentoring, couching between the parents and their children and parents with teachers.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the amount of time and effort that parent put into helping their children in their academic work has been shown have an effect on children academic performance, the way parent engaged with their kids in home learning environment can have a lasting impact on their academic performance.

Majority of the parents interviewed claimed to be involved in discussions about their children's academic progress with the teachers while in other hand pupils also confirm that they usually engage into discussion with their parents about their school activities at home. This was further evidence that parents played an active role in ensuring positive academic performance of their children. Children's academic needs keeps on changing regularly. Parents and teachers therefore need to be continuously met more often to discuss the progress of a child with the view of assessing the progress of the child.

Finally the findings of this study point to the bean of more holistic approach that takes into account both the content of the home work and the involvement of the parent in order to maximize the potential for positive and excellent outcome of their children in relation to their academic performance.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, parent can use many strategies to help their children to be successful academically in secondary school. These strategies include setting a good example, providing support emphasizing the importance of good study habit, and having conversations with their children about their academic performance toward ensuring they succeed in their educational qualification pursuance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parent should take part in to assisting children on their homework, assignment as well as guiding and mentoring them coaching and helping them on problem solving with regard to their activities for excellent performance.

Parent should realized that education is vital in the life of everyone, it liberate humans from the chains of illiteracy so proper guidance should be at forefront towards ensuring children academic excellent.

Parent should guide, assist and mentor their children on their educational activities which in turn can shape their mind and intellect as well as their

Parental involvement in children academic activities will prepare them to become more serious in relation to their studies and school activities

Parents should actively engaged in child discussion about school activities builds a healthy relationship with his teachers as well as to supervise child academic performance.

Findings of this study can be used by primary school teachers, school counsellors and parents, to enhance the learning and academic performance of children.

Many parents may not be aware of the importance of parental involvement at homes on the academic performance of their children. It is recommended that, teachers, educationists and leaders should try to create awareness in media to the parents on the importance of the participating of parent in assisting children home academic activities which can improve the children's excellent performance.

Parents need to be informed that they can contribute to the education of their children through discussion about school activities with their children and encourage them to fully concentrate during their lesson; this will help the children to become more active at their school.

Parents need to give their children chance to rest and play cautiously without putting too much pressure on the children which can cause psychological problems, which in turn may affect the child's academic performance.

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