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ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of parents in the educational development of the primary school child, the extent to which parents play their role and what factors militate against parental involvement. Three research questions were formulated for the study. A sample of 99 parents was drawn from all parents in Awka South. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. Percentages was used to answer the research questions. To validate the instruments, copies of the questionnaire were given to two lecturers in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education. At the end of the analysis the result showed that the roles of parents in educational development of their children in primary school are helping and monitoring their children to do their homework, making out time for their children to study, insisting their children to read their books, speaking to them on the importance of studying, monitoring their children television viewing, trusting and accepting them and checking their books after school. The study further revealed that parents are involved in the education of their children in the primary school to a great extent. Most parents help with their children's homework and insist that their children read their books after school however few parents read to their children and listen to their children while they read. The factors that militate against the involvement of parents in their children's education are, their job, income and uncertainty on how to contribute in their children study, the cost of transportation, teachers' reactions to their contribution, size of the family, poverty as well as poor educational background. The study recommended among others, that parents should endeavour to read to their children teach their children reading and also that parents should consider the welfare of their children in making decisions on the kind of business they indulge in to avoid cases of neglect on their children.



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Introduction

Education and development are two sides of a coin which cannot be separated. Education is a process of teaching and learning especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills.

Learning takes place everywhere in the home, market, place of work, workshop and school through informal, non-formal, formal processes. Through the early missionaries' schools came into existence in our society. According to Christie, 2005 schools of today are often disconnected from the home and community. Parents feel that the education of their children solely is the work of the teachers.

Parents need to know that whatever they can give in terms of time or resources is appreciated and that it is important to the academic, social and emotional development of the child. Most parents may think that parental involvement implies only giving time to children to engage in school or attend all the school activities. However, children like to see their parents in their schools and teachers appreciate the hands-on help they get from parents because at times, the work load in school can be too much for the teachers to accomplish. When a parent's value education and show it through encouraging their children, supporting the school, the child realizes the importance of school and learning (Nistler& Angola, 2000).

Parental involvement is more than Parents, Teachers Associations, fund donations or open days. Christie (2005) identifies volunteering at the school to be on lowest rung on the ladder of potential activities for parental involvement. However, its importance should not be neglected as it does have a positive impact on the student achievement and esteem. Christie ranks attendance at schools, conferences and activities the next lowest on her ladder of importance followed by participation on committees, tutoring and reading one-on-one. The highest level of involvement, in Christie's view is parents having high expectations for their kids in terms of academic and behaviour.

Parental involvement is often thought of as a means to raise money or plan special schools' activities but in reality, parental involvement includes any number of activities including reading with children and tutoring. According to Epstein and Jansora, (2004), most parents would like to be involved with the school but need some

direction from school personnel on how to help. Some parents may even need training on how they can help their children with their homework in different subjects such as Mathematics and reading skills. The critical thing is for school administrators to encourage involvement from parents in whatever form or fashion that they can provide. If parents and schools are partners, it connects them to their children and maintains a solid relationship with the school. Parental involvement is not only supplemented in the development of a child but also motivates the schools to function at a higher standard by constantly improving practices. Some parents adopt the technique of calm discussion and pro-active teaching in socializing their children by cultivating in them a sense of respect, moral principles, processing skills and reasoning ability in order to become self-reliant and develop self-directedness in learning.

As the child leaves infancy and approaches toddlerhood, one of the challenges parents face is introducing the child to peer group and the school environment is because the child has moved from the home to the school. The question for many school administrators then is how the school goes about the process of improving school and parents' relationship so that children will improve their learning outcomes.

In order to effectively and efficiently understand the role parents play in their children's education, there is need to properly support children's learning in order to motivate them. Therefore, this study is to examine the role of parents in the educational development of their children in primary school.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the roles of parents in the educational development of the primary school child?
2. To what extent are parents involved in the educational development of their children in primary school?
3. What factors militate against parental involvement in their children's educational development?

Method

This study adopted a survey research design and the study was carried out in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. The population of the study was made up of all parents of children in primary schools in AwkaSouth Local Government Area. The categories of parents involved in the

study include civil servants, artisans, and traders. The rate of mobility of parents in the area is high. People come and go on transfer and people who are self-employed might decide to relocate to another area and so this makes it difficult to determine specifically the number of parents in Awka South Local Government Area. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 99 parents, 11 parents from each of the nine towns in Awka South in order to have representative of parents from the nine towns.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument which was used in carrying out this research is questionnaire designed by the researcher. It is grouped into (3) sections: Section A,B and C. Section 'A' consist of 14 items and elicited information on the roles of parents on the educational development of the children in primary schools. Section B consist of 8 items and elicited information on the extent of parent's involvement on the educational development of their children in primary schools. Section C consist of 10 items and elicited information on factors militating against parental involvement in the education pursuit of their children. The instrument was developed on a three-point scale of Yes, No and Don't Know.

Validation of the Instruments

The instrument was validated by lecturers in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Namdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The validator was requested to examine the items and language in which they were requested to ascertain the extent to which the language was clear and items suitable to serve the purposes of the study. The inputs made by the validators were integrated in the final copy of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, it was administered on parents outside the study area in Ekwusigo Local Government Area and test-re-test method was used within an interval of two weeks. The score obtained from the two administration was collected and computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics. The Co-efficient value of 0.85, 0.89 and 0.76 were obtained for the sections A, B, and C, respectively which were considered suitable for the study.

Methods of Data Collection

Ninety-nine (99) copies of the questionnaire were produced, administered and collected by the researcher, and they were used for the analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data was analysed using percentages for all the sections. In answering research question one and two, 50% and above was regarded as a positive response while an item with a cut-off point of 49% and below was regarded as a negative response.

In research question three which dealt with factors militating against parental involvement, items with 50% and above cut-off point were regarded as factor affecting involvement of the parents to a high extent while items 49% and below cut-off point were regarded as factor affecting the parent's involvement to a low extent.

Data Analysis

The presentation and analysis were done according to the research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the roles of parents in educational development of their children in primary schools?

Data collected in respect of research question 1, were presented and analyzed in Table 1.

Table 1: Parents Responses on their roles in Educational Development of their children in Primary Schools (N=99)

S/N	Roles of Parents	Yes	%	No	%	Don't know	%
1.	Acting as a role model by reading to my child and reading always	35	35	50	50	14	14
2.	Encouraging reading by paying attention to what my child reads	36	36	52 52		11	11
3.	Have a positive attitude towards school	79	79	13	13	07	7
4.	Hiring a private tutor at home	26	26	71	71	02	2

	to coach my child						
5.	Mapping out a regular time in my home for my child's homework.	21	21	76	76	02	2
6.	Monitoring my child's grades and homework	79	79	14	14	06	6
7.	Making sure my child goes to school and on time.	80	80	10	10	09	9
8.	Insisting that my child reads his books after school	81	81	04	4	14	14
9.	Speaking to my children on the necessity and importance of studying after school.	78	78	09	9	12	12
10.	Discussing with my children on the importance of good education.	91	91	02	2	06	6
11.	Monitoring my child's television viewing habits to ensure it doesn't interfere with his studying hours.	69	69	26	26	04	4
12.	Encouraging, accepting and motivating my child to study harder.	92	92	04	4	03	3
13.	Designing a time table for my child's study hours	24	24	63	63	12	12
14.	Going through my child's book after school.	75	75	13	13	11	11

Table 1 indicates that parents agree that all the items above are the roles of parents in enhancing the educational development of their children in primary schools except items 1,2,4,5 and 13 which include acting as a role model by reading to the child and reading always (35%), encouraging reading by paying attention to what the children reads (36%), hiring a private tutor at home to coach the child (26%), mapping out a

regular time at home for the child's homework (21%) and designing a time table for the child's study hours (24%) respectively.

Research Question 2

To what extent are parents involved in the educational development of their children in primary school?

Table 2: Parents Responses on the Extent of involvement of Parents in the Educational Development of their children (N=99).

S/N	Extent of Involvement of Parents	Yes	%	No	%	Not Sure	%
1.	I help in my child's homework on daily basis	75	75	16	16	08	8
2.	I encourage my child to do his assignment every day	79	79	09	09	11	11
3.	I communicate with my child's school teacher to know how my children is faring in school.	35	35	47	47	17	17
4.	I participate in my child's school events and ceremonies.	27	27	66	66	06	6
5.	I praise and encourage my child to motivate and build confidence in him as a learner	89	89	07	7	03	3
6.	I arrange for extra moral lessons for my child.	82	82	12	12	05	5
7.	I monitor my child's grades consistently	92	92	04	4	03	3
8.	I establish family routines that supports my child's studies.	78	78	07	7	14	14

Table 2 dealt with extent of involvement of parents in the educational development of their children in primary school. The table shows that parents are highly involved in

the educational development of their children except that their involvement in communicating with their child's school teacher (35 %) and participating in their children's school events and ceremonies (27 %), are very low below 49%.

Research Question 3:
What factors militate against parental involvement in their children's educational development?

Table 3: Parents Responses on Factors militating against parental involvement in Educational Development of their children in primary schools (N=99)

S/N	Factors Militating Against Parental Involvement	Yes	%	No	%
1.	The nature of my work / business does not allow me to visit my child's school.	75	75	24	74
2.	Lack of interest in education does not allow me to go through my child's book after school	75	75	24	24
3.	Gender inequality do not allow me to support my children schooling as I ought to	46	46	53	53
4.	My income do not allow me afford to bring a private tutor at home for my children.	74	74	25	25
5.	Even when I want to get involved, I don't know how to contribute because I don't understand what the school wants.	36	36	61	61
6.	The cost of transportation to my child's school discourages me from visiting the school.	15	15	84	84
7.	The reaction of the teachers discourages me from being actively involved	24	24	75	75
8.	Increase in my family size reduce the support I give to my child's education.	30	30	69	69
9.	Poverty in my family limits my ability to care of my children's education.	41	41	58	58
10.	My poor educational background hinders me to contribute to my child's education.	21	21	78	78

Table 3 dealt with factors militating against parental involvement in educational development of their children in primary schools. The finding showed that Items 1, 2 and 4 are the factors that militate parental involvement to their children's education to a very great extent with percentage scores of 74, 74 and 75 respectively. However, only 15 (15%) parents indicated that cost of transportation to their children's school discourages them from visiting the school and only 21 (21%) parents indicated that their poor educational background hinders them in contributing to their children's education.

Discussion

The findings from research question one indicated that only 35% of the parents studied read to their children. This implies that only few parents teach their children how to read. These findingsis not far from the truth because most pupils in primary schools hardly read very well. According to Geske&Ozola (2008) reading literacy is substantially influenced by collaboration of parents and children at the pre-school and school age. Similarly, according to Lyon as cited in Geske and Ozola (2008) reading aloud is necessary and experience gained in such a way helps to create comprehension about the relationship between the written word and pronouncement.

The findings from research question one further indicated that 92% of the parents studied encourage, accept and motivate their children to study harder. According to Lawson (2003) students will never trust parents or open themselves up to hear what parent have to say unless they sense that they are valued and respected by their parents. Valuing and respecting children is very necessary for the general development of our society and for encouraging children to have enough confident in themselves. The findings in item 9, Table 1 shows that 78% of parents speak to their children on the importance of studying after school. This is quite encouraging for the growth of education in Awka South Local Government area and the state in general.

The findings from research question 2 showed that 92% of parents monitor their children's grade consistently through the teacher. According to Angus &Melissa (2006), teachers play an important role in the lives of children. They know each child capability and ability and in a better position to direct the parents. The findings from research

question 2 also revealed that only few numbers of parents participate in their children's' school events and ceremonies and also help their children to improve their reading skills each day. However contrary to this finding Otubelu (2000) observed that most educated parents provide their children with cognitive, language skills and support that contribute to early success in school.

The findings from research question 3 indicated that 75% of the parents studied were of the opinion that their work or business do not allow them to visit their children's school and similarly their work do not allow them to go through their children's book. This is evident from the researcher's experience as a teacher. Most pupils do not complete their homework when they are given assignments to take home. This is mainly because their parents come back home late from market/work. According to Gonzalez-Delta (2005) parents should play a partnership role with the school in order to fully get their children educationally developed. According to the author although school has a central role in developing a child's character, the most profound impact on pupils' development comes from their families.

Findings from research question 3 further showed that cost of transportation to the children's school is not much problem, hence only 15% of parents indicated that they have problem paying the cost of transportation to their children's school. However, 21% of parents indicated that they have poor education background which hinders them in contributing to their children education.

According to Obidiegwu (2008) literate patents are necessary to children's education because they render assistance, motivation and reinforcement necessary to enhance theirchildren's' academic performance. It was also indicated from the findings that parental income impedes on parents efforts to engage private teacher for their children. According to Machan, Wilson and Notar (2005) meagre income of some parents is an impediment and constraint to the educational development of their children. Similarly, Kayode and Aderinoye (2001) noted that parents of pupils living in a household above the poverty level are more likely to be involved in school activities of their children than parents of children living in a household at or below poverty level.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that parents play a great role in the educational development of their children. Such roles include:

Providing feeling of trust and acceptance, encouraging them to study after school, monitoring children's homework, encouraging a child to make out time for study, monitoring television viewing of children and providing feeling of trust and acceptance to children. Parents get involved in the educational development of their children, however, there are some factors militating against involvement in their educational development such parental income and nature of work.

It is therefore necessary that schools should involve parents and the community in school activities at all levels. This will enable a strong partnership and synergy to exist between schools and home in achieving all-round development of the children and in growing a more resilient society. In addition, parents should not allow their job to be their priority, adequate attention, care, support and encouragement should be given to children for them to develop appropriately in each domains of development.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should endeavour to teach their children reading skills from nursery school. Reading to their hearing is very necessary.
2. Parents should consider the welfare of their children in making decisions on the kind of business they indulge in to avoid cases of neglect on their children.
3. Parents should endavour to develop a time table for their children's study hour, allocate time and space for their study, regulate schedules on ways of training and guiding their child's study behavour.
4. Parent should provide adequate care, attention security, love and affection, nutrition, and feeling of trust and respect for their children. If all these needs are not met; children are denied a firm foundation for achieving their potentials.
5. Parents should monitor their children's television viewing habits, monitor the things they see on the television as this may influence them negatively.
6. Parents should contribute and assist the school in educating their children, by helping them in their homework and assignments particularly in reading and arithmetic.

7. Basic literacy and vocational centers should be established by the government for parents to help them acquire literacy and self-reliant skills in order to help their children and families to enhance their education and income.

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