

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined parental involvement as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study was 21,272 SS2 students in 267 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 SS2 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The instrument 'Parental Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ)' was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instrument was subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts. On the other hand, construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS version 26 which indicated that the instrument was suitable for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.78 for PIQ was obtained. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with five research assistants. Out of 1,064 copies of the instrument administered, 935(88%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used for the study. The findings of the study revealed that parental involvement in school decision-making and parenting practices positively and significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that parental involvement is a driving force that predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that parents should be given more opportunities to form part of the school governing boards so as to bring the school closer to the parents to foster closer parent-school relationship. Parents on the other hand, should make more efforts to involve themselves in the education of their children by providing their educational needs and other necessary support. This will go a long way in boosting students' academic engagement and performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Students' Academic Performance

Introduction

The present implication of the academic achievement of students in the senior school certificate examination (SSCE) has been a source of worry to the public and stakeholders in the education sector. There is a growing concern of the society about the realization of secondary education objectives due to the observation that some teachers do not have good teacher-student relationship either do parents get involved with their children education that could facilitate better performance of students in public secondary education in Anambra State, Nigeria. Thus, academic performance has been one of the most important goals of the educational process, which has been of concern to parents, guardians, students and even the wider society both at national and international levels.

Academic performance is regarded as excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as in co-curricular activities. Anierobi (2022) opined that the academic performance of a child is the learning outcomes of the child, which includes the knowledge, skills, and ideas acquired and retained through their course of study within and outside the classroom situations. Lone (2022) perceived academic performance as students' ability in computation and problem solving, which can normally be measured by a writing test. Academic performance is a performance by students in both curricular and co-curricular activities. In his own view, Chikendu (2023) stated that academic performance entails the achievement a student makes in school. Academic performance deals with the extent students have gained from a particular course of instruction. Determining academic performance helps the teacher and the students to evaluate and estimate the degree of success attained in learning a given body of knowledge. Hence, Okeke (2024) stated that academic performance is defined by examination marks, teachers' given grades and percentiles in academic subjects. And this will enable the parents who are checking on their children to ascertain the level of their performances in the school.

Students' academic performance measures the amounts of academic content students learn in a determined amount of time. Each grade level has learning goals or instructional standards that educators are required to teach. Standards are similar to a 'to-do' list that a teacher can use to guide instruction. When students have the support they need from their teachers, they have more freedom to focus on their academics, improving their chances of success. The most common kinds of problems students face are related to academics, accessibility, finances, living environment, mental health and wellness, and time management. Onongha et al. (2023) argued that the major ones are students' factors such as students' learning skills, parental background, environmental causes, and peer influence. Others include teacher-related factors, school factors, socio-cultural factors, and others. Thus, academic concerns, which might include issues such as learning difficulties or disabilities, underachievement, lack of attention from teachers and bullying, affect a number of students throughout their academic careers, from elementary school to university which result to poor academic outcome.

Contextually, academic performance is the amount of academic content a student learns in a specific time period. It is a common experience that one who fails in annual examination, is supposed to be retarded academically although he can be highly advance in the development of other aspects. However, since the understanding of concepts is a prerequisite for good academic performance, it, therefore, requires that parental involvement should not be an oversight in the schools. Nwune *et al.* (2022) indicated that schools and parents should be actively involved in enhancing students' academic performance. Contrarily, parents without involvement in their children's education process are merely considered to de-motivating and demoralizing their children through negligence.

Parents' active involvement in their children's education has a positive and noteworthy impact on children's lives, including their development, behaviour, motivation and academic performance. Parental school involvement refers to the involvement or engagement of the parents in the school activities of the children with the aim of fostering their children's academic success. The increase in the school activities by parents could be attributed to the interest and willingness of parents to be involved in the learning process of their children and the value they place on their children's educational success. Anyaeji and Ndukwe (2023) has stated that children, schools, and parents themselves benefit when they are allowed to volunteer, act as audience for programmes, and/or partake in the decision making process of the school. Lone (2022) disclosed that areas of parental involvement within the school that have received tremendous attention and support comprises; attendance at meetings in connection to school related problems, attendance at plays, concerts, sporting events, and attendance at school board meetings. Parental involvement comprised parental attitudes, actions, style, events that happen inside or outside the school environment to support children's academic or behavioural success in their presently enrolled school.

Parental involvement in children's education has become an important factor for building these parent-child relationships and improving children's path to educational success. In this regard, Anierobi et al. (2024) defined parental involvement as parents' participation in children's schooling by providing resources to children within a given domain, more specifically in the academic domain of children's lives. The most common forms of parental involvement are parents attending school meetings, such as PTA meetings, parent-school communication, parent's participation in school activities, involving in decision-making and parent-teacher conferences (Okeke, 2024).

Equally, parental involvement is assumed to be more of both parents' responsibility. In line with this, Nwokolo and Obijindu (2020) showed that students performed better academically and had more positive school attitudes if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable and involved in their child's learning. Adeyeye (2023) indicated that parents less to fulfilling their responsibilities of paying school fees, attending Parents-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, contacting the school about students' academic progress and attendance. Balogun (2023) argued that parents and students are clamouring for quality education for all, especially in democratic education system that requires parents to be informed, participate and influence decision that affect their children. Balogun (2023) added that parental involvement includes parental practices at home, communication with school, active participation in PTA meeting and school voluntary services. In the words of Alimba et al. (2024), the components of parental involvement in terms of communication with school, involving in their children education at home, volunteer in school activities and attending school events would help to improved students' academic performance in school.

Contextually, parental involvement is the active, ongoing participation of parents or primary caregiver in the education of a child. Parental involvement may include classroom volunteering, attending school events, participating in parent-teacher conferences and other communication with teachers. Students whose parents stay involved in school have better attendance and behaviour, get better grades, demonstrate better social skills and adapt much better to school activities. Parental involvement also benefits in creating

a more supportive learning environment, which leads to better self-esteem and emotional adjustment. In this study, parental involvement was delimited to parenting practices, parental communication with school and parental involvement in school decision-making.

Parenting practices implies assisting families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding family backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children. Adeyeye (2023) opined that families are to provide for the health and safety of children, and create a home environment that encourages learning and good behaviour in school; schools should provide training and information to help families understand and promote their children's development. Okeke (2024) referred to parenting practices as the degree of discipline exerted by the parents to assist on homework completion and to limit potentially distracting activities (for example excessive watching television. Imperatively, Anierobi et al. (2024) added that, having parents from different background with different perspective of ensuring their wards' home learning will give the school a holistic view on how to make decisions as it pertains to students from different socio-economic background

Decision-making therefore is a process that includes the input of parents, teachers, administrators and community members in making decisions about how a school operates (Umeh et al., 2024). It includes families in decision making at school meetings and associations. In the words of Alimba et al. (2024), parental involvement in school decision-making includes families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations. Anyaeji and Ndukwe (2023) said that schools can give parents meaningful roles in the school decision-making process, and help them make the most of it; this opportunity should be open to all segments of the community, not just people who have the most time and energy to spend on school affairs.

In public secondary schools in Anambra State, it could be said that some parental involvement in the education of their children seems to be limited. This could be blamed on burdens of daily life resulting from economic meltdown in the nation. It could also be blamed on the parents' variable such as parental occupation, parental income, parental education level, parental aspiration and support for education (Enemuo & Onyenwe, 2023). The observed trend is that some parents engage in jobs which obviously occupy their time in order to meet up with the financial demands of the family in the face of the present economic downturn in Nigeria. Nursing and young mothers no longer stay back at home to take care of their children but rather, mothers take their babies to school (crèche) pitifully, from three months of birth in order to cope with the exigencies of work or leave them at the mercy of the older siblings. These children move from crèche to nursery, primary to secondary schools, mostly left at the mercies of teachers, house helps and or private tutors; for those whose parents could afford the cost. This raises concern over the level of involvement of parents in the education of their children to ensure their active engagement in academic activities both at school and at home.

The drastically falling standard of education in schools as reflected by the failure of senior secondary school students in Mathematics in public examinations including WAEC and NECO cannot be overemphasized. Thus, the most concerning issue of many educationists is how to capture or grasp and retain students' interest during teaching and learning process, that is, how to retain the interest of the students to the end of every lesson. In Anambra State, there has been low students' academic performance in some subjects in senior secondary schools and efforts are always undertaken to address the problem. Among the factors that are suspected to associate with the students' poor academic performance is lack of parental involvement and unfavourable teacher-student relationship. It is possible that, factors like: poor parents' involvement in school decision-making, poor parenting practices at home, and poor parents' communication with school among others. The researcher observed that, in Anambra State, most public senior secondary schools are day schools and parental level of involvement is low probably due to their personal economic activities and there is also low teacher-student relationship in the schools. Although there are many factors that affect students' academic achievement, the factors related to parental involvement need to be considered for investigation to authenticate the cause of some senior students' poor academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Hence, the researcher deemed it necessary to examine parental involvement as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine parental involvement as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the predictive value of parental involvement in school decision-making on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. examine the predictive value of parenting practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of parental involvement in school decision-making on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of parenting practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Parental involvement in school decision-making does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Parenting practices does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Methods

The area of the study is Anambra State, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study was 21,272 SS2 students which comprised 9,550 males and 11,722 females in 267 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 SS2 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The instrument 'Parental Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ)' was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instrument was subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts. On the other hand, construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26 which indicated that the instrument was suitable for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.78 for PIQ was obtained. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with five research assistants. Out of 1,064 copies of the instrument administered, 935(88%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used for the study.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: What is the predictive value of parental involvement in school decision-making on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of parental involvement in school decision-making on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized B
Constant	28.437	5.325	
Parental Involvement in School Decision-Making	0.549	0.361	0.524
R	0.524		
R ²	0.438		
Adj. R ²	0.402		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 28.437. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of parental involvement in school decision-making, students' academic performance will be valued at 28%. The analysis showed that parental involvement in school decision-making positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.524$). However, the standardized beta is also values at $\beta = 0.524$ which revealed that parental involvement in school decision-making is a positive predictor of

students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit improvement in parental involvement in school decision-making led to 0.524(52%) improvement in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.438 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 44% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in parental involvement in school decision-making. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.402 indicating that 40% of the total variation in students' academic performance was explained by parental involvement in school decision-making. Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of students' academic performance moderately depends on parental involvement in school decision-making in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive value of parenting practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of parenting practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β
Constant	29.513	5.116	
Parenting Practices	0.591	0.375	0.548
R	0.548		
R^2	0.509		
Adj. R^2	0.476		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 29.513. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of parenting practices, students' academic performance will be valued at 30%. The analysis showed that parenting practices positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.548$). Additionally, the standardized beta is also values at $\beta = 0.548$ which revealed that parenting practices is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit rise in parenting practices led to 0.548(55%) rise in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.509 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 51% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in parenting practices. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.476 indicating that 48% of the total variation in students' academic performance was explained by parenting practices. Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of students' academic performance moderately depends on parenting practices in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Parental involvement in school decision-making does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of significance on the simple regression analysis on significant predication of parental involvement in school decision-making on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β	t- value	p- value
Constant	28.437	5.325		22.914	0.000
Parental Involvement in School Decision-Making	0.549	0.361	0.524	20.502	0.000
R	0.524				
R ²	0.438				
Adj. R ²	0.402				
F	34.622				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.524 while the R² is 0.438 and Adjust R² is 0.402. The F-ratio associated with regression is 34.622, the t-test is 20.502 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that parental involvement in school decision-making does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that parental involvement in school decision-making significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Parenting practices does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of significance on the simple regression analysis on significant predication of parenting practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β	t- value	p- value
Constant	29.513	5.116		23.531	0.000
Parenting Practices	0.591	0.375	0.548	20.832	0.000
R	0.548				
R ²	0.509				
Adj. R ²	0.476				
F	36.584				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 4 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.548 while the R² is 0.509 and Adjust R² is 0.476. The F-ratio associated with regression is 36.584, the t-test is 20.832 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that parenting practices does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that parenting practices significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings on the predictive value of parental involvement in school decision-making on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that parental involvement in school decision-making has a positive predictive value of 0.524(52%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that increase in parental involvement in school decision-making will bring about 52% increases in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that parental involvement in school decision-making significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding is in consonance with the findings of onongha et al. (2023) that parental involvement in school decision-making improved students' academic performance on a great extent. This means that parents take

part in PTA meetings; carry out school projects; take part in the preparation of school budget and make suggestions to teachers about how to help their ward learn. This finding supported the findings of Anyaeji and Ndukwe (2023) that parents are highly involved in decision-making process in their children's school. The findings of Umeh et al. (2024) also revealed that one of the three parental involvement constructs, that is, parental involvement in school decision-making were found to be positively related to students' academic performance in school. Similarly, the findings of Alimba et al. (2024) demonstrated that parental involvement in school decision-making is a positive and significant predictor of secondary school students' academic engagement. This implies that as parental involvement in school decision-making significantly increases, the academic engagement of students will significantly increase with it. Deductively, the academic performance of students will be promoted if parents are actively involved in their school decision-making by providing all the necessary support needed for the academic growth of their children.

Findings on the predictive value of parenting practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that parenting practices has a positive predictive value of 0.548(55%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that improvement in parenting practices will bring about 55% improvements in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that parenting practices significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Odogwu (2022) that the effects of parenting practices on academic accomplishment of school comprises the use of home teacher, helping children study at home, providing the necessary materials needed for study, supporting children academically, equally supporting children with basic educational requirements such as books and stationery, and supervising children's activities when out of school. Anierobi (2022) findings noted that the level of parents' engagement is one of the significant factors that influence children's performance in school. Similarly, Adeyeye (2023) findings showed that the practice of contracting home tutors enhances performance as it entails one-on-one coaching. In the same respect, Nwogbo (2023) pointed to the idea that parents helping with homework and study schedules rehearses positively to their children's learning, acknowledging the role of direct learning support. However, Anierobi et al. (2024) established that parents' provision of required learning materials was important in their context because; lots of resources led children to perform better than their counterparts. Furthermore, Okeke (2024) opined that active supervision of children's social activities has been deemed to have a positive effect on the performance of children in school. Children who have their out of school activities kept under check by their parents are more focused and are more determined to study. This is in conformity with the findings of Alimba et al. (2024) that parents' involvement enhances disciplinary outcomes and academic performance. Thus, children need adequate parental attention in order to excel in school.

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrated that parental involvement is a driving force that predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Therefore, the study concluded that parental involvements are positive and significant predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Educational Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study have far reaching educational implications. The outcome of the findings indicated that parental involvement positively and significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that significant improvement in parental involvement would significantly improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Parents who are actively involved in their children's learning are better placed to assist their children in their academic activities. This provides a greater support to children who are raised in supportive homes and involved parents who are more likely to perform well in their academic endeavours. The findings give useful insights to parents, students, and teachers. Parents who are involved in their children's education are more likely to excel academically since they receive intellectual stimulation and their parents directly engage them. This advantage can be offset for students from less involved parents through improvement of school facilities and encouragement from teachers so that students can feel that they can achieve well.

Recommendations

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

1. Parents should be given more opportunities to form part of the school governing boards so as to bring the school closer to the parents to foster closer parent-school relationship. Parents on the other hand, should make more efforts to involve themselves in the education of their children by providing their educational needs and other necessary support. This will go a long way in boosting students' academic engagement and performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Education authorities should, in collaboration with school administration, engage in dialogue with parents to encourage them to become part of not only children's learning but also to be part of school activities. Hence, parents should continue to take part in the academic pursuit of their children, with a focus on cognitive involvement such as setting academic goals and checking home works.

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