
Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement of Students in Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Imo State

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Abstract: *This study investigated parental involvement and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1,120 students in Imo State. The Tsaro Yamen formula was used to obtain the sample size of 295 respondents, while the stratified sampling technique was adopted for the study. Content and face validation of the research instrument was carried out by the supervisor and two other experts in the field of measurement and evaluation, while the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.97 from the pilot study. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistic of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions and to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level respectively. The following findings were made: there is a significant relationship between provision of textual materials and academic achievement of junior secondary school students, there is a significant relationship between provision of guidance counseling and academic achievement of junior secondary school students, finally there is a significant relationship between home teaching and academic achievement of junior secondary school students. The study concluded that provision of textual materials significantly enhance academic achievement of junior secondary school students, guidance counseling impacts positively on academic achievement of junior secondary school students, finally, it was concluded that a great significant relationship exist between home teaching and academic achievement of junior secondary school students. It was therefore, recommended among other things that parents' involvement in schools' activities should be encouraged and the government should consider developing and implementing policies that will support it.*

Key words: *Parental Involvement, Academic Achievement, Junior Secondary School, Students, Imo State.*

INTRODUCTION

Students often tend to do better in school, stay longer in school, and like school more when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning. In the view of Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), for the past decade, parental involvement shows that regardless of family background, level or income, and students whose parents are involved are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programme, be promoted, earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, adapt well to school and graduate to post-secondary education.

Parents often report feelings that children should do home-work alone, and that the parents should not try to help if they are not experts in the subject (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Furthermore, he stated that the structure of many schools today is a deterrent in assisting many students. Bower and Griffin (2011) asserted that the key part to effective parent-involvement

programme involves organizing schools so that at least one person knows each child well, keeping a "parent room" in the building, and sponsoring parent-to-parent communication and events. Parental involvement in a school setting implies a wide range of behaviours, but conventionally it refers to parents and family members who invest most of their resources in their children's education. These investments are intended to improve the child's learning as such can take place in or outside the school. Parental involvement is the level of participation that a parent has in the child's education and school. Many parents today are quite involved, often volunteering to help in their children's classroom activities, communicating well with their children's teachers, assisting with their homework, and understanding their individual academic strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, there are also many parents who are not directly involved with their children's education.

Many schools have programme aimed at increasing parental involvement such as games and sports, home activities, and assorted opportunities for volunteers. The following are the parental factors that affect the academic achievement of students; provision of home teaching, provision of guidance counseling, provision of textual materials, cultural values, parent-teachers association, family issues, parent education and parental nurture. Parental involvement at home includes various activities such as helping with homework, and reading with children, discussions about school and the like. Involvement at school may include attending workshops, parents volunteering in the classroom, or attending school plays and sporting events and above all parental nurture, family issues, parent education, and the like (Rain & William, 2011).

According to Lin (2010), academic achievement or (academic) performance is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved educational goals. However, academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment. However, there is no general agreement on how it is best measured or which aspects are most important: procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts (Lin, 2010).

Although academic achievement has become a hot topic in education today, especially with increased accountability for classroom teachers and parents alike. Previous researchers have also brought into being that parental involvement is related to the academic achievement of students: parental attitude, support, motivation, and commitment affect students' academic achievement (Lee & Bowen, 2016, and Yan & Lin, 2015). Although Lee and Bowen (2006) ascertained that parental involvement is essential for all children, the nature of parental involvement changes according to race/ethnicity, parent's education, economic status of parents, and family structure. Today, parents are often faced with unique challenges that hinder them from meeting the academic needs of their children which include time, finance, career or job type, level of education and time taken to respond to school activities. If the above needs are not attended to, there is a likelihood of the child not performing well because he or she is not adequately supported. Insufficient parental involvement may lead to poor performance of the child academically (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Many researchers have studied this concept but none of their studies as focused on parental involvement and academic achievement in Imo State thus leaving a gap. It is on this note that the researcher seeks to study parental involvement and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Overview of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement, from an economist's perspective, can be defined as direct effort, provided by the parent, in order to increase educational outcomes of their children. This definition refers to an education production function, and makes parental involvement one of its arguments. The broad perspective adopted here mirrors the definition of family involvement by the Harvard Family Research Project, one of the leading research groups into family involvement outside economics: their definition includes all activities by parents that are intentionally "linked to learning" (Comer, 2010). This review is concerned with parental involvement in school, defined as the efforts delivered by parents while their child is in school age. Traditionally, however, sociologists and practitioners in education have defined family involvement from the school's perspective.

Parental involvement according to Comer (2010) is defined as the level of participation that a parent has in the child's education and school. Many parents are tremendously involved, often volunteering to help in their child's classroom activities, communicating well with their child's teachers, assisting with homework, and understanding their child's individual academic strengths and weaknesses. Although, many parents do not directly get involve into their child's education. Many schools have programs aimed at increasing parental involvement such as games and sports, home activities, and assorted opportunities for volunteers.

Parent and the School Communication

In our society today, schools and parents are responding to increased expectations, economic pressures, and time constraint. In these changing times, effective partnerships between teachers and parents become even more essential to meet the needs of the children. Communicating with parents in the view of Epstein (2015) is one of the six major types of parental involvement practices that enhance the establishment of strong working relationships between parents and teachers. Also, the cultivation of the teacher-parent relationship is another vital point to the development team work. Unfortunately, so many teachers today are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents of their school children (Estein, Dauber & Susan, 2009).

Parents' Participation in Educational Activities at Home

According to Keith (2013), whenever a child returns from school with assignment, the parents' role is to make sure that it has been done in the right way and at the right time. Parents checking child's homework, has shown a positive association with academic achievement in some studies. Students whose parents are involved in checking their homework showed higher achievement than students whose parents are not involved in checking homework. Other studies, however, have shown a negative association between parents checking their children's homework and academic achievement (Keith, 2013).

What parents do is more important to student success than whether they are rich or poor, whether parents have finished high school or not. Necessarily, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental participation in promoting the academic growth of children. It is known that children who spend more time on homework and on average do better in school and that the academic benefits increase as children move into the upper grades (Keith, 2013).

Parents' Involvement in Educational Activities at School

After many years of intense effort to increase parent involvement in schools, it appears that the results are beginning to appear in educational research (Patrikakou, 2014). The news is good for schools where parent involvement is high, and the benefits for children are encouraging. Most times when parents are involved in their children's schools and education, the children have higher grades and standardized test scores, improved behavior at home and school, better social skills and adaptation to school.

Education activities in school include provision of instruction materials, attendance of parents meeting, attending sports day, annual academic day commonly known as 'academic clinic day', parents seminars and participation in different groups like Parent teachers association (PTA) (Hoover, Kathlem, Sandler & Howard, 2007).

Research on the demographics of parents who are involved in their child's school finds that parents with higher educational attainment and income attend school conferences, volunteering at schools, and supporting school events to enrich their children's learning achievement. Parents at all socio economic levels can "level the playing field" in their child's education by taking the time to get involved. Teachers give kids more attention when they know their parents from school visits (Hoover et al., 2007). So it makes parents to give school events first priority for attendance and this can help to support children education.

One kind of parental involvement is school-based and includes participating in parent-teacher conferences and functions, receiving and responding to written communications from the teacher. Parents can also serve as school volunteers for the library or lunchroom, or as classroom aides. Parents can participate in their children's schools by joining Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and getting involved in decision-making about the educational services their children receive. Almost all schools have a PTA or PTO, but often only a small number of parents are active in these groups (Grolnick, Wendy, Slowiaczft & Maria, 2014).

Such associations and organizations provide flexible scheduling for school events and parent-teacher conferences, inform parents about what their children are learning, and help parents create a supportive environment for children's learning at home (Grolnick, et al., 2014). He went further to assert that many schools have responded to the needs of working parents by scheduling conferences in the evening as well as during the day, and by scheduling school events at different times of the day throughout the year.

For many parents, a major impediment to becoming involved is lack of time. Working parents are often unable to attend school events during the day. In addition, evenings are the only time these parents have to spend with their children, and they may choose to spend time with their family rather than attend meetings at school.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

The National PTA (2016) defines the greatest shared barriers as the lack of time, not being valued, and not knowing how to contribute. Additional barriers to parent involvement contain not understanding the educational system, childcare problems, language, cultural changes, and transportation problems. Additionally, parents often do not feel welcomed. Little literacy levels, educational verbiage, superciliousness, boring meetings, and parents who have unmet requirements themselves are also barriers to parent involvement.

Moore (2011) stated that aloofness stuck between parents and teachers, deficiency and

lack of teacher training, and obstacles of race and class has been recognized as barriers to parent involvement. Moore (2011) in his view stated that minority parents are not counted in activities for the reason of language or cultural variances. Other barriers are created from opinions, assertiveness, and arrangements by teachers and schools: lack of commitment, role confusion, concerns with territory, and low expectations from at-risk families.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does provision of textual materials relate to academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State?
2. To what extent does provision of guidance counseling relate to academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State?
3. To what extent does home teaching relate to academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

The following formulated null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance;

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between provision of textual materials and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between provision of guidance counseling and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between home teaching and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted correlational research design. The population of this study is 1,120 selected junior secondary school students (320 in Sacred Heart villa Secondary Enyigugu, Aboh Mbaise, 450 in Ihitte Secondary School Ezinihitte Mbaise, and 350 in Secondary Commercial School Otulu Ahiara, Ahiazu Local Government Area, in Imo State. The sample size of this study therefore was 295 students. This was obtained using the Tsaro Yamen formula while the stratified sampling technique was adopted proportionately for the study. A structured questionnaire titled 'Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire' (PIASAAQ with a four point rating scale was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation. Mean was used to answer the research questions and the formulated hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The response options were very Very High Extent 4, High Extent 3, Moderate Extent 2, Low extent 1.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does provision of textual materials relate to academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean of the extent to which provision of textual materials relate to academic achievement of students

S/N	Questionnaire Item	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Provision of textual materials enhances better academic achievement.	2.80	1.03	Accepted
2	Textual materials help one to improve in one's academics.	2.71	0.97	Accepted
3	Textual materials help the child to read and get along in school.	2.85	0.83	Accepted
4	When students are not provided with textual materials it discourages them.	2.41	0.92	Rejected
	Grand Mean	2.69	SD	Accepted

The mean score of 2.80 implies that provision of textual materials enhances better academic achievement. The mean score of 2.50 agrees that textual materials helps one to improve in one's academic, the means score of 2.80 also indicates that textual materials help the child to read and get along in school, while the mean score of 2.50 agrees that when students are not provided with textual materials it discourages them. The grand mean of 2.69 implies that provision of textual materials relates to academic achievement to a very high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does provision of career counseling relate to academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary school in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean of the extent to which provision of guidance counseling relate to academic achievement of students

S/N	Questionnaire Item	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
5	Provision of guidance counseling enhances student's ability in choosing the best way of life to go.	2.72	0.87	Accepted
6	Guidance counseling helps the child to know what he or she wants in life.	2.96	1.40	Accepted
7	Guidance counseling helps the child to be well directed in life.	2.97	0.95	Accepted

8	Educated parents always assist their children with guidance counseling.	2.98	0.91	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.90	SD	Accepted

The mean score of 2.70 implies that provision of guidance counseling enhances student's ability in choosing the best way of life to go. The mean score of 3.0 agrees that guidance counseling helps the child to know what he or she wants in life, the means score of 3.0 also indicates that guidance counseling helps the child to be well directed in life, while the mean score of 3.0 agrees that educated parents always assist their children with guidance counseling. The grand mean of 2.90 implies that provision of guidance counseling relates to academic achievement to a very high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does home teaching relate to academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 3: Mean of the extent to which home teaching relate to academic achievement of students

S/N	Questionnaire Item	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
9	Home teaching enhances better academic achievement of students.	2.98	0.79	Accepted
10	Home teaching is essential for proper academic achievement of students.	3.03	0.99	Accepted
11	Home teaching brings about sufficient student's academic achievement.	2.90	1.20	Accepted
12	Students who receive adequate home teaching from their parents do well in school.	3.02	1.16	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.98	SD	Accepted

The mean score of 3.0 implies that home teaching enhances better academic achievement of students. The mean score of 3.10 agrees that home teaching is essential for proper academic achievement of students, the means score of 2.90 also indicates that home teaching brings about sufficient student's academic achievement, whereas the mean score of 3.10 agrees that students who receive adequate home teaching from their parents do well in school. The grand mean of 2.98 implies that home teaching relates to academic achievement to a very great extent.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between provision of textual materials and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 4: Relationship between provision of textual materials and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Variables	N	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	Df	SD	Sig Level	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Provision of Textual Materials & Academic Achievement	295	2,458	1,119	293	2.71	0.05	2.120	1.645	Reject H ₀

The computed r (2.120) is greater than the critical r value (1.645) for one tailed test at 0.05 level of significance. There is every reason to reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that there is a significant relationship between provision of textual materials and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between provision of guidance counseling and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 5: Relationship between guidance counseling and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Variables	N	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	df	SD	Sig Level	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Provision of guidance counselling & Academic Achievement	295	4,312	6,401	293	4.01	0.05	2.329	1.645	Reject H ₀

Table 5 above shows that the calculated r-value (2.329) is greater than the critical r value (1.645) at 0.05 level of significance. Given the above, the null hypothesis is rejected while, the alternate is retained. Therefore, provision of guidance counseling significantly relates with academic achievement of students in some selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between home teaching and academic achievement of students in some selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 6: Relationship between home teaching and academic achievement of students in selected junior secondary schools in Imo State.

Variables	N	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	df	SD	Sig Level	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Home Teaching									
&	295	6,148	5,589	293	3.01	0.05	1.901	1.645	Reject H ₀
Academic achievement									

The computed r (1.901) is greater than the critical r value (1.645) for one tailed test at 0.05 level of significance. It is imperative therefore to reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that there is a significant relationship between home teaching and academic achievement of students in junior secondary schools in Imo State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the data it was found that there is a significant relationship between provision of textual materials and academic achievement of junior secondary school students. This finding is in line with the assertion of Epstein (2015) who opined that the provision of textual materials is one of the practices that enhance the academic achievement of students. Unfortunately, so many students today are not specifically provided with such materials such as stationeries and instructional materials alike and are not trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with teachers in their schools (Estein, Dauber & Susan, 2009).

Communicating with parents in the view of Epstein (2015) is one of the six major types of parental involvement practices that enhance the establishment of strong working relationships between parents and teachers. Also, the cultivation of the teacher-parent relationship is another vital point to the development team work. Unfortunately, so many teachers today are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents of their school children (Estein, Dauber & Susan, 2009).

According to Estein, Dauber and Susan (2009), school communication practices are so fundamental to involving families in the education process, teacher preparation and professional development programs should actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers. However, teachers basically strive to establish partnerships with parents to support student learning. This is because strong communication is fundamentally necessary to this partnership and to building a sense of community between home and school.

According to Estein, Dauber and Susan (2009), textual materials and other practices are so fundamental to involving families in the education process, teacher preparation and professional development programs should actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers. However, teachers basically strive to establish partnerships with parents to support student learning. This is because the provision of textual materials is fundamentally necessary to academic success and to building a sense of community for the students.

It was also found that the provision of guidance counseling significantly relates with academic achievement of junior secondary school students. This finding is in line with the view of Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012), who asserted that the duty of a school entails the provision of career counseling, promotion of parental involvement and this has become a passive act, rather than a genuine effort. In addition, parents are often scapegoats when trying to find the blame to student achievement. For example, some educators blame parents for the children's academic failures (example, "If only the parents helped at home" or "Parents just do not care about school"). Despite these remarks, research continues to credit the provision of career counseling as a way to increase academic achievement effectively. Therefore it is imperative to state here that career counseling is, in fact, a strong independent variable in motivating their children to learn (Gonzalez-DeHass, 2005).

The Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of these services by observing that, deciding on the future career is not quite easy. It is even more difficult when you lack the necessary information on the different types of careers. In an ideal situation the process of career development stretches throughout one's lifetime with a greater emphasis during the secondary and tertiary years (Ministry of Education, 2007).

In his contribution, Schmidt (2001) explained that career guidance and counseling is an important avenue through which students acquire the ability to make rational career decisions, and by extension, programmes for study at universities that impact on their future working lives. This understanding is based on the fact that during the career counseling process, all aspects of an individual's life are considered as an integral part of the career making and planning. After orientation into their degree programmes, a significant percentage of students come wishing to revise their degree programmes, citing dislike for some aspects thereof. Secondly, others come to change, from degree programmes they were admitted into after choosing them as first choice and meeting the degree programme requirements, to others degree programmes they perceive to be better.

Finally it was found that a significant relationship exist between home teaching and academic achievement of junior secondary school students. This entails the act of providing extra means of teaching the child at home in order to improve his/her learning ability. Provision of home teaching is fundamentally influential in the success of any student.

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

It was concluded that the provision of home teaching significantly enhances academic achievement of students in some selected junior secondary schools in Imo State. Also the study concluded that the provision of guidance counseling relates with academic achievement of students in some selected junior secondary schools in Imo State. Finally, it was concluded that a great significant relationship exist between the provision of textual materials and academic achievement of junior secondary school students in Imo State.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

- (a) Regarding the weakness of parents to help their children in explaining difficult ideas the researcher recommended the provision of textual materials by parents for their children since textual materials enhances academic achievement of students.
- (b) High training programs such as career counseling, for all school staff should be provided as to aid them with experience in modern techniques in dealing with parents and communicating with them in order to ascertain that guidance counseling improves the academic achievement of students.
- (c) Parents and students should be encouraged to join local community programs around their school in providing home teaching for their children. This is because it has been established that home teaching fundamentally influences students' academic achievement.

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