

Parental and Community Involvement as Correlate of Academic Performance Among Senior Secondary Schools in Calabar South, Nigeria

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Abstract

Poor quality of academic performance is an issue of concern to members of the society. This deplorable situation is attributed to many factors such as lack of parental and community involvement. This study, therefore, explored the relatedness of parental and community involvement to academic performance in senior secondary schools. To achieve the purpose of the study two research questions were raised. A descriptive survey research design of ex-post facto type was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 200 senior secondary school students who were selected by stratified random sampling method. Parental and community involvement questionnaire and academic performance test were used for data collection. Data obtained were analysed using multiple regression. Results shows that parental and community involvement in school matters are predictors of academic performance. Hence, Schools and government should focus not only on parental involvement, but also on establishing strong partnerships and relationships with parents and communities.

Keyword: Parental, Community, Involvement, Correlate, academic performance

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ABSTRACT

Poor quality of academic performance is an issue of concern to members of the society. This deplorable situation is attributed to many factors such as lack of parental and community involvement. This study, therefore, explored the relatedness of parental and community involvement to academic performance in senior secondary schools. To achieve the purpose of the study two research questions were raised. A descriptive survey research design of ex-post facto type was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 200 senior secondary school students who were selected by stratified random sampling method. Parental and community involvement questionnaire and academic performance test were used for data collection. Data obtained were analysed using multiple regression. Results shows that parental and community involvement in school matters are predictors of academic performance. Hence, Schools and government should focus not only on parental involvement, but also on establishing strong partnerships and relationships with parents and communities.

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Introduction

Education has been recognized by educational psychologists, government, stakeholders, teachers, parents, community members and even the students themselves all over the world, as one of the most important tools for meaningful growth and development of a nation. It is through the education acquired by the citizens of a nation that different areas of human endeavours are properly explored. It is in view of this fact that the past and present governments in Nigeria have accorded the educational sub-sector reasonable recognition. For instance, the huge annual budgetary allocations to education, the Education for All (EFA), the constant educational returns and the emphasis on mass literacy are example of government efforts to improve quality education output. The importance of education for national development has placed post primary education at the centre of the efforts of government to increase the rate of literacy level in Nigeria. According to Akomolafe and Olorunfemi-Olabisi (2011), higher institutions are depending upon the potential academic skills, knowledge and performance of secondary schools grandaunts for admission into various disciplines of their institutions for further studies. Hence, stakeholders in education systems consider academic performance at this level an important goal to produce the best quality candidates for higher institutions.

Student academic performance is seen as the foundation of a successful educational system in any society. It is the outcome of education which reveals the extent to which students, teachers or institutions have achieved their educational goals (Edinyang & Ubi, 2012). As highly important as secondary education students' academic performance is to both government and educationists, it is disheartening to note that most performance of students in secondary schools in Nigeria generally, and Cross River State in particular is fast declining. This declining stage of academic performance is recorded in both internal and external examinations. For instance, a senator representing Katsina state central in senate plenary session of March 2018, observed the recurring mass failure in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in the country since 2009 or thereabout which is embarrassing to the nation and prejudicial to the interest of Nigeria secondary school students and parents. He however, expressed worry that in both 2009 and 2010 WASSCE only 25.99 and 24.94 per cent respectively passed with five credits including English language and mathematics, while remaining 70% constitutes failure. In 2011 May/June WASSCE, only 649,159 out of 1,672,224 candidates that sat for the examination representing 38.81% got five credits pass and above including the core subjects of English language and mathematics. In 2013 WASSCE, only 29.17% of the candidates actually passed November/December examinations, while 70% failed. Also, in both 2017 and 2018 January/February WAEC private examinations, only 17.13% passed with five credits including core subjects respectively, while over 70% failed (Umaru, 2018).

However, this academic failure has deep effect on the society in terms of death manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics. It also signal that many candidates failed to meet the entry requirements for further studies in the higher institutions. Hence, there is a generic complaint that the anticipated bright future of the country might continue to be bleak if urgent action was not taken to address the recurring mess facing the education sector and indeed the future generation of Nigerian leaders. Thus, many scholars assert that the successful passage through the process of educational attainment is partly dependent on the entire parental and community involvement, Because of deteriorated performance in

public schools, there is distrust in the delivery of education in these schools, which by their design were purposed to serve as community schools, and preference for private ones has been growing. Community has relinquished its power to private proprietors of schools choosing to apportion all blame on the Government, rather than confronting the problem. Therefore, to get optimum performance from students there is need to be some sort of parental and community involvement. Lending credence to this, Okon (2009); Ibrahim and Bin Jamil (2012; Chowa, Masa and Tocher (2013); Meremikwu, Ekwueme & Enuakoha, (2014) asserts that getting parents and communities involved in the teaching and learning could be a valuable link to students' success in school generally. It is on this basic this study aimed to examine the composite relationship of parental and community involvement with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Calabar south local government, Cross River State, Nigeria.

In contemporary society like in Nigeria, parental involvement is a factor which has been found as a serious aspect among secondary schools in Calabar South, Cross River State, Nigeria as a whole. West (2000) investigated the relation between parental involvement in an early intervention program and school achievement for inner city children. Findings of the study involving 704 parents of children participation among parents with children in preschool and kindergarten and greater participation in activities resulted in higher reading achievement, lower rates of grade retention, and fewer years in special education among children until age 14. The researcher concluded that parents are crucial in helping to sustain the immediate positive effects of early intervention. Similarly, Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong and Jones (2001); and Sander (2001) reported that parents who choose to become involved in their children's home work believe that their involvement will make a positive difference in their children's learning. Therefore, actively involving such parents will further motivate them, and is bound to positively impact on the children's learning experience. To get parents involved, it is important to let them know content of the curriculum and engage them in discussions that would give them better understanding of the subjects and topics. Cosden, Morrison, Albanese and Macias (2001) reported that a study which involved members of the community, teachers, professionals as volunteers to work with students and families in student homework has a positive impact on the students' performance.

Faoag, Chaudhry, Shatrg and Berham (2011) posit that parents have long been identified as primary motivators, and remain the primary socializations agent for the children. They also stressed the importance of parenting in the life of a child. They submit that parenting plays an important role in forming and developing children's psychological outcomes, academic performance and educational aspiration. On the other hand, parental involvement generally includes three aspects: home-based involvement; school-based involvement; and academic socialization (Fan and Chen, 2001; Hill and Chao, 2009; Hill and Tyson, 2009). Home-based involvement entails parents' involvement activities at home such as supervising homework, checking homework, and talking about school life; school-based involvement includes some activities implemented at school such as communicating with teachers, attending the class meeting, and participating in school activities; academic socialization mainly includes parents' expectations and faith about their children's education (Hill and Tyson, 2009; Benner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016).

In addition, parental involvement includes numerous activities such as: listening to children while reading, allocation of special time for the child to discuss outside school matters, for their homework,

asking questions regarding the child's activity at school, conversations with the child's teachers about school work as well as the frequency with which parents express their intent to learn information about the activities the child. Among the benefits of parental involvement in children's lives can include: reducing the frequency of absenteeism unjustified, attitudes, behavior and mental health of children and increased parental confidence (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Parental involvement in their children's education either by helping or guiding them with home work performed at home after school programmes or by assisting them with class work during the school day has been noted to be a highly effective tool for improving academic performance (Topor, Keane, Shelton & Calkins, 2010). In another study, Wilder (2014) submits that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement was positive, regardless of a definition of parental involvement or measure of achievement. Furthermore, the findings revealed that this relationship was strongest if parental involvement was defined as parental expectations for academic achievement of their children. However, the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement was weakest if parental involvement was defined as homework assistance.

Parents confirmed that effort by the school to increase their interaction with their children by learning together has increased the time they spent at home with the children and made learning activities more interesting. It also created opportunities for social interaction between families since parents met often and discussed educational issues in a supportive and safe environment. The experience also built confidence in the parents as adult learners (Meremikwu et al. 2014). A study of Shumow and Schmidt (2014) on the impact of parent engagement and high school students also showed a positive association with parent engagement at school and students' GPA. In this study engagement at school was defined as volunteering, attending events at school, and interacting with teachers. However, there was a negative association with this type of engagement and students' time spent doing homework.

The study with high school students conducted by Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) also showed a positive association between parent engagement at school and students' emotional engagement. For this study, engagement at school was measured by the extent to which parents volunteer and attend meetings and events at school, and emotional engagement was measured as student reports of enjoyment in learning and interest in learning at school. Another study of six community schools in the Redwood City School District also demonstrated positive associations with school outcomes. These community schools served mostly low-income and Latino communities and focused on family engagement, extended learning, and social support services. Two of the schools served kindergarten through fifth grade, three served kindergarten through eighth grade, and one served sixth through eighth grades. This study used programme attendance, participation and achievement records, and longitudinal growth modeling. Findings showed that taking part in family engagement programmes (e.g., parent education classes, leadership and volunteer opportunities, and on-campus events) at the schools was associated with better attendance. In addition, taking part in family engagement programmes was associated with higher mathematics achievement scores but had no significant impact on English language arts achievement (Biag & Castrechini, 2016).

Tolbert and Theobald (2006) claimed that authentic hands on learning is produced when community are directly incorporated into classroom issue. A community is where one's heritage lies. Where you grow up and with whom, has a huge influence in the outlook you have on life. This reaffirms

that the responsibility of raising a well-educated and civic-minded generation of children cannot rest wholly with schools and parents. The broader community too, has a duty in the provision of high quality education for all learners. Community involvement is reflected through school-business partnerships such as scholarships and work experiences are linked to increased career opportunities for high school students (Foley, 2001). Community involvement in school is a medium from augmenting and enhancing the societal, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development of students. Community involvement in school has additional benefits. Through service learning a method of learning that unites course contents with community service or volunteerism students attend to the local, social and or economic needs of the community Kaiser-Drobney (2011).

Essentially, when community is passive in education matters, children can barely recognize that their contribution in the community is paramount and that they are the solutions to the change that they so much desire. Developing our communities starts with each and every one of us, where we take keen interest as well as participation in the development and growth of schools. Specific examples of community involvement in school include, but are not limited to, field trips, parent or community volunteers and guest speakers in school, parent or community member attendance at school-sponsored events, fundraising activities, service-learning activities, adult classes organized within the school, recreational activities associated with the school, student scholarships, donations to the school, community mentorship opportunities, charitable school events, visits to local museums, and cultural celebrations. Community resources that enhance community involvement in school include people, programs, businesses, activities, facilities, policies, finances, and local norms, beliefs, and attitudes—anything that can help promote student success (Epstein, 2011; Gregoric, 2013). A community active in the education of its children motivates them to critically think about the challenges prevalent in the community, inspires, supports and encourages them to do their best in finding to solutions (Nabuzale, 2018).

A longitudinal study by Chen, Anderson, and Watkins, (2016).of four schools that were part of the Providence Full Service Community Schools initiative in Rhode Island found positive associations with school outcomes as well. Schools in this initiative focused on providing and coordinating comprehensive services in school, including family literacy, expanded learning, wraparound services, health services, and family engagement. Data were collected for this study through parent questionnaires (n=685 for Wave 4) and analyzed using analysis of variance. Results demonstrated a statistically significant increase in parent comfort (e.g., the quality of parent-teacher and parent-school relationships), reputation (e.g., parent endorsement of the school), and parent-teacher communication (e.g., frequency of contact between parent and teacher) initiative-wide.

Research has found the importance of involving community organizations in addition to families in order to improve student and school outcomes. The Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement is one initiative that has shown preliminary success in forming partnerships and has led to significant academic achievement across targeted subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities, low-SES students) in one school (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Iachini, Flaspohler, Bean, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2010). In addition, study of 35 public elementary schools in an urban center in south eastern Virginia found that community engagement at school also had a positive association with student achievement. This study

collected survey data from teachers and other instructional faculty (n=1,292) as part of a larger study. In this study, community engagement is defined as actively engaging parents in the school and building school-parent-community partnerships. Findings revealed that there were statistically significant and positive associations between community engagement and student achievement in reading and mathematics, even when controlling for SES. Findings also suggested a positive academic optimism (i.e., collective efficacy of teaching competence and teaching task, faculty trust in students and parents, academic press or optimism) and community engagement in schools (Kirby and DiPaola, 2011).

Consistent community involvement and engagement at all levels of the school has been shown time and time again to have significant short and long-term benefits. According to extant literature reviewed in this study, when schools, parents and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, improved behaviour is registered, and school attendance is more regular, stay longer in school and enroll in high level programmes. It is noteworthy that, great volumes of previous studies were done in countries outside Nigeria generally and Cross River State in particular. Also, prior studies reviewed above focuses much on children in kindergarten and elementary schools creating a gap for this study to fill. The authors realizing this were motivated to conduct a study on parental and community involvement in school matters as correlate of academic performance and school matters among senior secondary schools students in Calabar South Local Government, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What is the extent to which parental involvement in school matters (volunteer to work with students, counselling of wards, helping in homework, attendance at meetings and events) either relatively or compositely influences academic performance among senior secondary school students?
2. To what extent does community involvement in school matters (Participation in decision-making, provision of voluntary staff, provision of infrastructure, relationship with staff) either singly or when combined relate with academic performance of senior secondary schools students?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design using the ex-post facto type was used for the study to obtain empirical information on the research problem. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) submitted that research design enables the researcher to validly, objectively, accurately and economically provide answer to research problem under study. Research design, therefore, guides the operation or direction of the research. There are many types of research designs but ex-post facto was adopted for the purpose of this study. From the derivative point of view, ex-post facto is literally translated to denote “from what is done afterwards”.

This, therefore, implies that ex-post facto is a method used to retrospectively study things that have occurred. Since the events that have already occurred cannot be manipulated, the researcher only studies the independent variables afterwards for the purpose of establishing causal-link with the dependent variable. From this explanation the choice of ex-post facto for this study is as a result of the researcher's inability to have direct control over the independent variables. The research interest was limited to the

retrospective examination of the possible effects of these independent variables on the dependent variable with the view to establish causal-link among them.

On this premise, correlational study (otherwise known as causal research) which is one of the kinds of ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. It equally enables researchers to collect two sets of data for the purpose of establishing relationship between the independent and dependent variables Population: The population of the study was made up of two hundred (200) participants, one hundred (100) parents and one hundred (100) committee leaders. Instruments: Two instruments were used for this study which is community and parental involvement scale, and students' academic test. Data generated from the questionnaires were subjected to statistical analyses using multiple regressions techniques for the three research questions.

Result and discussion

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Parental Involvement in School Matters and Academic Performance

Variables	Academic Performance	Mean	SD	Sig.
Volunteer to work with students	.022 -.234	57.92 16.86	11.99 1.39	0.01 0.01
Counselling of Wards	-	29.92	6.04	0.01
Helping in homework	.157	2.74	1.01	0.01
Attendance at meetings and events at School	.145			

** $P > .05$ and 0.01

Table 2: Analysis of Variance for Parental Involvement in school matters with Academic Performance

Multiple	R	.239		
Multiple	R ²	.057		
Standard error		11.82		
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	810.873	3	270.291	1.933
Residual	13422.487	96	139.818	
Total	14233.360	99		

* $P > .05$

Table 3: Standardized Coefficients of Parental Involvement in School Matters with Academic Performance.

Variables	B	Std.	β	T	sig
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		Error			
1. Counselling of Wards	-.124	.864	-.014	-.43	.886
2. Helping in Homework	-.482	.210	-.243	-2.395*	.019
3.Attendance at meetings and school events	.538	1.188	.045	.453	.652
Constant	72.957	16.861		4.327	.019

** $P > .05$

As Table 1 shows, there was significant relationship between parental involvement in school matters (volunteer to work with students, counselling of wards, helping in homework, and attendance at meetings/school events). Noting the results of table 1, academic performance was most highly negative correlated with counselling of wards with correlations coefficients of -.234 this shows that counselling of students is perceived as the dominant school matters. In the same vein, the rest of correlation coefficients among independent variable (parental involvement in school matters) and dependent variable (academic performance) are helping in homework ($r = -.157$), Attendance at meeting and school events ($r = .142$), while volunteer to work with students ($r = .022$) had the lowest correlation coefficients. Hence, optimum academic performance among senior secondary school students is associated with highly parental involvement in school matters in terms of counselling, volunteering, helping in homework and attending school meetings and events.

To test the significance of regression, analysis of variance in table 2 was used. Noting the results in Table 2, parental involvement in school matters (volunteer to work with students, counselling of wards, helping in homework, and attendance at meetings/school events) are joint predictors of academic performance ($R^2 = .057$, $F_{(4, 96)} = 1.933$, $P < .05$) with $R = .239$, $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .054$ and standard error of 11.82. The result implies that any variations in academic performance among senior secondary school students in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State are jointly accounted for by 5.7% in the variation in a combination of the parental involvement in school matters. By implications, the more parents get involved at school matters measured in this study, that is, the extent to which parents volunteer, give counselling, help in homework, and attend meetings and events at school, the more students' academic performance and learning at school will be improve.

Results in Table 3 displays the results of the relative contributions of parental involvement in school matters (counselling of wards, helping in homework, and attendance at meetings/school events) in the prediction of the dependent variable (academic performance). Since the regression weights (β) indicates the relative contribution of each of the parental involvement in school matters to academic performance, the results show that parents involvement in helping in homework is most significant predictor of academic performance in senior secondary school ($\beta = -.248$, $t = -2.395$, $P < .05$), followed by attendance at school meetings and events ($\beta = .045$, $t = .453$, $P < .05$), and counselling of wards ($\beta = -.014$, $t = -.43$, $P < .05$). However, this result is in consonance with findings of prior studies Guolaug, (2010); Meremikwu et al. (2014); Biag & Castrechini, (2016), that parental involvement in school has been associated with academic achievement.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations and correlations Matrix for community involvement in School Matters and Academic Performance

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Academic performance	1.000				
2. Participation in decision making	-.117	1.000			
3. Provision of Voluntary staff	.174*	.015	1.000		
4. Provision of infrastructure	.012	-.233*	-.071	1.000	
5. Relationship with staff	.111	-.055	-.191*	.126	1.000
Mean	57.83	16.86	21.17	19.18	17.13
Standard Deviation	12.07	1.39	2.63	10.78	8.26

**P>.05 and 0.01

Table 5: Analysis of Variance for Community Involvement in School Matters with Academic Performance

Multiple R	.254			
Multiple R ²	.064			
Standard error	11.91			
Source of variation	SS	Df	Ms	F
Regression	928.644	4	232.161	1.635
Residual	13485.466	95	141.952	
Total	14414.110	99		

**P>.0 5

Table 6: Standardized Coefficients of Community Involvement in School Matters and Academic Performance

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	T	p
1. Participation in decision	-1.007	.884	-.116	-.1.138	.258
2. Provision of voluntary staff	.907	.455	.202	1.992*	.049
3. Provision of infrastructure	-.002	.115	-.019	-.188	.852
4. Relationship with staff	.212	.149	.145	1.427	.157
Constant	52.395	18.925		2.768	.007

**P>.05 and 0.01

Result in Table 4 is the matrix of the inter-correlation coefficient among the four related community involvement in school matters of participation in decision-making, provision of voluntary staff, provision of infrastructure, relationships with staff and academic performance. In Table 4, academic performance was most highly correlated with provision of voluntary staff ($r = .174$). This shows that provision of voluntary staff is perceived as the dominant community involvement in school matters variable. The rest of the correlation coefficients among independent variable (community involvement in school matters) and

dependent variable (academic performance) are participation in decision-making ($r = -.117$), relationship with staff ($r = .111$); while provision of infrastructure ($r = .012$) had the lowest correlations coefficients. However, the relationships amongst community involvement in school matters and academic performance was found to be significant at 0.05 and 0.01 alpha level.

Results in Table 5 further shows that community involvement in school matters of participation in decision-making, provision of voluntary staff, provision of infrastructure and relationships with staff are significant joint predictors of academic performance among senior secondary school students in Calabar south local government area ($R^2 = .064$, ($F_{(4, 99)} = 1.6535$, $P < .05$) with $R = .254$, Adj. $R^2 = .060$ and Standard error = 11.91. This result indicates that any variation in academic performance was jointly accountable for by 6.4% variations in a combination of the community involvement in school matters variables.

The regression model in Table 6 shows the relative contributions of each of the community involvement in school matters variables to the dependent variable (academic performance). The results in the Table reveals that provision of voluntary staff is the most significant predictor of academic performance ($\beta = .202$, $t = 1.992$, $P < .05$), followed by relationship with staff ($\beta = .145$, $t = 1.427$, $P < .05$), participation in decision-making ($\beta = -.116$, $t = -1.138$, $P < .05$) and provision of infrastructure ($\beta = -.019$, $t = -.188$, $P > .05$). These results means that provision of voluntary staff, relationship with staff and participation in decision –making are good individual community involvement in school matters predictors of academic performance of senior secondary school students. On the other hand, provision of infrastructure was not a good individual predictor of academic performance in this study. But we should be carried away by this result because good learning environment with needed infrastructure could enhanced better teaching-learning process The study is in consistent with the submission of Tolbert and Theobald (2006); Kirby and DiPaola (2011); Chen, Anderson and Watkins (2016). This implies that community involvement in school matters is considered as one of the strategies in achieving better educational goals and by extension optimum students' academic performance.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that there is a demonstrable connection between parental involvement, community involvement, and student academic performance. Schools and government should focus not only on parental involvement, but also on establishing strong partnerships and relationships with parents and communities. These relationships and partnerships take time to build, but can lead to benefits for students and schools. Although most administrators and programme funders are interested in seeing schools move out of improvement status and academic achievement scores increase, other benefits to students that may arise include engagement in class, improvements in positive behaviours, emotional well-being, increased social skills, and postsecondary readiness. Recommendations for strengthening parent, school, and community involvement that can lead to school improvement and increased student performance include the following: firstly, provide opportunities for parents to work together, learn from each other, network, and build social capital. Secondly, focus on empowering parents, building parent leadership, and developing capacity for families to act as partners in decision making with schools. Finally, offer classes

and courses for families that can improve adult life skills, increase their ability to support their children's education and learning, and get them involved in community building and advocacy

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