

LEVEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND CHILDRENS EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**BY****Asiya Lawal: Department of Home-Economics, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria,
Email: shiktrashani@gmail.com****Abstract**

This paper provides solutions to the educational performance and the level of parental involvement in early childhood education in Nigeria. This study served as an eye opener to parents and the society in modifying their mode of parental involvement towards achieving a better future for themselves and their children notwithstanding their busy schedules and in some cases, inadequacy of resources. A survey approach was used through self-administered questionnaires. The population stood at 250. A sample size of 159 parents were used for this study. The sample of the study was guided by research Advisor (2006). Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of parents from primary education level and secondary education level in Zaria, Kaduna State. The questionnaires were distributed to primary and secondary schools, through the headmistress and principals. Analysis was done using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses. Based on the findings of this work, it is vividly obvious that children are most likely to perform better in their early childhood education with adequate participation of parents. The paper concluded that the higher the level of education of parents, the higher the chances for their children to access early childhood education in Zaria Metropolis. The paper recommended that Parents should improve the level of control and care of their children, show more interest and concern in the academic work of their children by providing conducive atmosphere for studies at home, providing materials for studies and helping the children in their studies and homework.

Keywords: *Assessment, Early childhood, Educational performance, Parental involvement*

Introduction

Education in the second half of the twentieth century has been characterized by increases in the provision of educational programs for preschool-age children. Schweinhart (2015) points out that one-fourth of children under the age of six are living in poverty, and that three-fifths of the mothers of three and four year old children now work outside the home. Increasing attention has been paid to the early childhood years as the foundation of children's academic success. The importance of high quality learning environments, qualified teachers, and family engagement with early care and education programs have all been identified as critical factors in enhancing young children's early learning experiences and their subsequent educational outcomes (Feinberg, 2019). This report focuses on one critical aspect in supporting high quality learning experiences for young children that of family involvement in early care and education programs. Family is the primary influence of young children and sets the stage for how they grow and develop. The more parents are involved with their children, the more positive learning and general life outcomes occur (Baker, 2019).

Furthermore, children of involved parents typically display higher levels of achievement, more acceptable behaviour and greater motivation in school (Keith, 2019). Students who excel academically often have parents who are interested in their children's learning from an early age and who engage in supportive learning activities, such as rhyming and shared book reading (Wade, 2018). It is important that the key role families play in supporting their child's learning at home and in early care and education programs be understood, facilitated, and nurtured across the array of services and programs available to young children and their families. Sheldon (2017) sees parental involvement as the investment of resources in children by parents. While Coleman (2019) provide a more descriptive definition stating that family involvement can include many different components including a program providing emotional support, providing parents with skills and knowledge, communicating about the child with the provider. Parental involvement is more likely to encompass the full extent of beliefs and expectations held by families and providers. Epstein (2016) suggests that the relationships and interactions among family members, educators, community, and students are similar to partnerships. Dunst (2015) presents a family-centered approach, one where a child's growth and development is nurtured by the overlapping supports of parents, family, community, and child learning opportunities, as most effective for successful outcomes. Both Epstein and Dunst present the partnerships between families and providers as an opportunity for shared responsibility for facilitating

the growth and development of children.

Epstein (2016) describes six types of involvement including parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making, and collaborating with the community. Each type of involvement comprises various components. Families and educators can work together to develop goals and establish the best possible practices that are meaningful and appropriate for both parties. Despite the number of children in early care and education programs, most research concerning parental involvement is focused on families with children in the school system and for school-age children in particular. It is essential that the foundation for family school/program partnerships is nurtured early in a child's educational experience in an effort to enhance future family-school partnerships as well as optimize children's educational success. Although the school based research provides insight to parental involvement, several differences exist between early care and education programs and school-based programs, which can affect the nature of parental involvement.

According to Bauer (2019), the United States has one of the highest percentages of children in poverty among developed countries, with many of these children being raised by single mothers. According to Coleman (2019), over 2.5 million families with related children under age 5 live below the poverty line. The resources available to families have a large impact on every aspect of life, including participation in parent education programs. Parents from lower socio economic status backgrounds experience many obstacles, which affect their ability to participate. Time constraints due to work schedules, need for child care, transportation and financial difficulties (Eccles, 2019). Parents who come from higher SES backgrounds generally have more flexibility in their schedules and do not have the additional daily stressors that lower SES parents' experience. Parents with few resources who struggle with such stressors may not have the time to practice effective parenting (Harold, 2018). Not only can life at home be disadvantageous for some parents, but they can also receive poor treatment by teachers and professionals.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study was to find out:

1. The relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child.
2. Whether socio-economic characteristics have impact on early childhood education

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated for the purpose of this study:

1. What is the relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child?
2. Does socio-economic characteristics have impact on early childhood education?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child.

Ho₂: Socio-Economic characteristics do not have any impact on early childhood education

Methodology

Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of parents from primary education level and secondary education level in Zaria, Kaduna State. The questionnaires were distributed to primary and secondary schools, through the headmistress and principals. Since the population was primary and secondary schools, the respondents were majorly parents and most of them are literate, therefore, the population for this study comprised all parents whose children are in primary and secondary school in Zaria metropolis of Kaduna State. The population stood at 250. A sample size of 159 parents were used for this study. The sample of the study was guided by research Advisor (2006) which opined that for a population of 250, that 159 is an adequate sample. Based on the confidence level of 95% with a marginal error of 0.05. The data collected was analyzed with the use of SPSS package version 22. The study was analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child.

Table 1

Parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	36.552	1	36.552	35.099	.000
Residual	164.541	158	1.041		
Total	201.094	159			

Since P value is less than 0.05 i.e. ($0.000 < 0.05$) therefore, we can reject the Null hypothesis (H₀), which means that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child. From the analysis it is vividly obvious that children are most likely to perform better in their early childhood education with adequate participation of parents.

Ho₂: Socio-Economic characteristics do not have any impact on early childhood education

Table 2

Socio-Economic characteristics do not have any impact on early childhood education

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8913.319	1	8913.319	22.161	.000
Residual	63547.656	158	402.200		
Total	72460.975	159			

Since P value is less than 0.05 i.e. ($0.000 < 0.05$) therefore, we can reject the Null hypothesis (H₀) which means that the socio-economic characteristics do have an impact on early childhood education. The parental educational exposure is very crucial. Some parents just don't buy the idea of letting their kids experience early childhood education. More so, some parents who are illiterate do engage in practices like; if the child's hand does not touch the other side of his/her ears then he/she can't start school. These are kind of beliefs that should be discarded. So therefore, the parental educational exposure has a very huge impact on the early childhood education.

Discussion

Hypothesis one states that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement in early childhood education and the educational performance of the child. Findings from this study demonstrated that increased parental involvement is significantly related to a child's increased perception of cognitive competence. This finding is consistent with the findings of Silva (2016). The findings demonstrated that increased parent involvement was significantly related to increased performance of the child. Findings also demonstrated that increased perceived cognitive competence was related to higher achievement test scores and that the quality of the parents was significantly related to the child's academic performance, measured by both standardized achievement test scores and the child's classroom academic performance.

Hypothesis two states that socio-economic characteristics do not have any impact on early childhood education. Findings from these study by Falodun (2017) revealed that many single parents experience a great deal of difficulty with raising their families alone. Most single mothers left their children in the care of relatives, neighbours or they left them at home to look after themselves when they went to work. Others sent their children to day-care centers until they returned home in the evening. Also the findings by Solaja (2016) shows that single mothers were more numerous than single fathers. Most pupils have no fathers, maybe the mother never got married or the father left them and some died. Also, single fathers do not stay unmarried long before they remarry and the child lives with a stepmother, who in most cases never wanted to spend their income in pay the school fees and buy learning material for these children, simply because they are not her biological kids. Therefore, these resulted into losing direction for education of this children.

Conclusion

This paper discussed parental socio-economic status on early childhood education in Zaria metropolis of Kaduna State: It concluded that the higher the level of education of parents, the higher the chances for their children to access early childhood education in Zaria Metropolis. This implies that low parental educational background may result in low chances of preschool access whereas higher educational background of parents has a higher tendency of influencing positively the accessibility of preschool by their children.

Recommendations

This paper gave the following recommendations:

1. There is a need to improve on level of education of parents in Zaria metropolis of Kaduna State so as to improve children's access to schools.
2. It is important that policy makers and stakeholders strengthen the course for adult literacy as a prerequisite tool for good accessibility to schools by the children.
3. Parents should improve the level of control and care of their children, show more interest and concern in the academic work of their children by providing conducive atmosphere for studies at home, providing materials for studies and helping the children in their studies and homework.

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