

Extent of Parental School Involvement for Improved Pupils' Academic Performance in Anambra State

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Abstract

This paper examined the extent of parental school involvement for improved pupils' academic performance in Anambra State. Four research questions guided the study. The population of this study comprised all 2519 primary five teachers in 187 primary schools in Awka-North, Awka-South, Anocha, Dunukofia and Njikoka LGEAs. The sample size for the study comprised 172 primary five class teachers. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this study. At the first stage, 15% of the schools were sampled randomly from each LGEAs, making a total of 28 primary schools selected. At the second stage, all the primary five teachers in the sampled schools totaling 172 primary five class teachers formed the sample of the study. A structured questionnaire titled "Teachers' Response on Parental School Involvement (TRPSI) containing 33 items built on four clusters of B1 – B4. The instrument is structured on a four-point scale of VGE- Very Great Extent, GE- Great Extent, LE- Low Extent, VLE- Very Low Extent with nominal value of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to validation report by three experts. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to analyze the data to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded values of 0.84, 0.80, 0.87 and 0.78 respectively. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions posed in this study. The finding revealed that teachers rated to a great extent parental involvement in; child's home-school communication; school volunteering; child's home learning and school decision-making for improved pupils' performance. It was recommended amongst others that parents and guardians should create a good communication language style that will foster close interaction between the parents and the child as well as the parents and the school.

Keywords: Parents, performance, involvement, system.

Introduction

Parent involvement in children's education has become an important factor for building these parent-child relationships and improving children's path to educational success. Educational policies and organizations, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Parent Teacher Association, and the National Coalition for Parental Involvement in Education, have taken the issue further by promoting parental involvement in children's education (Domina, 2019; Pomerantz, Moorman & Litwack, 2017). In this regard, parental involvement can be defined as parents' participation in children's schooling by providing resources to children within a given domain, more specifically in the academic domain of children's lives. The most common forms of parental school involvement are parents attending school meetings, such as PTA meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.

Parents may also become involved with schools at a higher level, which can include becoming a member of the school board and attending school board meetings (Cassandra, 2019). The importance of parental school involvement as highlighted by Barry (2016) lies in the areas of; supporting their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations like parent-teacher conferences; involving themselves more in helping their children improve their school work; providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space; modeling desired behaviour (such as reading for pleasure); monitoring homework and actively tutoring their children at home. In other words, Olatoye and Agbatogun (2019) stressed that outside the home, importance of parental school involvement could be in areas like; advocating for the school; volunteering to help out with school activities or work in the classroom or taking active role(s) in governance and decision-making necessary for planning; developing and providing an education for the community's children.

According to the Epstein model, parental school involvement is outlined into four different indices which includes; communicating, volunteering, home learning and decision-making (Dumont, Trautwein, Ludtke, Neumann, Niggli & Schnyder, 2019; Galindo & Sheldon, 2017; Ouellette & Wilkerson, 2018). Communicating is an effective form of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programmes and children's progress in school. It provides various ways for parents to correspond with the school that will strengthen the family-school partnership and build the mutual responsibility for the children. A regular schedule of useful notices, memos, telephone calls, newsletters, and other communications must be in place (Dumont et al., 2019). It is important to note that when there is effective parent-school communication, it tends to enhance parents' participation in school activities. This act is what is regarded as volunteering.

Volunteering in the context of this study means parents helping with school events, extracurricular activities and attending Parent-Teacher Association meetings in their wards' school. It also means creating ways for families to be engaged in school activities. Vickie (2018) highlighted that volunteering increases parental involvement by making parents feel welcomed and making sure they know that their support and assistance is needed and greatly appreciated; provide opportunities for parents to work with pupils in small group settings, or with classroom presentations; allow parents to be present at staff meetings and share relevant information.

Therefore, learning at home as another index of parental involvement, supports learning activities at home that will reinforce school curriculum. It refers to the degree of discipline exerted by the parents to assist on homework completion and to limit potentially distracting activities (for example excessive watching of television) (Ouellette & Wilkerson, 2018). Imperatively, having parents from different background with different perspective of ensuring their wards' home learning will give the school a holistic view on how to make decisions as it pertains pupils from different socio-economic background.

Decision-making therefore is a process that includes the input of parents, teachers, administrators and community members in making decisions about how a school operates (Callison, 2018). It includes families in decision making at school meetings and associations. Finally, collaborating with community as another index of school involvement tailors family needs to meet community services. Annunziata and Liddle (2016) buttressed that it utilize knowledge that the parents in the community have to provide opportunities for them to obtain useful information and grant access to community programs/services that will benefit their children.

Each of the four constructs encompasses a variety of practices which lead to improved academic performance. Parental school involvement is an important determinant of students' academic performance. Dimbisso (2019) defined academic performance as what a learner is able to accomplish by execution of class work in school. Similarly, academic performance entails how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by the teacher in a fixed time or academic year. The idea behind academic performance is to determine one's ability by the degree of attainment in tasks, projects, courses or programmes. Academic performance shows the effectiveness of a programme in terms of students' outputs and in terms of understanding in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Academic performance of pupils cannot be separated from their family situation and the degree of family school connectedness. Reports from the study of Olatoye and Agbatoye (2019) revealed that pupils' academic performance in home-work has been nothing to write home about as there is little or no participation from parents. This in turn leads to poor academic performance of pupils during examinations. It is in this view that Utah Education Association (2018) asserted that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in schools.

Abubakar (2020) opines that the education a child receives from his/her parents, is likely to be a significant dominant factor on his/her behavior later in life. Sequel to this, various studies have shown that parental school involvement can have a positive influence on children's development and academic performance. Parents who were more involved at their children's school had children with higher literacy performance, better overall grades, and these children tended to outperform their peers who did not have the same involvement from their parents (Galindo & Sheldon, 2016; Pomerantz et al, 2017). In Nigeria, the study of Muraina and Muraina (2018) highlighted that the nature of parental school involvement will differ from one family to the other and amongst different communities. Ibadan town is the capital of Oyo State and is located within the state's Capital Territory and so consists mainly of public/ civil servants in addition to people in private or self-employment, businesspeople, farmers and artisans. Majority of the citizens are enlightened and literate, but there is little or

no extant information on how parents participate in enhancing their children's' academic performance. Muraina and Muraina in their analysis of parental school involvement and pupils' achievement revealed that when schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and like schooling more. It is upon this background that this study seeks to investigate the extent of parental school involvement for improved pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Preliminary investigations conducted by the researcher showed that majority of the parents whose wards are enrolled into public primary schools are either self-employed, business people, farmers or artisans. Few parents fell under civil/public servants. In this regard, these set of parents hardly give assistance and feedback to their wards on their homework as a result of the nature of their jobs. The negative outcome of this is that there is a bridge in the opportunity for parent-child exchange of information, facts, attitudes toward school; communicating seriously about learning; observing the child's learning abilities and progress through witnessing how the child completes assignments. It is therefore against this backdrop that this study determined the extent of parental school involvement for improved pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent of parental school involvement for improved pupils' academic performance in Anambra State. In specific terms, the study determined the extent of:

1. Parental involvement in child's home-school communication for improved pupils' academic performance.
2. Parental involvement in school volunteering for improved pupils' academic performance.
3. Parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance.
4. Parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of parental involvement in child's home-school communication for improved pupils' academic performance?
2. What is the extent of parental involvement in school volunteering for improved pupils' academic performance?
3. What is the extent of parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance?
4. What is the extent of parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance?

Theoretical Underpinning

Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner

Ecological System Theory was propounded by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1917. The theory stated that child development is in terms of an ecosystem. The ecological systems theory explains that the child develops within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple layers of the environment. The environment is made up of a series of nested structures that go beyond the home, school and neighbourhood settings in which children spend their everyday lives. Urie Bronfenbrenner believed that each layer of the environment has a profound impact on development. He listed the system as: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem. He explained further that the microsystem is the first and inner most level of the environment and involves the interaction of the child and other people in the immediate environment, such as the home, the school, child care centre, neighbourhood or the peer group. He gave an example that microsystem includes the way a child is treated by parents, toys available for him/her to play with, the child's relationship with the teacher and peer etc.

Bronfenbrenner's theory lay much emphasis on importance of home-school collaboration for the success of children's education. He also stressed on the esosystem, which involves the interactions of the various settings within the microsystem. It consists of connections among the microsystem that foster/nurture the development of children. He further explained that the mesosystem connects the child to broader societal influence. For example, parental involvement in a child's school activities that results in the parents taking a more active role in the child's education. He added that a child's academic performance does not depend only on what goes on in the classroom, but also on parent involvement in school life and the extent to which academic learning is taking place in the home. Urie Bronfenbrenner also believed that ecosystem consists of contexts that do not include children but affects their experiences in the immediate environment. It includes: parents work place, health and welfare services in the community, sick leave for parents whose children are sick and way that work settings can help parent's rear children, all of these are indirectly enhance their development. For example, a work place that were poorly paid, would breed poverty which will deprive children access to good food, good medical health services, education and leisure activities. Poverty and unemployment also create stress to parents, this results in increased rates of conflicts and child abuse which affects children's development negatively, and when a child is affected negatively, that child can not be able to cope in school talk more of achieving success academically.

Urie Bronfenbrenner ecological system theory relates to the present study because the education of the child requires relationship between parents and schools (home-school involvement) collaborating together to achieve academic success of the child. Also, the ecological system theory has helped us to focus attention on the systems with which children interact as they develop and how it affects their development. Finally, it has helped us to understand that changes in family circumstance affects children's development, which represents the socio-economic status of the parents, which can either, boost or affects negatively a child's education.

Methodology

This study was conducted in Anambra State. The population of this study comprised all 2519 primary five teachers in 187 primary schools in Awka-North, Awka-South, Anocha, Dunukofia and Njikoka LGEAs. The sample size for the study comprised 172 primary five class teachers. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this study. At the first stage, 15% of the schools were sampled randomly from each LGEAs, making a total of 28 primary schools selected. At the second stage, all the primary five teachers in the sampled schools totaling 172 primary five class teachers formed the sample of the study. A structured questionnaire titled “Teachers’ Response on Parental School Involvement (TRPSI) containing 33 items built on four clusters of B1 – B4. The instrument is structured on a four-point scale of VGE- Very Great Extent, GE- Great Extent, LE- Low Extent, VLE- Very Low Extent with nominal value of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to validation report by three experts. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to analyze the data to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The computation showed that the clusters B1 to B4 achieved the following co-efficient: 0.84, 0.80, 0.87 and 0.78 respectively. The researcher personally administered copies of the instrument with the aid of four research assistants. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions posed in this study.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent of parental involvement in child’s home-school communication for improved pupils’ academic performance?

Table 1: Teachers’ mean ratings and standard deviation scores on the extent of parental involvement in child’s home-school communication for improved pupils’ academic performance.

S/N	To what extent:	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	are parents informed about school activities on time e.g., PTA meetings, annual inter-house sport competition etc	2.88	1.13	Great extent
2	so parents talk to me as a class teacher about their wards accomplishment	2.61	1.02	Great extent
3	are parents informed of the academic needs of their wards	2.62	0.89	Great extent
4	do parents talk to me as a class teacher about preparing their wards for life after school	1.59	1.23	Low extent
5	do parents talk to me about their personal matters as it affects their wards at school	2.62	0.98	Great extent
6	are parents provided with resourceful information to help them understand how children learn better	2.51	0.95	Great extent
7	are parents given feedback on their children’s progress (report cards)	3.68	0.59	Very Great extent
8	do parents talk to me about disciplinary procedures	2.41	1.01	Low extent
9	are parents given reports on their children’s deviant behavior	2.63	0.98	Great extent
10	do parents attend PTA meetings to talk about their wards learning and behavior	2.39	0.95	Low extent
11	providing information to parents on how to assist their child with skills they need to improve	2.44	1.04	Low extent
Cluster Mean		2.58		Great extent

Data in Table 1 shows the item by item teachers' mean ratings on the extent of parental involvement in child's home-school communication for improved pupils' academic performance. The results indicate that item 7 with mean score of 3.68 was responded by teachers on a very great extent. Item 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9 with mean scores of 2.88, 2.61, 2.62, 2.62, 2.51 and 2.63 respectively were responded on a great extent by teachers. Also, item 8 with mean score of 2.41 was responded by teachers on a low extent. The cluster mean of 2.58 indicates that teachers rated to a great extent on parental involvement in child's home-school communication for improved pupils' academic performance. Similarly, the standard deviation score that ranged from 0.59 – 1.13 indicates that the difference between the standard deviation scores were not much, therefore this shows that the items are homogeneous.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of parental involvement in school volunteering for improved pupils' academic performance?

Table 2: Teachers' mean and standard deviation scores on the extent of parental involvement in volunteering for improved pupils' academic performance

S/N	To what extent do parents	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
12	participate in recruiting part-time teachers to handle subjects	2.18	1.05	Low extent
13	Work in the school as aide, parent tutor, parent volunteer or assistant teacher	2.50	0.87	Great extent
14	participate in fundraising activities at school	2.43	1.15	Great extent
15	volunteer to give prizes to best pupils	2.52	0.92	Great extent
16	volunteer to participate in extra-curricular activities (such as, sports day, school end of the year party)	2.56	1.01	Great extent
17	volunteer to take children to places of educational interest (e.g. museums, libraries, art galleries)	2.47	0.96	Low extent
18	volunteer to sensitize fellow parents on developing home routines, conditions and environments that support their child's learning during PTA meetings	2.54	1.01	Great extent
19	are willing to support excursion exercise of their children's school	2.45	0.98	Low extent
20	arrange conferences with their child's teacher about reading progress	2.18	0.88	Low extent
Cluster Mean		2.43		Great extent

Data in Table 2 reveal item by item teachers' mean ratings on the extent of parental involvement in school volunteering for improved pupils' academic performance. On this note, item 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18 with mean scores 2.50, 2.43, 2.52, 2.56 and 2.54 respectively were responded on a great extent by teachers. Also, item 12, 17, 19 and 20 with mean scores 2.18, 2.47, 2.45 and 2.18 respectively were responded on a low extent by teachers. The grand mean of 2.43 indicates that teachers responded to a great extent on parental involvement in child's home-school communication for improved pupils' academic performance. Similarly, the standard deviation score that ranged from 0.87 – 1.15 indicates that the difference

between the standard deviation scores were not much, therefore this shows that the items are homogeneous.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance?

Table 3: Teachers' mean and standard deviation scores on the extent of parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance

S/N	To what extent parents:	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
21	help their child to do homework	2.78	1.07	Great extent
22	provide their child with recommended textbooks	2.71	0.97	Great extent
23	talk to their child about careers they are interested in	2.74	0.95	Great extent
24	help their child with academic skills they struggle with	2.77	0.98	Great extent
25	provide their children with learning materials e.g, mathematical sets, drawing board etc	3.08	0.98	Great extent
26	arrange extra lessons in subject their wards find difficult	2.66	1.06	Great extent
27	assist their wards with their assignment	3.58	0.76	Very great extent
28	ensure their wards complete assignment	2.60	0.95	Great extent
29	arrange for their children extra lessons in subject they find difficult	3.35	0.78	Great extent
Cluster Mean		2.92		Great extent

Data in Table 3 reveal item by item teachers' mean ratings on the extent of parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance. Item 27 with mean score 3.58 was responded by teachers to a very great extent. Also, item 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28 and 29 with mean scores 2.78, 2.71, 2.74, 2.77, 3.08, 2.66, 2.60 and 3.35 respectively were responded by teachers on a great extent. The grand mean of 2.92 indicates that teachers responded to a great extent on parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance. More so, the standard deviation score ranged from 0.78 – 1.07 means that teachers were homogeneous in their responses.

Research Question 4: What is the extent of parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance?

Table 4: Teachers' mean and standard deviation scores on the extent of parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance

S/N	To what extent do parents:	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
30	take part in PTA meetings	2.73	0.79	Great extent
31	carry out school projects	2.38	1.03	Low extent
32	take part in the preparation of school budget	2.77	1.14	Great extent
33	make suggestions to me about how to help their child learn	2.47	1.05	Great extent
Cluster Mean		2.59		Great extent

Data in Table 7 reveal item by item teachers' mean ratings on the extent of parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance. Item 35, 37, and 38 with mean scores of 2.73, 2.77 and 2.47 respectively was responded by teachers to a very great extent. Also, item 36 with mean score of 2.38 was responded by teachers to a low extent. The grand mean of 2.59 indicates that teachers responded to a great extent on parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance. More so, the standard deviation score ranged from 0.79 – 1.14 means that teachers were homogeneous in their responses.

Discussion of Findings

The result in research question one revealed that teachers opined that parental involvement in child's home-school communication for improved performance was on a great extent. This finding corroborates with the finding of Eboatu and Igboka (2017) that teachers perceive that parents in Awka South Local Government Area effectively communicate with school and coach their children for improved academic achievement to a high extent. On the other hand, this finding opposed the finding of Ibrahim and Jamil (2015) who reiterated that there is a low level of meaningful contact between the school and parents. The result in research question two revealed that teachers opined that parental involvement in school volunteering for improved pupils' academic performance was on a great extent. This finding agreed with the finding of Fajoku, Aluede and Ojugo (2016) that the higher parents volunteers for school activities, the higher the performances of pupils in English language, mathematics, and integrated science. The result in research question three revealed that teachers opined that parental involvement in child's home learning for improved pupils' academic performance is on a great extent. This means that teachers opine to a great extent that parents help their child to do homework; provide their child with recommended textbooks; talk to their child about careers they are interested in; help their child with academic skills they struggle with; provide their children with learning materials example mathematical sets, drawing board. Also, the findings also agreed with the finding of Veronicah (2016) that education activities at home and home environment had an influence on academic performance of pre-school learners.

The result in research question four revealed that teachers opine that parental involvement in school decision-making for improved pupils' academic performance is on a great extent. This means that teachers opine to a great extent that parents take part in PTA meetings; carry out school projects; take part in the preparation of school budget; make suggestions to teachers about how to help their ward learn. This finding supported the findings of Mutodi and Ngirande (2018) that parents are highly involved in decision-making process in their children's school. the findings also revealed that one of the three parental involvement constructs, that is, parental involvement in school decision-making were found to be positively related to performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that teachers rated to a great extent parental involvement in; child's home-school communication; school volunteering; child's home learning and school decision-making for improved pupils' performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents and guardians should create a good communication language style that will foster close interaction between the parents and the child as well as the parents and the school.
2. Parents and guardians should be aware of the learning environment of their children concerned food, an area for private study and place for sleeping.
3. Education authorities should, in collaboration with school administration, engage in dialogue with parents to encourage them to become part of not only children's learning but also to be part of school activities.
4. Parents should be given more opportunities to form part of the school governing boards so as to bring the school closer to the parents to foster closer parent-school relationship.

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