

# INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to determine students' academic achievement in English language based on parental involvement in their children's education in the southern educational zone of Cross River State. One research question and one null hypothesis was formulated and tested. The sample consisted of 376 senior secondary two students (SS2) of the 2011/2012 academic session. Instrument for data collection were the home background variable questionnaire (HBVQ) and an English achievement test. The data gathered was analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The finding revealed that parental involvement in their children's education significantly influenced their academic achievement in English language. On the basis of the finding it was concluded that when parents assist their children with their school work at home, children academic achievement is likely to be high. Thus, it was recommended that parents work regularly with children's learning activities at home to facilitate achievement.

**KEYWORDS:** Influence, parental involvement, children's education, academic achievement, English language.

## INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, English has played a leading role right from the colonial period up to this day. Banjo (1989) as cited by Ezema (2002) identifies three reasons why English studies is taught in school in Nigeria:

- i. It is the official language of the country.
- ii. It is the official medium of instruction at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in the country.
- iii. Many of the learners need proficiency in the language for their future career (P.5).

Explaining further, the author opines that in order to participate effectively in the social, political and economic aspects of national life, one must attain some level of proficiency in English language. For a Nigerian to follow intelligently what is going on in the national life, he has to read newspapers and make use of both

the radio and the television whose communication modes are English language. This presupposes that if he is deficient in the English language, he is seriously handicapped in making use of these agents of information dissemination.

The role of English in Nigeria is even appreciated more when it is remembered that the country is a multilingual nation. There are over 300 different lingual groups within the country as observed by Ezema (2002). To be able to move and communicate freely within the country, a Nigerian has to be conversant with the use of English language. The unifying position of the language in the country, is therefore, very obvious. As a second language in Nigeria, English is being used to enhance our national unity and cultural integration.

Adeniran (1979) and Oyeleye (1990) aver that as the society develops, as groups

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interact with groups in the process of modernization, the place of English as a second language gets more interwoven with the life of the people. Most significantly, the English language is taught through formal education by teachers and so it is transplanted and adopted. That is why it is a core subject in the Nigerian school curriculum both at the junior and secondary school levels as specified in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Furthermore, the English language is a pre-requisite for admission into Nigerian universities. Hence, students are expected to pass it at a minimum credit level. For candidates to study in colleges of education, monotechnics and polytechnics, they are expected to possess a minimum credit pass in the English language. Indeed, competency in English attracts a lot of things; admission into higher studies, job opportunities, entry into many national circle and even promotion to positions of responsibility.

What is more, it is a language of knowledge in which much research and publication are conducted. Thus, competence in the subject translates into other subjects. Moreover, it can be observed that many Nigerian these days insist on speaking English to their children at home irrespective of the fact that they themselves are not proficient in the language. Parents do this with the hope that the language being a status symbol will give their children some educational head-start and ease. Besides, in Nigeria English language provides a link in the Nigerian heterogenous community. Thus, it is regarded as a code of communication for diverse linguistic and socio-cultural groups. It therefore, becomes imperative to ensure that its teaching and learning must aim at the highest level of competence.

It has to pass through a very formal way if communicative competence is to be achieved. In this regard, every proactive measure should be put in place to arrest its declining standard. And perhaps parents are expected to act as catalysts to facilitate its efficient achievement.

This, may be, because the home is where children are first nurtured and where according to Leler (1983) school children spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school. A stimulating environment affects positively a child's learning effectiveness. Nwobueze (1984) maintained that the family served as the child's window to the world, and that parents should create time to assist children with academic work at home.

Thus, this work examines parental involvement on their children education to determine if it has influence on their children academic achievement in English language in the southern educational zone of Cross River State.

### **Statement of the problem**

The importance of the English language has been stressed in the introduction to the study. In spite of its importance in the different spheres of life, student's achievement in school certificate examination has continued to be very discouraging. This is noticeable at the poor use of English by candidates who sit for its examinations. For instance, reporting in Nigerian News Now (2003) the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) observed that candidates lost valuable marks in the subject due to poor grammatical expression. This results in poor expression of points, while the candidates also failed to follow instructions in the question paper.

Similarly, students' poor performance in other school subjects is traceable to the inability of students to express themselves meaningfully in English or meet the language demands the subjects make on them. This is obvious because deficiency in English language translates into other subject.

This has been a major source of worry to students themselves, parents, teachers, educational administrators and government. One then got worried with this situation and therefore asked, to what extent do parents' involvements in their children's education influence students' academic achievement in English language? This is the thesis to which this paper sets out to determine.

### **The concept of parental involvement in children's education (literature review perspective)**

Emerging literature indicates a significant relationship between parental involvement in children education and their academic achievement. In this wise, a family is where the children are first nurtured and where they spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school (Leler, 1983). To Nwabeze (1984) the family serves as the child's window to the world. In the same vein, Adeyemo (1985) is of the view that the family is one of the agencies of education, the first station through where the child enters the world.

Therefore, parents involvement in their children education is highly essential and it

includes several different forms of parents' participating in the children's education and in the schools' activities. Accordingly, National Education Association (NEA, 1999) says parent's involvement means:

- ❖ Reading to your children
- ❖ Checking homework every night
- ❖ Discussing your children's progress with teachers
- ❖ Voting in school board elections
- ❖ Helping their school to set challenging academic standards
- ❖ Limiting television viewing on school night.

Explaining further, NEA emphasized that it could even be as simple as asking your children, "How was school today?" But ask everyday, NEA added. This, the author says would send your children the clear message that their school work is important to you and you expect them to learn.

For Cotton and Wiklund (2001) parents involvement means parents being more involved in helping their children to improve their school work by providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modeling desired behaviour (such as reading for pleasure, monitoring home work and actively tutoring them). The author further declared that the most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home. He observed that children who practice reading at home with parents make significant gains in reading achievement compare to those who only practice at school. These are also the views of Evans (2000); Mendelssohn (2001) and Sharif (2001) all cited in center for community child health (CCH, 2004) that regular shared reading positively correlated with vocabulary development.

Also, Branham and Lynch-Brown (2002) in (CCH, 2004) reported similar findings in a study of 1171<sup>st</sup> graders and 1293<sup>rd</sup> graders where three styles of reading were compared (example just reading, performance reading and interactional reading). The result showed that interactional reading style with parents, which invited questions at any point during the reading, facilitated greater vocabulary gains than the performance reading.

These findings above corroborate earlier findings of Keith (1986); Tennes (1986) and Vinograd-Bausell (1987) whose results revealed that parents who taught their first graders word recognition skills at home, using materials provided by the school significantly outperformed

the controlled group. The author further opined that when parents are involved with learning activities at home with children, children have higher grades, test scores and graduation rates. Continuing, the author added that, the children have better school attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol and fewer instances of violent behaviour.

In their submission, Collins, Moles and Cross (1982) studied 28 parents involvement programs in large American cities and identified elements which appear responsible for their success. The authors' conclusion was that positive results of involving parents in their children's schooling include improved achievement, reduced absenteeism, improved behaviour, and restored confidence among parents in their children's schooling.

Balli and Demo (1998) found that home discussion of school activities was one of the stronger predictors of student achievement. To Obasi (1996) mere seeing that the children are prepared for school in the morning is important for the children's academic achievement. This is an indication that if parents can be interested to look to see and encourage what their children do both at school and at home, children will catapult in their academic achievement.

Parents' involvement in children education also according to Leler (1983) indicates that when parents come to school regularly, it reinforced the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family's life. This view is reaffirmed by teaching Today (2005) which declared that today's involved parents desire more information about their children's curriculum and occasionally seek real decision-making power.

On the whole, the reviewed work have revealed that considerable amount of work has been conducted on parents involvement in their children education in relation to achievement in English language. A greater portion of these studies however, are foreign-base. This indicates that studies focused on Nigerian setting and in the southern educational zone of Cross River State in particular are required. This is the gap which this present study has set out to fill.

### **Purpose of the study**

The cardinal purpose of this study is to determine whether parents' involvement in their children's education can influence students' academic achievement in English language.

### Significance of the study

The relevance of a research is to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Hence, this study will be of significance to parents, policy makers, governmental organizations, researchers, teachers and students.

The result of this study should encourage parents to provide academically stimulating environments to their children. This work will also be significant to researchers since it will provide empirical data on the interaction between parental involvement in their children education and students academic achievement in English language.

In addition, the result will provide information to teachers of English language on the relationship between parental involvement variable and students academic achievement in English language. Such information could assist the teachers in counseling students whose family background may have adverse consequences on their academic achievement. The students themselves will be informed to mobilize the stimulating environment in English language.

### Research question

One research question was formulated for the study  
What is the relationship between parental involvement in their children's education and students academic achievement in English language?

### Research hypothesis

Based on the research question, one research hypothesis was formulated.

There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in their children's education and students' academic achievement in English language.

### Scope of the study

The study focused principally on the influence of parental involvement in children academic achievement in English language. It was confined to Senior Secondary two (SS2)

students in southern educational zone of Cross River State.

### Research design

The research design adopted for this study was the ex-post facto. The intension was to determine the extent to which the independent variable influences dependent variable. The independent variable has already occurred in the population, thus, producing the variable – English achievement. Hence, the choice of the ex-post facto design is appropriate in that the researcher has no control over them, but only to make deductive inferences in terms of the influence of independent variable on the dependent variable after data collection and analysis.

### Population of the study

The population consisted of all the Senior Secondary two (SS2) students in the southern educational zone of Cross River State in the year 2011/2012 academic session. A total of 5,166 students made up this population.

### Sampling technique

Stratified random sampling was adopted.

### Sample

The sample was 376 (SS2 students). They were 192 males and 184 females from ten (10) secondary schools randomly drawn from five local government areas in the zone.

### Instrument

Two instruments were used for data collection.

- i. Home background variable questionnaire
- ii. English achievement test were used to obtain relevant data from the subjects

### Result of hypothesis testing

Data collected were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis to compare the academic achievement of students in English language, whose parents were involved in their education with that of those whose parents were not. The result is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between parental involvement in their children's education and students' academic achievement in the English Language

<b>Variable</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>P. level</b>
Parental involvement	27.32	6.35	.201*	.000
Academic achievement	15.73	5.36		

\* Significant at .05 level, df = 374; r = .1638

The result in Table 1 indicates that the calculated r-value of .201 is greater than the critical r-value of .1638 at 0.05 level of significance, at 374 degree of freedom. Based on this result, hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between parental involvement in their children education and students academic achievement in English language.

**DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDING**

This present finding is in concord with the earlier works of Leler (1983); Nwabeze (1984); Adeyemo (1985) and Branhamand Lynch-Brown (2002) whose individual studies revealed a positive significant relationship between parental involvement in their children's education and academic achievement. The present finding also corroborates Keith (1986); Tennies (1986) and Vinograd-Bausell (1987) contention that when parents assist their children in their academic work at home, they significantly outperformed others whose parents do not.

A possible explanation for this is that when parents are interested and get involved with learning activities at home with their children, children academic work will be enhanced. The result in this study that parents' involvement in their children academic work relates positively to their academic achievement in English language affirms.

The consistency of the finding with parents' assistance having a positive relationship with students academic achievement is further in line with the call by Obasi (1996) on parents to ensure that they encourage, motivate, love and discuss regularly children academic activities at home with the children.

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study revealed a significant positive relationship between parental involvement in their children's education and students' academic achievement in English. Based on that, it was concluded that for students' academic achievement in English language to be effectively enhanced, parents should be interested and work with their children in their education. This will complement the teachers' effort to improve students' academic achievement in English language. It was therefore, recommended that parents should actively be organizing and monitoring children's time, helping with home work and discussing school matters regularly with them. Parents should also model the value of learning, self discipline and hard-work in children. If this exercise is persistent, it can facilitate positive improvement in their children's academic achievement in English language.

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