

## INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON CAREER PREFERENCE OF STUDENTS IN YENAGOA EDUCATIONAL ZONE OF BAYELSA STATE

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of parental involvement on career preference of students in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa state. Descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprised of all students, teachers and parents in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State. A sample of 499 respondents was used in the study. The instrument for data collection was a “Parental Involvement and Career Preference Questionnaire” validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha formula and a coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that causes of non-parental involvements in senior secondary school students’ academic activities in Bayelsa State the study revealed that illiteracy, nature of parents’ occupation and ignorance on the subject taught in the schools has significant impact on the academic achievement. It was recommended that guidance and counsellors should provide literacy awareness to parents in achieving students’ educational success.

**Keywords:** Influence, Parental Involvement, Peer Pressure, Career Preference

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### INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement in students’ academic achievement has attracted many educators and researchers in the field of education globally. Parental involvement emerged as compensation programme among other educational programmes to encourage low-income parents to prepare their children for more successful schooling and prevent education delays for children who are at risk (Bakker, et al., 2007). It was just an appeal to support lower school achievers through parents’ intervention. For instance, in United States of America (USA), parental involvement was established as the programme for low-income kindergarten and first grade students to sustain compulsory education programme. Its execution manifested positive results by equipping parents with skills on how to help their children with home works for enhancement of education progress.

When parents are involved in their children’s education, it enhances commitment and interests (World Education Forum Conference, WEFC, 2000). Therefore, it is ideal for educationalist to ensure all challenges that are thought to hinder parental involvement are worked through, particularly in senior secondary schools where currently students’ academic achievement is

declining. Similarly, government should promote parental involvement through policy statements that allow formulation of parent–school association with the intention of enhancing children’s education. The argument as opined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2003) draws strong support on how parents are vital in children’s schooling in the way of demanding policy which act upon constraints that limit parents in monitoring children education in senior secondary schools. This strengthens efforts towards achieving quality Education for All (EFA).

In the case of some African countries, parental involvement in education has also attracted many scholars in relation to its contribution to students’ academic achievement. Eze (2002) revealed that parents are the first teachers at home and potential in early literacy skills acquisition of their children for higher academic progress and positive attitude towards learning can be achieved if parents become more involve in their children’s academic activities. Studies from South Africa also uncovered that parental involvement in students’ study programmes contribute to good achievement (Ndebele, 2015). Education policies and programmes in Nigeria like UNESCO (2000) and Lareau and Manoz (2012) recognizes the roles of parents in education through decentralization, in which parents are involved in education of their children’s.

Experiences from schools indicate that parents are doing less to fulfill their responsibilities of paying school fees, attending parents-teacher meeting, contacting to school about students’ academic progress and attendance which is contrary to the expected aim of these policies. Abdul-El-Fattah (2006) argues that parental involvement has been seen as a mechanism for raising the level of students’ academic progress. Attempts and efforts had been made by States and Federal governments in Nigeria in terms of programmes, policies, and practices like Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), School Based Management Committees (SBMCs); and the Whole School Development Planning (WSDP) to encourage and facilitate strong parents-school linkages.

For Abdul-El-Fattah, PTA is an instrument of community participation in education. These programmes were aimed at providing platforms for parents, guardians, sponsors and teachers in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions to meet, exchange views deeply, analyze issues and take and effectively pursue implementation of decisions on matters affecting education in Nigeria with the appropriate agencies. In Bayelsa State, there has been poor students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools over the years and efforts are always undertaken to address the problem. Among the factors that are suspected associated with the students’ poor academic achievement is lack of parental involvement and unfavorable home environments.

It is also observed that, in Bayelsa State most public and private senior secondary schools are day schools and parental level of involvement is low probably due to their personal economic activities. Although there are many factors that affect students’ academic achievement, the factors related to parents’ involvements need to be considered for investigation to authenticate the cause of students’ poor academic achievement in the study are. Hence, the need to investigate the effects of parental involvement on students’ academic achievement in public and private senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem facing senior secondary school education today in Nigeria is how to involve parents in academic matters in order to enhance students’ academic achievement. Parental

involvement in the form of attending to students' educational need, interest and support has an influence on their academic performance and attitudes towards educational activities. Despite all these immense importance, many parents feel uninformed about some educational practices and how they can be more involved with their child's learning. A number of strategies have been implemented internationally to encourage parent-teacher involvement in educational practices. However, research of these nature particularly on the effect of parental involvement on senior secondary school students' academic achievement is limited. Studies by Sheldon (2009) and Lemmer (2014) revealed the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement that enhance not students' academic achievement but it also had positive influence on students' attitude and behaviour and even that of their teachers. Undoubtedly, accumulation of these challenges can make students become low achiever, depressed and misbehave. It stands to reason that a study like this need to be conducted so as to ascertain empirically whether parental involvement affects senior secondary school students' academic achievement. Thus, this study set out to determine the effects of parental involvement on academic achievement of senior secondary school students' in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How does parents assist their children in solving academic problems at home in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State?
2. What are the ways needed to bring parents and teachers to work together in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State?
3. What are the causes of non-parental involvements in their children's academic activities in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State?
4. What are the strategies that can be used to increase parental involvement in children's academic activities in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

Parenting in this study is a great responsibility and lifelong activity which involves caring and bringing up of children by parents or guardians. Parenting is a life-long activity that requires much patience and temperament to adjust (Anderson, 2017). According to Anderson, parenting is to raise a child and also educate him or her in the best possible way. The aim of parenting is thus to create socially responsible, productive individual who make not only his or her parents proud but also the society proud as well with his or her endeavors (Baumrind, 1991). Through parenting a child receives education, which is totally different from the education that a child receives at school. Through parenting, a person also fulfils his or her parental duties. The basic parental duty that a person has to fulfil is to provide enabling environment for the child or children's social development and security.

#### **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) argued that when parents are involved in their children's schools, academic motivation and achievement increase. Students' interest in learning, competence, and understanding of a subject area, improves and promotes student achievement.

Haas and Reiley (2008) examined ways to increase homework completion among middle school

students using selected interventions. One intervention required students to complete daily homework planners and parents to sign the planners for verification. Students who were consistent with the study requirements received a Gotcha slip from school staff as positive recognition. The findings indicated that most parents cooperated. Despite a few nonparticipants, the homework planners, in conjunction with a Gotcha slip, created a dialog between teachers and students as well as between teachers and parents.

Haas and Reiley also found that not all students knew how to fill out the homework planners accurately, and the increased communication with parents served to improve these students' organizational skills and increase homework completion rates. Hara and Burke (1998) investigated whether inner city third grade students experienced significant and sustained academic growth when their parents were more directly involved with the school. They conducted an assessment to determine what the elementary school needed to do to ensure an effective parent involvement program. The process included research, planning, implementation, and program evaluation. The researchers used Epstein's framework for building parental partnerships as the model best suited for setting program goals and conditions. The five-step implementation process included:

- (a) create an action,
- (b) obtain funds,
- (c) identify a starting point,
- (d) develop a 3-year plan, and
- (e) continue planning to improve the program.

Parents and the community were made aware of the program, and the researchers administered a needs assessment survey to parents and third grade students. They used the results of the survey to implement a program that encouraged parent participation in the following school related activities: Offering parenting workshops (among the most popular activities) Gathering and analyzing data for activity planning purposes Developing parent outreach training programs Obtaining information from the needs assessment analysis Planning alternatives for parents with special needs Seeking funding for additional program implementation Establishing open houses (in-school and throughout the community) Hosting family nights (e.g., meet teachers at the public library or using the school library and computer labs with children) Creating popular nutrition workshops Promoting parent discussion groups Offering Rabbit Ears Radio activity

Bower and Griffin (2011) used the Epstein model as a strategy to study parental involvement in a high poverty, high minority elementary school. The study involved a student body of 347 students of multiethnic backgrounds. Five teachers and two members of the administrative team were interviewed for this study. The researchers used a digital voice recorder and transcribed responses to the questions verbatim. Collected data also consisted of field notes based on observations of formal parental involvement activities within the school environment. Communication and home learning consisted of weekly reports sent to parents and personal calls made by teachers and the administrator to invite parents to school events.

Bower and Griffin (2011) found low parent attendance despite efforts by the school to include them in activities. Engagement was not apparent in the study, and the researchers observed a lack of communication between parents and teachers. The researchers determined that schools and teachers did not build effective relationships with parents. Further, Bower and Griffin noted that the Epstein model does not fully capture the essence of how parents want to

participate in their children's school activities. They suggested additional studies to provide information on improving communication and encouraging involvement among parents.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate for this study since information will be gathered from a sample of the population, who are familiar with the ideas relating to the purpose of study with the aim of generalizing the results for the entire population.

The population of the study comprised all 36 principals, 3542 teachers and 96594 students in the 36 public secondary schools in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State. A sample size of 499 respondents, comprising 24 teachers, 80 parents and 395 students across the LGA was used in the study.

The instrument for data collection was a "Parental Involvement and Academic Performance Questionnaire" developed by the researcher. The instrument is a structured questionnaire which consist of sections, 1 and 2. Section 1 focused on the demographic details of the respondents, while section 2, elicited information on the Parental Involvement and Academic Performance (PIAP). The section 2 of Parental Involvement and Academic Performance was further divided into four (4) sub sections, each section of PIAP measuring the items in all the research questions. All items were measured on { Likert} 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE)-4 points, High Extent (HE)-3 points, Low Extent (LE)-2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE)-1 point. DELETE Face and content validity of the questionnaire was ascertained through observations from supervisor and experts in measurement and evaluation. Finally, their criticism, advice and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft.

The reliability of the instrument 0.844 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha which was considered appropriate for the study. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### Research Question 1

How does parents assist their children in solving academic problems at home in Bayelsa State?

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of responses on how parents assist in solving academic problems at home

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	REMARKS
1.	Provide all necessary learning materials	2.16	1.77	Disagreed
2.	Provide means of transportation to and from school	3.52	1.88	Agreed
3.	Assignment/homework	2.17	1.73	Disagreed
4.	Provide lesson teacher	3.82	1.45	Agreed
	<b>Grand mean</b>	2.41	1.84	Disagreed

**Source: Researchers' Desk (2022)**

Result in Table 1 revealed that parents do not assist students at home with their academic problems. This is evidence by the grand means of 2.41 and standard deviations 1.84 on all items.

### Research Question 2

What are the ways that can bring parents and teachers to work hand-in-hand in Bayelsa State?

**Table 2:** Mean and standard deviation of responses on how parents and teachers work hand-in-hand in Bayelsa State

S/N	ITEMS	mean	SD	REMARKS
1	Teachers should involve parents' school monthly sanitation	1.30	1.81	Disagreed
2	Involving parents in making rules and regulations	3.35	1.99	Agreed
3	Involving parents in school facilities maintenance	2.84	1.95	Agreed
4	Regular meeting with the school P.T. A	3.14	2.03	Agreed
5	Through phone calls to discuss students' academic activities	2.35	1.67	Disagreed
	Grand	2.49	1.92	Disagreed

**Source: Researchers' Desk (2022)**

Results in Table 2 revealed that the grand mean on the responses on the ways that can bring parents and teachers to work hand-in-hand in Bayelsa State is 3.72. This indicates that involving parents in making school rules and regulation, maintenance of school facilities and putting emphasis on Parents Teachers Association Meetings can bring parents and teachers to work together in Bayelsa State.

### Research Question 3

What are the causes of non-parental involvements in their children's academic activities in Bayelsa State?

**Table 3:** Mean and standard deviation of responses on the causes of non-parental involvement In their children's academic activities in Bayelsa State

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	REMARKS
1	Illiteracy	3.94	1.94	Agreed
2	Nature of their occupation	3.69	1.93	Agreed
3	Lack of interest in western education	2.27	1.80	Disagreed
4	Lack of knowledge to teach those subjects taught	3.16	1.93	Agreed
	Grand mean	3.76	1.90	Agreed

**Source: Researchers' Desk (2022)**

Results in Table 3 revealed that the causes of parental non-involvement in the students' academic activities their children are: illiteracy, nature of parents' occupation and lack of knowledge to teach those subjects taught in senior secondary school. This is due to the grand mean of 3.76 and standard deviation of 1.93 respectively.

### Research Question 4

What are the strategies that can be used to increase parental involvement in children's academic activities in Bayelsa State?

**Table 4:** Mean and standard deviation of responses on strategies that can increase parental

involvement in their children’s academic activities in Bayelsa State

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	REMARKS
1	Organizing terminal parents/guardians’ day by schools	3.11	1.02	Agreed
2	Parents and teacher should meet at least twice to thrice in a session	3.32	1.07	Agreed
3	Creation of other association other than P.T.A. e.g. School Base Management Committee (SBMC)	3.29	1.07	Agreed
4	Making school phone number available to all parents or guardians	3.40	1.10	Agreed
	Grand	3.29	1.06	agreed

**Source: Researchers’ Desk (2022)**

The result shown in Table 4, revealed that all the respondents agreed on the strategies that can increase parental involvement in students’ academic activities in Bayelsa State. This is because all items had grand mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 2.26.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This study revealed that parents assist students in solving academic problem at home in Bayelsa State. This is evident by the fact that Items in Table 1 was rated (3.41±1.84) grand mean and standard deviation respectively. This finding is supported by Walberg (1984) and Odoh and Chukuani (2017) who founded that parent who assisted students with learning facilities such as textbooks, favourable environment and solving assignment did better in their academic performance. On how parents and teachers to work hand-in-hand in Bayelsa State the respondents agreed that parents and teachers come together to improve students’ academic achievement through involving parents in making rules and regulation, involving parents in maintenance of school facilities, nd a putting more emphasis on Parents Teachers Association Meeting (PTA). Supporting this finding Clark (2007) revealed that, students, parents and teachers can work hand-in-hand, through involving parents in maintenance of school facilities, putting emphasis on Parents Teachers Association Meeting (PTA).

Concerning the causes of non-parental involvements in senior secondary school students’ academic activities in Bayelsa State the study revealed that illiteracy, nature of parents’ occupation and ignorance on the subject taught in the schools has significant impact on the academic achievement. The finding is consistent with that of Akinsany (2011) who proved that parents’ education had the highest significant influence on the academic achievement of students. Parents who did poorly in school are less likely to provide these positive influences to children. Clark (2007) findings also revealed that those parents that own large business place did not have enough time to assist their children with academic work at home. The finding of this study revealed the strategies for increasing parental involvement in students’ academic activities in Bayelsa State is by organizing terminal parents/guardians day in the schools, calling a meeting two to three times in a year creating more associations other than Parents Association like School Base Management Committee and making school phone number available to all parents and guardians. The finding is similar to that of Epstein (2005) who found that, the higher parents engage themselves in management committee, visiting school from time to time. The finding of this study revealed that parental income influences the academic

achievement of senior secondary school students' in Bayelsa State with the grand mean and standard deviation  $3.68 \pm 1.91$  respectively. The finding of this study is related to that of Hill and Craft (2004) who found that parents' income had influence on students' academic performance in school, insufficient parental income, family type and lack of funding by governments are other factors influencing students' poor academic performance. This is in line with Osuafor and Sanni (2013)'s study that revealed that family structure, parental involvement and educational level of parents had influence on students' achievement. The finding is similar to that of Castelino and Hill (2004) and Thomas (2011) who found that parental income influenced students' academic achievement. Parents whose income is low cannot afford to provide their children with available learning materials.

## CONCLUSION

This study determined the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement of senior secondary school students' in Bayelsa State. The study hypothesized that parental involvement in students' educational activities have a significant effect on the students' achievement. The study revealed that parental income is directly related to students' academic achievement. This means that the parental level of involvement in students' educational activities play important role on students' achievement. The study revealed that organizing termly parents/guardians day in schools, calling a meeting two to three times in a year creating more associations other than Parents Association like School Base Management Committee and making school phone number available to all parents or guardians as strategies will encourage parental involvement.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

The study recommended that schools should encourage parents to attend Parents Teachers Association meetings.

1. Guidance and counsellors should provide literacy awareness to parents in achieving students' educational success.
2. The study also recommend government to provide all the necessary learning materials to schools and make free education to help those from the low income families have access to quality education.

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