

Parental Involvement in Promoting Learning Achievements of Primary School Pupils in Sokoto State: Implications for Basic Education

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Abstract

This study titled 'parental involvement in promoting learning achievements of primary school pupils in Sokoto state' is to assess the opinions of parents on parental involvement in preparing children for effective learning through home support. The study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised male and female parents who have children in public primary schools and those with children in private primary schools. A sample size of 340 participants (170 from each of the two groups of parents) was selected through the purposive sampling technique. The study has three specific objectives and three corresponding research questions. An instrument titled: Parental Home Support Learning Activity Questionnaire (PHSLAQ) was developed by the researcher for data gathering. Mean and standard deviation was used for data analysis. The results revealed a unanimous decision in the responses of parents in terms of the importance of parental support, factors hindering the support, and the strategies to adopt in supporting children learning achievements. It was recommended among others that parents, regardless of whether their children attend public or private early childhood schools should be more committed to supporting children's learning in the early years of life.

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Background to the Study

Education is the process that prepares individuals to develop and actualize their potentials and capacities to live a successful life. As a process, education begins right from birth and continues throughout the journey of life. Education is universally accepted as the fundamental right of the child. It is, therefore, necessary that international standards and measures be followed to protect and promote the well-being of children in society via the provision of quality education. As noted by Rahuman and Uddin (2009), education is one of the basic needs and is fundamental for the growth and development of both developed and developing countries and as such, the development of any nation or community depends largely on the quality of education offered. To this end, ensuring quality at the grassroots or primary level of the education system is of considerable importance. Akanle (2007) stated that the basis for any development must commence with the development of human resources through quality education. Achieving a high level of educational attainment requires an understanding that education is a primary instrument for social, economic, and political pursuits.

Education, with particular reference to its provision at the primary level, should be a cooperative undertaking between the government and its citizenry. This perhaps explains the inclusion of school host communities as stakeholders in education. The fact that the government-built schools for the provision of primary education and parents or guardians enroll their children into the schools is a fact that stakeholders in the Nigerian education system (ranging from government to guardians) are so much concerned about children's learning. Therefore, the launching of the compulsory, free universal basic education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age by the Federal Republic of Nigeria brought about the increasing need for parental involvement for the promotion of children's learning achievement and the attainment of the goals of basic education. Basic Education as described in Nigeria's National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) is the education given to children of age 0-15 years. It encompasses the Early Childhood Care and Development Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. However, the 10 years of formal schooling covers 1 year of Pre-Primary Education for children aged 5-6 years, 6 years of Primary Education for children aged 6-12 years as well as 3 years of Junior Secondary School. This paper, however, focused on the primary education level with emphasis on parental involvement in promoting the learning achievement of pupils in schools operating at that level.

Parental involvement in the education of their children cannot be over-emphasized, because, the first environment for children is their parents' home. Ekanem (2004) noted that the home consists of a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, interacting with one another and performing an influential role of training the child. Thus, the involvement of parents in promoting primary school children's learning is concerned with taking care of children's quest for learning from the time they attained the age of formal learning. In this regard, the home becomes the primary agent of children's socialization and as such it has a direct and great influence on children's learning. As noted by Orakwe (2013) childhood educators often refer to parents as the child's "first and best

teachers" in this regard parents could be seen as important role-players in the provision of education at the grassroots level. Duke-Natrebo (2016) also noted that the home background has a vital influence on children's education and learning, and so, primary school pupils need to be encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward schooling and learning through interactions between parents and their children. Yan and Lin (2002) posited that parent active involvement in children school activities tends to positively affect school performance including higher academic achievement. Similarly, Kellagham (2003) asserted that the academic success of children depends on what parents do at home after school hours concerning the children's education. Nwakaibie (2009) supported this by pointing out that, children who are better prepared physically, mentally, and socially for school have an easier transition from home to school and stay longer at school.

In developing countries such as Nigeria, illiteracy on the part of parents and guardians has been acting against parents' active involvement in children's education, and as such, the way children learn at home is influenced by their parents' level of education. To this effect, Uzodimma and Onwurah (2016) sadly noted that many parents do not involve themselves adequately in meeting children's problems especially in the provision of learning materials. Such parents see the provision of books and other learning materials to children as a waste of scarce funds. However, Damian (2016) opined that variance in parents' participation in children's school activities could be an indicator of high or low learning achievement among children. From the above submissions, therefore, it could be seen that the type of home or family system to which a child belongs could influence the schooling and learning achievement of such a child.

Statement of the Problem

Primary education in Nigeria is the foundation upon which the entire education system was built. Children who attend primary schools and acquire quality education are not only more successful throughout their academic endeavors, but they are also able to grow into competent adults who become useful to themselves and their society. Hence, there is no gainsaying that primary schools are associated with several positive outcomes. This also makes good performance at the primary education level very crucial to pupils and their families. Since the return of democratic governance in 1999, successive administrations in Sokoto state have tried to live up to expectations in terms of resuscitation of education at the primary level. Many existing public primary schools were renovated and new ones have been established in both urban and rural areas to provide equal access to education at the grassroots level. Learning facilities and teaching personnel have in constant supply to primary schools.

However, the provision of primary education which has the sole aim of removing illiteracy and inculcating permanent literacy, numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively, seems to have fallen short of the expectations of society. The majority of the pupils completing the sixth grade are usually found wanting in terms of ability to read, write or communicate effectively. This distressing and embarrassing situation was perceived by the researchers who are (under their vocations) stakeholders in primary

education. This problem of poor quality in the public system of education has been a source of concern to society for years. But then, what are parents doing at home to complement the efforts of schools? The home is said to be the first agent of socialization and as such, it has a great influence on children's overall development. Parents are the first set of teachers, hence, their involvement in children's schooling may be an indicator of high or low learning among school children. Therefore, this study seeks to address the situation by assessing parental involvement (through home-based supports) in promoting the learning achievements of primary school pupils in Sokoto state.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the difference in the mean response of participants on the extent of parents' involvement in promoting children's learning achievements through home support.
2. To find out the difference in the mean response of participants on the importance of promoting children's learning achievements through home support.
3. To find out the difference in the mean response of participants on factors militating against parents' involvement in promoting children's learning achievements through home support.

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study to determine the perception of parents on their involvement in promoting primary school pupils' learning achievements through home-based educational activities. This design according to Amajuoyi and Joseph (2016: 48) involves descriptive recording and interpretation of conditions that now exist. It also involves some type of comparison, contrast, or relationships that exist between the variables involved in the study, hence the justification for its adoption in this study.

Population

The study was carried out in Sokoto metropolis and the population comprised of parents who have children in both public and private primary schools. A total of ten primary schools was selected, two from each of the five LGAs that constitute the metropolis.

Sample

A total of 34 parents were selected from each of the ten schools covered in the study through the purposive sampling technique. This gave a total of 340 male and female parents (170 with children in public primary schools and 170 with children in private primary schools) used as the sample size in the study. High, middle, and low socioeconomic classes as well as the occupation of parents were some of the characteristics that guided the selection of the participants.

Instrumentation

A 30-items questionnaire designed by the researchers and titled: Parental Home Support to Learning Activity Questionnaire (PHSLAQ) was used for data gathering. The

questionnaire was validated by three senior lecturers from the Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The questionnaire was also subjected to trial testing and a coefficient correlation reliability index of 0.83 was obtained.

Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered to the parents by the researchers with the help of administrators of the public and private primary schools used in the study. All the questionnaires distributed were retrieved. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics.

Results Analysis

The participants were classified into two groups (parents with children in public primary schools and parents with children in private primary schools). Thus, the data analysis was done based on a comparison of the responses obtained from the two groups of parents concerning each of the four research questions raised in the study.

Research Question One: What is the difference in the mean response of participants on the stated extent of parents' involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support?

Table 1: Mean response of participants on the extent of parental involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support

S/N	Item Statement	Parents with children in Public Primary Schools			Parents with children Private Primary Schools		
		X	SD	RS	X	SD	RS
1.	Alphabetic almanacs and calendars to enhance children's word learning at home.	2.91	1.03	A	3.17	0.82	A
2.	Slates, drawing papers, exercise books for children to practice writing at home.	2.87	1.02	A	3.28	0.86	A
3.	Paints, brushes, and color pencils to enrich children's image-making practice.	2.24	1.09	D	3.15	0.81	A
4.	Enough foreign toys and building blocks for children to play with at home.	2.20	1.07	D	3.06	0.97	A
5.	Enough locally sourced play materials for children to play at home.	2.21	1.00	D	3.26	0.80	A
6.	Microcomputers for children to play games at home	1.94	1.02	D	2.88	1.04	A
7.	Encourage children to listen to radios and watch televisions for learning	2.15	1.03	D	2.98	1.01	A
8.	Enough time for children to play and explore the home environment	2.96	1.00	A	3.41	0.74	A
9.	Enough time to watch and guide children home-play for academic gains.	2.06	1.04	D	3.13	0.87	A
10.	Encourage children's educative play through praises and gifts.	1.95	0.92	D	3.00	0.96	A
	Total	23.49	10.22		31.32	8.88	
	Cluster average of Mean and Standard deviation	2.35	1.02		3.13	0.89	

X = (Mean), SD = (Standard Deviation), SR = (Status of Response)

Table 1 revealed that parents with children in public primary schools have agreed with only item statements 1, 2, and 8 as the extent of parents' involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support. The response rating of this group of parents on item statements 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 ranged from 1.94 – 2.24 and these are values below the acceptable mean rating of 2.50. However, parents having children in private primary schools have agreed with all the item statements 1 – 10 and the mean rating of their responses ranged from 2.88 – 3.41 which are values above the acceptable mean rating of 2.50. This indicated the existence of a difference in the responses of the two groups of parents. This is also confirmed in the cluster average mean ratings and standard deviations of the two groups of parents which show 2.35 and 3.13 respectively. This has therefore revealed that the two groups of participants varied in their opinion regarding the extent of supporting children with materials and services at home to aid learning achievements.

Research Question Two: What is the difference in the mean response of participants on the stated importance of promoting children's learning achievements through home support?

Table 2: Mean response of participants on the significance of parental involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support

S/N	Item Statement	Parents with children in Public Primary Schools			Parents with children Private Primary Schools		
		X	SD	RS	X	SD	RS
1.	It is a source of personal development and fulfillment for parents.	2.98	0.96	A	3.12	0.97	A
2.	It helps the parent to recognize children's interests and decision-making abilities.	2.93	1.00	A	3.22	0.92	A
3.	It helps in making the parent-child relationship much stronger.	3.00	0.96	A	3.31	0.85	A
4.	It helps children to develop a feeling of self-worth and recognition at home.	3.12	0.89	A	3.15	1.03	A
5.	It helps in developing children's self-dignity and confidence in school.	3.08	0.90	A	3.14	0.87	A
6.	It assists children in transition to school and work by providing their learning needs.	2.87	1.02	A	2.91	1.01	A
7.	It leads to the timely development of the basic literacy and numeracy skills of children.	2.99	1.02	A	3.12	0.89	A
8.	It helps in the development of early creative talents in young children.	3.04	1.00	A	3.21	0.92	A
9.	It leads to children's early interaction with and appropriate use of learning materials.	2.90	1.03	A	3.12	0.97	A
10.	It helps in making children resourceful in their academic work and general life situation.	2.87	1.04	A	3.21	0.91	A
	Total	29.78	9.82		31.51	9.34	
	Cluster average of Mean and Standard deviation	2.98	0.98		3.15	0.93	

X = (Mean), SD = (Standard Deviation), SR = (Status of Response)

Table 2 revealed that participants in the two groups have responded in agreement with the item statements 11 - 20. The cluster means the response of parents having children in public primary schools is 2.98, whereas the cluster means a rating of parents having children in private primary schools is 3.15. These two sets of ratings were all above the bench mean rating of 2.50. This has indicated that item statements 11 - 20 are some indicators of the importance of parental involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support. The agreement is also confirmed by the closeness in the values of the corresponding standard deviations of the two groups of parents which show 0.98 and 0.93 respectively.

Research Question Three: What is the difference in the mean response of participants on the stated factors militating against parental active involvement in promoting children's learning achievements through home support?

Table 3: Mean response of participants on factors impending parental active involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	Parents with children in Public Primary Schools			Parents with children Private Primary Schools		
		X	SD	RS	X	SD	RS
1.	Parents are not adequately enlightened on their role as stakeholders in Primary education.	3.08	0.90	A	2.98	0.96	A
2.	Most parents have poor educational backgrounds and as such, they are ignorant of the importance of early education in the life of children.	3.29	0.84	A	2.94	0.98	A
3.	Most parents are not aware of the benefits of home support to children's school performance.	3.12	0.85	A	2.93	1.00	A
4.	Most parents do not have a positive attitude towards children's educational achievements.	2.93	1.00	A	3.09	0.95	A
5.	Many families have poor economic status and as such parents are not financially strong to actively support children's schooling.	3.04	1.00	A	3.22	0.92	A
6.	Many families lack interest in formal education and as such parents are not committed to providing learning materials for children to use at home.	2.99	1.02	A	3.12	0.89	A
7.	Most parents do not provide enough time for children to play and explore the home environment	2.91	1.03	A	3.31	0.85	A
8.	Most parents do not spare time to examine and guide children home-play for academic gains.	3.21	0.91	A	3.35	0.81	A
9.	Most parents do not reward children educative play through praises and gifts	3.00	1.02	A	3.14	0.87	A
10.	Conflicts at home lead to marital instability.	3.09	0.96	A	3.24	0.77	A
	Total	30.66	9.53		31.32	9.00	
	Cluster average of Mean and Standard deviation	3.07	0.95		3.13	0.90	

X = (Mean), SD = (Standard Deviation), SR = (Status of Response)

Table 3 indicated that the two groups of parents have all agreed with item statements 21 - 30. The cluster means a rating of responses of parents having children in public primary schools is 3.07, whereas the cluster means a rating of the responses of parents having children in private primary schools is 3.13. These two sets of ratings were all above the acceptable mean rating of 2.50. This has therefore indicated that item statements 21 - 30 have been agreed with as some of the factors impending parental involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support. The agreement is also

confirmed by the closeness in the values of the corresponding standard deviations of the two groups of parents which show 0.95 and 0.90 respectively.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study (as reflected in Table 1) revealed that to the opinions of parents of public primary school children, only item statements 1, 2, and 8 could be indicators of what parents do at home to support children's school learning achievements. However, the opinions of parents of private primary schools' children as shown on the same table indicated that all the item statements 1 – 10 are indicators of parental involvement in children's learning through home-based activities. The mean rating of responses from this group of parents ranged from 2.88 – 3.41 which were all above the acceptable mean rating of 2.50. This has therefore indicated that parents who have children in private primary schools involved themselves more in providing certain materials and activities at home to support their children's school readiness and learning achievements. This finding is in support of Uzodimma and Onwurah (2016) who noted that many parents do not involve themselves adequately in children's problems especially in the provision of learning materials. The finding is also in line with the first finding in the work of Damian (2016) which found a high extent of acceptability by parents in terms of their participation in children learning, through supporting children at home on how to read letters of the English alphabet and how to do their school assignments work.

The second finding of this study (as reflected in Table 2) revealed that, from the collective opinions of the two groups of participants in this study, item statements 11 – 20 are some of the importance of parental involvement in promoting children learning achievements through home support. This was made obvious from the mean response ratings of the parents of public and private primary children, which ranged from 2.87 – 3.22, and 2.91 – 3.31 respectively. Since the two sets of ratings were found to be greater than the criterion means of 2.50, it is therefore attested that parental involvement in children's education through the provision of learning materials and activities at home is central to the promotion of learning achievements of primary school pupils. The finding also lends strength to the view of Nwakaibie (2009) that intervention that supports young children's physical and mental development leads to increased enrolment and improve children's progress and performance in school, thereby lowering the rates of dropout and repetition as well as limiting the need for adult education programs. The finding also agrees with the assertion of Posse and Melgosa (2001) as cited in Duke-Natrebo (2016) that the home or family strongly influences the intellectual capabilities and school performances of children, as such, parents should never delegate their responsibility to the school.

The third finding of this study (as reflected in Table 3) revealed that participants in the two groups have responded in agreement with the item statements 21 – 30 as some of the factors impeding parental involvement in promoting primary school pupils learning achievements through home support educational activities. The mean rating responses of parents of public primary school children, ranged from 2.91 – 3.29, while that of parents of private primary school children ranged from 2.93 – 3.35. These two sets of ratings were all

above the acceptable mean rating of 2.50. This has therefore indicated that, from the collective opinions of parents who participated in this study, there exist certain factors which have translated into impediments toward parental involvement in promoting primary school pupils learning achievements. This finding lends strength to the claim of Dule-Natrebo (2016) that Nigeria remains one of the literacy backward countries in global ratings, and that as a result of this low level of literacy, parents' participation in the education of their children is hampered. The finding also agrees with the finding of Omotayo (2009) which is the gaps in parents and children relationship and domestic works (such as hawking) among the factors hindering the school performance of children.

The implication of the study to Basic education

This study emerged out the researcher's concern about the need for making primary schools' pupils in Sokoto state acquire effective basic literacy skills at the early stage of their lives. Therefore, the implication of this study to the provision of Basic Education in the state lies in the fact that parents are essential stakeholders in basic education, hence, the need for primary schools heads and classroom teachers to reach out to parents to establish home-school collaboration for the provision of quality basic education.

Conclusion

This study is concluded with a notation that, the government of Sokoto state had recognized the importance of primary education in the life of children and for the development of the state by discharging its constitutional responsibility in the education through the periodical renovation of public schools, constant supply of instructional materials, hiring of teachers and payment of wages to teachers as and when due. Therefore, this giant stride by the state should not be made incapacitated by failure on the part of parents (who are key stakeholders in primary education) to play their role actively.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward by the researchers to have adequate parental involvement that could help in achieving basic education among primary school pupils in Sokoto State Nigeria:

1. The government of Sokoto state should adequately enlighten parents throughout the state on their role as stakeholders in primary education. This can be done through the use of public media outlets in the state.
2. The government of Sokoto state should promote parental and family life education for the benefit of such parents who are ignorant of the importance of basic education. This could be by organizing workshops and seminars for parents and guardians who have the custody of primary school pupils in the state.
3. The Sokoto state Ministry of Social Welfare should in collaboration with the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) assist parents and guardians of primary school pupils in the state with some of the essential learning materials for children home use.

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