RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN LOKOJA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between learning outcomes and parental involvement in early childhood education in Lokoja, Kogi State Three primary schools in Kogi State were selected for this research work: an elites private primary school, a low cost/affordable private primary school: and a public (Government UBE) primary school. Ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. A total sum of Four Hundred (400) Respondents were sampled for the study. Structured questionnaire title Family Involvement Ouestionnaire (FIO) was used to collect data in the study data. The FIQ was confirmed to be validated with a reliability coefficient of 0.86. The first category was marked A for students with overall average 80% - 100%, B for students with overall average 79% - 50% and C for students with overall average 49% and below. The result indicated that most involved parents had children with A Grade and least involved parents had children with overall average 49% and below. Socio-economic characteristics such as Level of Education, Employment Status and parents who were married were equally analyzed and it was discovered that; A graders had the highest percent of welleducated parents, gainfully employed parents that stayed together in marriage, while C graders had the lowest percentages. The overall results show that children perform better in their early childhood education with adequate participation of parents.

Keywords: Parenting, early childhood, parenting style, learning outcomes and preschool.

Introduction

Parental involvement refers to the interest parents show in their children's schooling. This is expressed by encouraging their children to do well in school, guiding them to perform school assigned tasks, applauding them when they do well in school and encouraging them to put more efforts to do well in school, cooperate with teachers about the child's progress, participating in extended class visits, attending school community functions, participating in the school policy-making among others. Parental involvement varies from one family to another and can take different forms. Some families assign this duty exclusively to the mother, some families assign these responsibilities between both parents, others leave it to the father especially if the mother is illiterate and yet other families shift the full weight of the job to the school teachers.

Parents' involvement behaviours in early childhood education are classified into home-based involvement and school-based involvement. Home-based parent involvement includes practices related to children's education that take place outside school, usually within their homes. These practices may be directly related to schoolwork, including assisting/ guiding homework, responding to children's academic questions, guiding children's academic choices and talking about academic issues. School-based involvement takes place when parents actually make contact with the school. It entails participation in general school meetings, communicating with teachers and administrators, attending school events, volunteering at the school e. t. c (Kurtulmus, 2016). The chart below shows the various Processes of parental involvements and the expected outcomes.

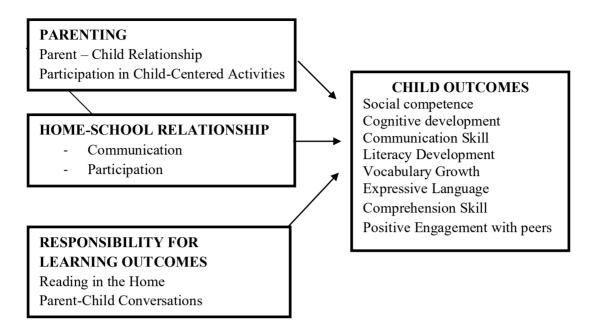


Fig. 1: Adapted from Processes of family involvement and young children's outcomes. (Kurtulmus, 2016)

A more comprehensive approach of parental involvement for family and professional partnerships was described by Epstein (2001). Epstein identified six types of involvement which include parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. (Fasina, 2011).

Table 1: Components of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement

TYPE OF	PURPOSE/GOAL			
INVOLVEMENT				
Parenting	Help all families establish home environment to			
	support children as students			
Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home			
	-to- school communications about school programs			
	and their children's progress			
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support			
Learning at Home	Provide information and ideas to families about how			
	to help students at home with homework and other			
	curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning			
Decision Making	Include parents in school decisions, developing			
	parent leaders and representatives			
Collaborating with	rith Identify and integrate resources and services from			
Community	the community to strengthen school programs,			
	family practices, and student learning and			
	development			

Both participation in preschool-based activities and regular communication between parents and teachers have an impact on young children's learning outcomes. The frequency of parent-teacher contact in these activities affects the child's preschool performance. Parents who maintain direct and regular contact with the early educational setting and experience fewer barriers to involvement tend to produce children who demonstrate positive engagement with peers, adults and great learning (Epstein, 2001).

Home and school relationships include formal and informal connections between the family and educational setting. Parents' higher levels of involvement in their children's educational experiences at home have been associated with children's higher achievement scores in reading and writing (Epstein, 2001). Besides, parents' higher level of involvement at school Activities and interaction with the teachers is associated with better achievement in mathematics and reading. This research on parental involvement examines the link between specific parent behaviors and child outcomes.

Literature review

The early elementary school and parental involvement

Early elementary school or Pre-school education is one of the important steps of education system and constitutes the grounding of the education in which the individual will obtain within whole education system. This period which includes under zero age of the individual is an important period in which physical, mental, emotional and social developments are fast, personality structure starts to form and basic habits are gained (Aytac, Dmirhas, Celik, &Kiracioglu, 2019). When families are considered to be children's first teachers in this period, one of the most important factors for the success of the educational activities given in the institutions is the awareness of the family. Parents with high awareness strive to provide rich opportunities to their children's search in daily life events, interact active with environment and learn through imitate observations. The role of family is the personality development of the child, positive behaviour adoption of the child and growing a child as an individual who is emotionally and physically healthy, who becomes self-sufficient, who is profitable for himself/herself and for the world he/she lives in. The importance of the environment for the cognitive development of children was frequently emphasized in the literature.

Parental involvement in children's education in the Nigerian context

Some of the findings of the major research on parental involvement have emphasized that the child's first place of contact with the world is the family (Umeana, 2017). The child, as a result, acquires initial education and socialization from parents and other significant persons in the family. The parents are, in short, the child's first teachers. They are the first and primary source of social support for young children. Kutelu and Olowe (2013) in their studies argued that in the African setting the responsibility for raising a child is a collective one. From the Nigerian perspective, a family consists of not only a father, a mother, and children, but also includes a host of aunts, uncles, grand-parents, and even long-standing friends, all of whom are described as the extended family.

Arogundade (2009) reiterated that when parents are involved in the education of their children, the children tend to model their parents' attitudes and actions. When parents are actively involved in their children's education, they do better in schooling. They develop good work habits and lifelong learning skills, such as time management, organization, persistence, and self- responsibility. Suffice it to say that

parents exert profound influence on every aspect of a child's life. Parents have a great role to play in school/child education quality. Umeana (2017) stated that homework is a very important learning strategy that entails a lot of activities that go beyond the walls of the classroom. Parents' participation enhances performance, particularly in the area of helping children with their homework. Positive parental involvement, starting from the beginning of their children's lives and continuing on to the secondary schools, needs to be encouraged so that children's education is improved. Studies by Umeana (2017) showed that low income families are less involved in their children's education, and because of this lack of participation, their children are less likely to be successful in school. Parents in Nigeria interact with the school authority during PTA meetings. These meetings are a forum where parents, teachers, and school administrators meet to discuss students' affairs. Open days (visiting day) are also set out for parents to visit their children in school and to meet with their respective class teachers. These class teachers present the child's education progress chart to their parents, and they discuss the progress of the child with the parents, which gives the parents ample opportunity to explain to the teachers their children's problems. Based on these complaints, necessary corrections are made. The teachers' views about parents' intervention are a welcome development in the Nigerian educational system. The interaction between the teachers, parents, and administrators is the connection between home and school in promoting the education of children.

Stress is another vital factor which affects the involvement of parents in the education of their children. This stress interacts with their ability and opportunity to interact with their child. Parents who have completed secondary schools and pursued further education in Nigeria understand the pressures and stresses of schooling Mothers' education especially has a significant impact on their children's learning process. Studies results from (Bottiani,Duran &Brandshaw 2019) indicate that mother's monitoring is positively associated with children's academic and emotional functioning, especially their academic functioning.

Effect of parental involvement on the socialization and learning outcomes of children in the preschools

The benefits of parents being involved in their children's education in general, and their children's literacy activities in particular, is overwhelming. Research shows that parental involvement in their children's learning positively affects the child's academic performance and socialization (Nishank, Sangyoo& Reynolds, 2020 in

preschools, primary and secondary schools. This is directly linked to higher academic achievements, greater cognitive competence, greater problem-solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioural problems at school (Shusen& Yu, (2021).

Furthermore, involvement with reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills (Ikunyua (2012)), but also on pupils interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom. There is ample evidence that parents who promote the view that reading is valuable and worthwhile activities have children who are motivated to read for pleasure (Baker and Scher, 2002). The study overwhelmingly demonstrates that parents involvement in children's learning, is positively related to academic achievement. Furthermore, the study shows that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning the more beneficial are the achievement effects. This holds true for all types of parent involvement in children's learning and for all types and ages of students.

Conceptual framework: The conceptual framework below shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Learning outcomes of children depends on several factors that point to parental participation. Such factors include parenting; where parents are involved in provision of basic needs that ensure holistic development of children. They also assist inhomework, are warm and loving. Communication between the parents and teachers is important because through this, they are able to establish how their children are doing academically and in other school activities.

The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure below

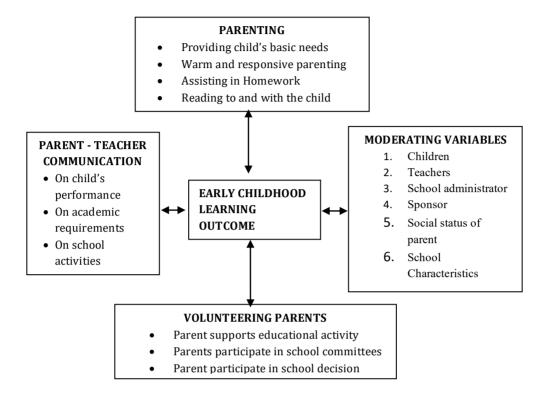


Figure 2: Epstein's Framework of Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Theoretical Framework

This study used Epstein Theory (2002) of Comprehensive School Reform Model (CSR). Epstein's framework model explains six types of parental involvement as follows: parenting which helps all families establish home environments to support children; Communicating between home and school about school programmes and student progress; Volunteering by organizing parent help and support. Learning at home by providing information and ideas from families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities; decisions and planning; Parents should be included in decision making; involve parent leaders and representatives; Collaborating with the community by identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programmes,

family practices, student learning and development. The model demonstrates how collaborative work produces positive outcomes.

Research shows that parental involvement is more important to children's academic success than their family's socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or educational background (Amatea& West, 2007). Parental involvement can encourage children's and adolescents' achievement in many ways. One way that parents can contribute positively to their children's education is to assist them with their academic work at home. Parents who read to their children, assist them with their homework, and provide tutoring using resources provided by teachers tend to do better in school than children whose parents do not assist them. Furthermore, research shows that the level of parental involvement is associated with academic success. Children whose parents are actively involved in their schooling benefit better than children whose parents are passively involved. Furthermore, children excel even more when their parents assist them at home with their homework, attend school sponsored events, and volunteer at their children's schools (Briones, Ritzes, Gijslaers& Brand -Gruwel 2021). "early childhood education programmes with strong parent involvement components have demonstrated" the effectiveness of this approach. Recognizing that parents differ greatly in their willingness, ability, and available time for involvement in school activities, these schools provide a continuum of options for parent participation.

Statement of the Research Problem

The importance of parental involvement in children's academic and social development has been widely accepted. Parental involvement is a key factor in determining a child's academic performance. The benefits are greatest when parents are involved in education consistently and from a young age (Andriano, 2012). Parental involvement in pre-school education of their children is fast becoming a serious problem in Nigeria because there is increasing cases of the busy (career) parent syndrome where both parents work multiple jobs, especially in present hardship in Nigeria and leave the children to the mercies of maids and caregivers. In some schools, records show that in a term, some parents had only shown themselves once in the school probably to pay fees. Against this background, the study seeks to determine the relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the academic performance of the child in selected schools in Lokoja, Kogi State - Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- a. To determine the extent of parental involvement in early childhood education in Kogi State.
- b. To determine the relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and learning outcomes.

Research Questions

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of parental involvement in early childhood learner development in relation to learning outcomes. The study answered the following research questions:

- 1. To what extent are parents in Lokoja, Kogi State Nigeria involved in the early elementary education of their children?
- 2. What is the relationship between parental involvements in early childhood education on the child's learning outcomes?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

Ho¹: The level of parental involvement in early childhood education, does not affect the educational performance of the child.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the ex-post facto. The population consists of all the Early Elementary School pupils public and Private School) in Kogi State. A total of 47,117 pupils in the private pre-primary school enrolments and 44, 489 pupils in the public pre-primary school enrolments, (91,606 pupils) this population is reported by Kogi State Ministry of Education(2017). While the sample size was calculated using the Yaro Yamane Formula and "the total sample size obtained is approximate to 400. Purposive method was employed, according to Ali (2014) in purposive sampling, the researcher uses his personal judgment to select elements that satisfy predetermined criteria. The researchers select three Nursery/primary schools in Lokoja an elite private primary school, an average/affordable private primary school and one Government UBE primary schools in Lokoja because of their peculiar environments and conditions of teaching and learning.

The family involvement questionnaire constructed by Fantuzzo, Tighe and Child (2000) was adapted for the typical Nigerian pre-school setting to measure parental involvement. It is a fifty-eight item scale with a Likert 4-point response format. The instruments were administered to the students with the approval of the school head mistresses/proprietors. The questionnaire sample was validated by experts in the field. Test-retest methods were used to determine reliability of the research instruments. The instrument was pre-tested on a selected sample similar to the actual sample used in the study. Piloting targeted about 1% of the total sample size. Pearson's Correlation method was used for the calculation the reliability value which was found to be 0.86, thus the instrument is highly reliable. Four hundred completed questionnaires were distributed and completed by respondents.

Results

The table below was used to answer research question one.

To what extent are parents in Lokoja, Kogi State – Nigeria involved in the early elementary education of their children?

Table1: Analysis of level of parental involvement in early childhood education

Parents/Respond	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Grade A	57%	26%	12%	5%
Grade B	35%	31%	21%	13%
Grade C	27%	29%	24%	20%

The table 1 above shows that for the A grade students, 57% of the respondents chose always, 26% chose often, 12% chose sometimes and 5% chose rarely. This table shows that high parental involvement reflected on the child's learning outcome (A grades), the chart above in contrast to the A grade students, 35% of the respondents chose always, 31% chose often, 21% choose sometimes and 13% chose rarely. This B Grades table indicates the level of dependence of the child's grades on parental involvement.

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The C Grades table above shows that, 27% of the respondents chose always, 29% chose often, 24% chose sometimes and 20% chose rarely. Almost half (44%) of the parents in this category responded with sometimes and rarely as compared to 17% in A grade students. This sharp contrast in parental invovement could be a justification of the child's lower learning outcome.

To answer research two stated thus, what is the relationship between parental involvements in early childhood education on the child's learning outcomes? The socio – economics characteristics of the parents was used to answer the research as shown below:

Table 2: Educational Background of respondents to the parental involvement questionnaire and corresponding child's grades

	A	В	С
Educational Background	Grade	Grade	Grade
No Formal Education	1	12	12
Primary School	3	12	24
Secondary School	15	36	32
Graduate	141	68	44
Total	160	128	112

The table above shows that only one out of one hundred and sixty parents with A grades has no formal education but twelve (12) out of a hundred and twelve (112) which represent 12% of the C graders parents have no formal education. For the secondary school level 15 out of 160 for A graders, 36 out of 120 respondents for B graders and 32 out of 112 for C graders. The highest number of University graduates are parents of A graders (144) followed by the B graders (68) and the least number is from the C graders respondents, 44 out 112.

Table 3: Employment Status of Respondents to the Parental Involvement Questionnaire and Corresponding Child's Grades

	A	В	С
Employment Status	Grade	Grade	Grade
Unemployed	1	3	44
Self Employed	75	53	45
Employed	84	72	23
TOTAL	160	128	112

Table 3 shows that the C graders have the highest number of unemployed parents while the A graders have the highest number of employed and self-employed (entrepreneurs and business people). This serves to show that the socio-economic status of the parent affects the learning outcome of the children.

Table 4: Marital Status of respondents to the parental involvement questionnaire and corresponding child's grades

1 8 8			
	A	В	С
Marital Status	GRADE	GRADE	GRADE
Single	20	28	34
Married	128	81	25
Separated	8	12	20
Divorced	4	7	33
TOTAL	160	128	112

53 out of 112 respondents of the C-graders questionnaires are either separated or divorced, 34 are single parents and 25 are married. This is in stark contrast to the A graders where 128 out of 160 are actively married, 20 single parents and 12 separated/divorced.

Test of Hypothesis

The level of parental involvement in early childhood education does not affect the educational performance of the child.

Table 5: chi- square test was used for the analysis.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ...

Parents/Respond	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	totals
Grade A	228	104	48	20	400
Grade B	140	124	84	52	400
Grade C	108	116	96	80	400
Total	476	344	228	152	1200

The above table of observation (Fo) was used to compute the expected value. (Fe)

$$(F_{228}) = 476 \text{ X} 400 = 158.67$$

1200

$$(F_{140}) = 476 \text{ X} 400 = 158.67$$

1200

$$(F_{108}) = 476 \text{ X} 400 = 158.67$$

1200

$$F_{104}$$
) = 344 X400 = 114.67 1200

$$(F_{124}) = 344 \text{ X} 400 = 114.67$$

1200

$$(F_{116}) = 344 X400 = 114.67$$

1200

$$(F_{48}) = 228 \text{ X} 400 = 76$$

$$1200$$

$$(F_{84}) = 228 \text{ X} 400 = 76$$

 1200

$$(F_{96}) = 228 \text{ X} 400 = 76$$

$$1200$$

$$F_{20}$$
) = 152 X400 = 50.67
1200

$$(F_{50}) = 152 \text{ X} + 400 = 50.67$$

1200

$$(F_{80}) = 152 \text{ X} 400 = 50.67$$

1200

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ...

Computation of Chi – squarevalue.

S/N	Freq observed	Freq Expected	Fo - Fe	$(Fo - Fe)^2$	$(Fo - Fe)^2$
	(Fo)	(Fe)			Fe
1	228	158.67	69.33	4806.65	30.68
2	140	158.67	- 18.67	348.57	2. 20
3	108	158.67	50.67	2567.45	16.18
4	104	114.67	-10. 67	113.85	0.99
5	124	114.67	9.33	87.05	0.76
6	116	114.67	1.33	1.77	0.02
7	48	76	-28	784	10.32
8	84	76	8	64	0.84
9	96	76	20	400	5.26
10	20	50.67	-30.67	940.65	18.56
11	52	50.67	1.33	1.77	0.035
12	80	50.67	29.33	860.25	16.98
Total					102.83

 X^2 cal = 102.83, then we look for chi –value from the table at 0.05 significant and at the degree freedom = (3-1)(4-1) = 2 x3 = 6, which is equal to 12.59. Since the calculated value is higher than the table value of chi –square we reject the null hypothesis which is stated thus asthe level of parental involvement in early childhood education, does not affect the educational performance of the child. Conclusively, parental involvement in early childhood education does affect the educational performance of the child.

Discussion of Findings

This present finding is in concord with the earlier works of Branhamand Lynch-Brown (2002) whose 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) 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, their academic work will be enhanced. The result in this study affirms that

parents' involvement in their children academic work relates positively to their academic achievement. (Ebuta and Ekpo 2014).

The study found that volunteering parents motivate their children leading to effective socialization. In addition, parents who volunteer, spare their time in the favour of children were found to raise the preschool children's morale to socialize and lay good foundation for the children future on performance. The volunteering parents in school activities enhance preschool children learning interest and determination towards education and better socialization as parents pause as role models. This concurred with Allen and Daly (2002) who found that more active form of parental involvement produces greater achievement benefits than the passive parents.

Communication among preschool parents, children and teachers was critical in ensuring effective parental involvement on children socialization in school. Effective communication between parents promote effective parenting where parents become closer and responsive to their children through communicating and supporting them in their academic activities and other school activities which influence children socialization in pre-school.

This is supported by Ahmed and Hazri (2012) in which they explained the findings from over thirty years of educational research indicating that parental involvement in the schooling process of their children have positive impact upon the academic success of those students. Another findings from the research also established that children whose parents are actively involved in theirschooling process are more likely to be successful in their education. In the same vein, some other studies revealed that parental involvement improves facets of their children education such as daily attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002); In general, effective family participation in schooling is considered to be a crucial component in the academic success of students. Based on the discussion above on the child's schooling process, the researchers are convinced that parents should extend their involvement beyond the basic teachers/parents relationship. They should take an active part in the activities such as School Governing councils, parent councils, and act as volunteers in the classroom. This is important as such children will gain more knowledge and be aware of parental involvement in any educational setting as mentioned by Wood (2003). Contrary to the above views, it should not be forgotten that parental involvement is still a problem especially in most areas where there is a high rate of illiteracy and poverty.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken in an effort to gain an understanding of what parental participation in children's schooling looks like in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. The results of the findings clearly shows, the percentage of respondents that chose Always and Often in the Family Involvement Status Questionnaire was 83% for A grade, 66% for B grade and 56% for C grade, meaning that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the academic performance of the child which is in support of several reviewed literatures.

The socio-economic characteristics analysed include; Level of Education, Employment Status and Marital Status. From data analysis, A Graders had the highest percentage of well-educated parents, gainfully employed parents and parents that stayed together in marriage, and the C graders had the least percentages of the analyzed socio-economic attributes. The results analyses vividly showed that children are most likely to perform better in their early childhood education with adequate participation of parents. Parental involvement is key to a child's academic achievements and a major determinant of the quality of the child's Adult life.

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