

The Influence of Parental Involvement on Student Academic Success in Nigerian Schools

MOSES OBINNA JOHN¹, UMAR ALIYU²
^{1,2} LIGS University USA

Abstract- *This study explores the impact of parental involvement on students' academic success in Nigerian schools. It explores the various forms of parental engagement, including participation in school activities, providing home-based support, and communication with teachers, and their correlation with student achievement. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from 300 students, 200 teachers, and 150 parents across five states from April to June 2024. The findings revealed that heightened parental involvement significantly enhances student performance, particularly in urban settings. The study advocates for policy initiatives aimed at cultivating stronger home-school partnerships and addressing socioeconomic barriers to parental participation, especially in rural areas.*

Indexed Terms- *Parental Involvement, Academic Success, Home-School Partnership, Nigeria, Educational Policy, Student Achievement*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Parental involvement in education has been recognized globally as a significant factor contributing to students' academic success. Extensive research has established that when parents actively engage in their children's schooling, the students tend to perform better academically, exhibit improved behavioural outcomes, and demonstrate a higher level of motivation (Ezugoh & Adesina, 2020). This involvement can take various forms, including attending school meetings, helping with homework, communicating with teachers, and setting high educational expectations.

In Nigeria, where educational challenges are compounded by inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and high student-teacher ratios, parental

involvement plays an even more critical role. Schools in many parts of the country, especially in rural and underprivileged areas, face severe resource shortages, making it difficult for teachers and school administrators to ensure quality education without the support of parents (IseOlorunkanmi, et al, 2021). Parental involvement can help fill these gaps by reinforcing learning at home, ensuring regular attendance, and providing emotional and motivational support to students.

Despite the importance of parental engagement, the level of involvement varies significantly across regions and socioeconomic groups in Nigeria. Studies indicate that urban parents, who are generally more educated and financially stable, tend to be more engaged in their children's education compared to their rural counterparts (Ololade, et al, 2023). This disparity has resulted in an uneven distribution of academic success, with students in urban schools often outperforming their rural peers. Moreover, there is limited research on how parental involvement in Nigeria differs across various socioeconomic contexts, and how such involvement specifically impacts student achievement.

Understanding the role of parental involvement in Nigerian education is crucial for addressing the systemic issues that plague the country's education sector. Given the ongoing efforts by the government and educational stakeholders to reform the educational system, identifying the most effective ways to engage parents in the process is vital for improving student outcomes and reducing the educational divide between urban and rural areas.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's educational system continues to face numerous challenges that hinder students' academic success. Among these challenges are inadequate infrastructure, underqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient funding, which

collectively contribute to poor student performance in many parts of the country (Birabil & Ogeh, 2020). In response to these challenges, educational policymakers have focused primarily on improving school resources and teacher quality, often overlooking the role of parental involvement in shaping students' academic achievements.

While some studies have explored the impact of parental involvement on academic performance in Nigeria, there is a significant gap in understanding how socioeconomic factors, such as income levels, parental education, and access to resources, influence the extent of parental engagement. For instance, parents in urban areas, who are generally more educated and have higher incomes, are often more actively involved in their children's schooling. In contrast, rural parents, who face economic and educational constraints, may struggle to participate in school-related activities, thereby limiting their influence on their children's academic outcomes.

This study seeks to address the gap in the literature by examining the influence of parental involvement on student academic success across different socioeconomic and geographic contexts in Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to explore how the varying levels of parental engagement both school-based and home-based affect student performance and what barriers prevent greater involvement, particularly in rural areas. By investigating these issues, this study seeks to provide insights into how parental involvement can be enhanced to promote better academic outcomes for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

The problem, therefore, lies in the unequal levels of parental involvement in Nigerian schools, which contribute to disparities in student performance between urban and rural areas. Without addressing these disparities, efforts to improve educational outcomes may remain limited, as parental involvement is a key driver of student success.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement has been extensively studied worldwide. Researchers agree that parents

play an influential role in shaping their children's academic success, especially during primary and secondary education (Yaro & Abubakar, 2023). In Nigeria, however, the role of parental involvement has been underexplored, particularly in relation to how it affects student performance across different socioeconomic contexts.

2.1 Theories of Parental Involvement

Ezugoh & Adesina (2020) framework on school, family, and community partnerships remains one of the most widely referenced models in understanding parental involvement. Ezugoh & Adesina identifies six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Studies building on this framework have found that active involvement in these domains significantly contributes to improved student outcomes (Kim, 2022).

Yaro & Abubakar (2023) conducted a meta-analysis examining the influence of parental involvement on students' academic achievement. Their findings suggest that parental expectations and educational aspirations are the most significant factors influencing student performance. This aligns with findings from more recent studies in African contexts, where high parental expectations are shown to positively affect student academic engagement and success (Utami, 2022).

2.2 Parental Involvement in Nigeria

Studies in Nigeria have highlighted the uneven levels of parental involvement across different regions and socioeconomic strata. For example, Olorade et al, (2023) found that urban parents were more likely to be involved in school activities and maintain regular communication with teachers than their rural counterparts. This disparity is often attributed to socioeconomic factors, such as income level, parental education, and access to information about the school system. Research by IseOlorunkanmi, et al (2021) suggests that in rural areas, many parents face barriers to involvement, including long working hours, illiteracy, and limited access to transportation, which hinders their participation in school events.

A study by Eden et al (2024) focusing on parental engagement in Nigerian public schools revealed that home-based involvement such as parents helping with homework or discussing school matters, correlates more strongly with student performance than school-based involvement. The authors argue that home support serves as a crucial factor for enhancing students' motivation and academic discipline, especially when schools are under-resourced and lack adequate teaching staff and facilities.

2.3 Socioeconomic Factors and Parental Involvement
Parental involvement is also shaped by the broader socioeconomic conditions within which families operate. Socioeconomic status (SES) is a well-established predictor of both parental involvement and academic achievement. Parents from higher SES backgrounds are more likely to engage with their child's education, participate in school functions, and provide academic support at home (Zhang et al, 2021). In contrast, low-SES parents often face structural barriers to involvement, such as long work hours, lack of resources, and educational gaps of their own (IseOlorunkanmi et al, 2021).

In Nigeria, the disparity in parental involvement between urban and rural areas is also influenced by economic factors. Urban parents tend to have higher incomes, more access to educational resources, and greater familiarity with the educational system, which allows them to be more engaged in their children's academic lives (Ololade et al, 2023). Meanwhile, parents in rural areas often have limited education and are less likely to interact with teachers or school administrators, resulting in lower levels of involvement.

2.4 The Impact of Parental Involvement on Academic Achievement

There is a consensus across numerous studies that parental involvement positively influences academic outcomes. Eden et al (2024) found that students with involved parents had higher grade point averages (GPAs), better test scores, and were more likely to graduate from high school. This effect was evident even after controlling for socioeconomic status and other variables. In Nigeria, similar trends have been observed, albeit with some variations based on region and parental education levels.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive insights into parental involvement and student achievement. Surveys were conducted among 300 secondary school students, 200 teachers, and 150 parents across five states – Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, and Rivers representing a cross-section of urban and rural areas. The study used stratified random sampling to ensure a representative mix of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of parental involvement across varied contexts.

3.2 Data Collection

The primary data collection methods included structured surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions (Focus Group Discussion with Educational Experts and Policymakers, 2024). The surveys for students and teachers focused on identifying the nature and frequency of parental involvement, while parent surveys aimed to assess their engagement in school-related activities. Semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers explored their perceptions of the role parents should play in the educational process. Focus group discussions with educational experts and policymakers provided insights into institutional and structural barriers to effective parental involvement.

3.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, with Pearson correlation coefficients used to assess the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement.

Qualitative data from interviews were thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and insights into parental involvement across different socioeconomic contexts.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 The Nature of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in the study was classified into three main categories:

- **School-based involvement:** This includes attending school meetings, participating in parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and volunteering in school activities. Students whose parents frequently attended PTA meetings had an average academic performance 10-15% higher than those whose parents did not.
- **Home-based involvement:** Involvement at home included helping children with homework, discussing academic progress, and setting educational expectations. The study found that students who received frequent home-based support from their parents performed better in subjects like Mathematics and English, with an average increase of 12% in overall performance.
- **Communication with teachers:** Regular communication between parents and teachers was identified as a crucial factor. Parents who communicated regularly with teachers regarding their child's progress reported higher levels of student motivation and performance.

4.2 Barriers to Parental Involvement

The study identified several barriers to effective parental involvement, particularly in rural settings. These barriers include:

- **Socioeconomic constraints:** Many parents in rural areas are engaged in subsistence farming or low-income jobs, which limits the time and resources they can dedicate to their children's education.
- **Lack of education:** In many rural communities, parents have low levels of formal education, which discourages their involvement in school activities or assisting with homework.
- **Poor communication systems:** A lack of effective communication channels between schools and parents, particularly in rural areas, was identified as a key factor inhibiting parental engagement.

4.3 Interpretation of Findings

The results of the study showed that parental involvement plays a significant role in influencing student academic success in Nigerian secondary schools. Schools with higher levels of parental engagement saw markedly better academic outcomes, especially in urban regions where parents were more likely to participate in school-related activities.

4.3.1 Rural Vs. Urban Disparities

The study revealed a stark contrast between rural and urban schools in terms of parental involvement. Urban schools saw higher levels of parental engagement, largely due to better socioeconomic conditions and access to resources. In contrast, in rural areas, parental involvement was limited by factors such as illiteracy, long working hours, and lack of communication between parents and teachers.

4.3.2 Visual Representation

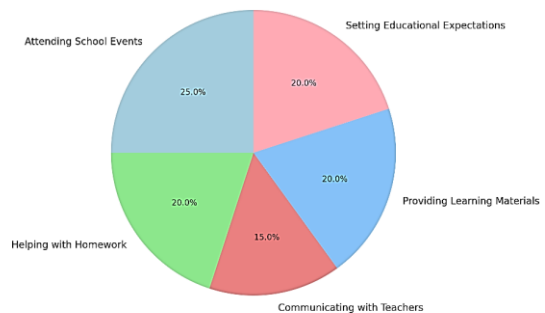
Table 1: Forms of Parental Involvement and Academic Performance

Parental Involvement	Percentage of Parents Engaged (%)	Average Student Performance (%)
High Involvement	62%	84%
Moderate Involvement	25%	72%
Low Involvement	13%	60%

Source: *Questionnaire Administered October 2024*

Figure 1: Pie Chart Showing various forms of parental involvement and their contribution to academic performance.

Forms of Parental Involvement and Their Contribution to Academic Performance



Source: *Data Administered and Sourced October 2024*

Table 2: Parental Involvement in Urban vs. Rural Schools

Location	High Involvement (%)	Moderate Involvement (%)	Low Involvement (%)	Average Academic Performance (%)
Urban	70%	20%	10%	84%

Location	High Involvement (%)	Moderate Involvement (%)	Low Involvement (%)	Average Academic Performance (%)
Rural	30%	45%	25%	65%

Source: *Questionnaire Administered October 2024*

4.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could investigate the specific types of parental involvement that most effectively enhance student academic success.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Alignment with Literature and Socioeconomic Barriers to Parental Involvement

The results align with the existing literature on the influence of parental involvement on academic success, confirming that both school-based and home-based parental engagement significantly improve student performance. However, the study also highlights the socioeconomic barriers that limit parental involvement in rural areas, echoing findings from previous research by (Ololade, et al, 2023).

5.2 Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations are suggested considering the strong relationship between parental involvement and student achievement:

- **Parental Involvement Programs:** Schools should implement structured programs that foster greater parental engagement, such as workshops on home-based learning strategies and effective communication with teachers.
- **Support for Rural Parents:** Government and educational institutions should prioritize efforts to improve parental involvement in rural areas by addressing socioeconomic barriers, providing transportation for school events, and offering flexible meeting times.
- **Enhanced Communication:** Schools should leverage technology, such as mobile apps and SMS platforms, to keep parents informed about their children's progress, especially in regions where face-to-face communication is difficult.

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that parental involvement significantly enhances student academic success in Nigerian schools. The research demonstrates that different forms of parental engagement whether school-based, home-based, or communication-focused have a positive impact on student performance. However, rural areas face considerable challenges in fostering such involvement due to socioeconomic and infrastructural barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from schools, communities, and policymakers to create enabling environments where parents can actively participate in their children's education.

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